

17

## Towards an Integrative Psychology of Well-Being

*Roger Walsh  
and  
Frances Vaughan*

A great thorough-going man does not confine himself to one school, but combines many schools, as well as reads and listens to the arguments of many predecessors.

Kuo Hsi

Each year the number of psychological theories continues to expand. Even within the major schools, different subgroups and factions multiply. As if there were not sufficient choice within Western psychology, we have recently seen a growing interest in Non-Western concepts and models. Such an abundance of riches has led to considerable confusion, competition, and occasional out-right internecine warfare between different schools.

Not surprisingly, along with this growing embarrassment of riches has come a growing interest in the possibility of obtaining some broad synthesis and overview which could make sense out of this morass of competing claims. Unfortunately more energy has been expended by people trying to prove that theirs is the only true way than in integrating various ways. Even where integrative models have been attempted, they have usually been confined to syntheses among related schools, for example, among various

psychoanalytic perspectives. Indeed, some psychologists have wondered whether broad theories are premature or even appropriate to psychology. Carl Jung<sup>1</sup> was pessimistic about the possibilities in his time and wrote

We know so very little about the psyche that it is positively grotesque to think we are far enough advanced to frame general theories. We have not even established the empirical extent of the psyche's phenomenology. How then can we dream of general theories?

Indeed it has been argued that the belief that we may be able to extract a single overarching integrative psychology is nothing more than naive monism. Theoretical pluralism may reflect both the vastness and the very nature of knowledge. According to Joseph Royce,<sup>2</sup>

It would indeed be a miracle if the range, complexity, and richness of psychological phenomena were to be accommodated by one world view, one conceptual framework, one paradigm or one theory.

On the other hand, most scientists usually assume that large numbers of fragmented and conflicting models represent an early phase of investigation in a field and that further development and data will result in an ongoing sifting and integration of theories. Raymond Corsini<sup>3</sup> notes,

Psychologists generally assume the viewpoint that personality theory is science rather than philosophy. If it is a science, there can be an eventual convergence of all theories into one final theory of human nature. The present situation is similar to that of the blind man describing the elephant: each theorist sees the truth, but not the whole truth.

Whether or not knowledge in a field as vast as psychology may be ultimately reducible to one or even a very few general theories is thus a moot point. However, it is our impression that one of the major factors presently limiting resolution of the plethora of theories and conflicts is not their inherent irreducibility, but rather psychologists' limited familiarity and depth of understanding of the different schools. With sufficient breadth and depth of understanding it may be possible to penetrate differences in language, data base, perspectives, and presuppositions to detect ways in which different theories may display underlying commonalities and complementarities.

This idea is supported by the fact that in recent years a few models of truly broad integrative scope have appeared. The works of Ken Wilber have provided far-reaching syntheses among the major psychologies of the world. In

addition to attempting to map different psychologies and therapies along a spectrum of states of consciousness, he has formulated a developmental psychology encompassing the major Western and non-Western systems. His chapters in this volume and his books<sup>4-6</sup> are all rich sources of integrative information and synthesis.

In this chapter we are attempting a preliminary synthesis of major psychological models. We will attempt to show that many of the major psychologies may present partially overlapping and partially complementary pictures of human nature. Since Eastern psychologies have focused on well-being, the major emphasis will be on integrating Eastern and Western systems—although we will point to syntheses within these systems where possible. As much as possible we will strive for simplicity rather than detailed comprehensiveness, and we acknowledge that the suggested synthesis is tentative, preliminary, and partial. However, at the present stage even preliminary and partial attempts at integration may be useful in suggesting directions for future exploration.

### The Nature of Models

In the introduction to this book it was pointed out that there has recently been an emerging appreciation of the formerly unrecognized power and influence that models of reality exert on us. Models not only uncover facts but actively create them out of the interaction among beliefs, perception, analysis, and interpretation of data by the observer.<sup>2</sup>

Models are necessarily relatively simple and limited by comparison with the phenomena they describe. Indeed that is the very function of models: to simplify phenomena so as to render them comprehensible to us. Models therefore collapse and order multidimensional, multilevel properties along a small number of salient dimensions. Psychologies are clearly attempts to do just this. From the awesome complexity that is a human being, a few conceptual dimensions are abstracted in an attempt to parsimoniously account for a maximal range of behavior.

This approach is central to most of Western science. However, difficulties arise when we do not recognize the ways in which models can influence our perspective once they are accepted as true. For example, they tend to reify and isolate the dimensions, leading us to see them as independent entities awaiting discovery, rather than as parts of an interconnected whole. In contrast, the emerging world view in certain areas of science, particularly physics, points to the interconnected, interdependent, holistic nature of reality whereby all components are fully dependent on all others and are tied together in an unbroken net of interdependencies and interdeterminations. Any attempt to dissect out individual components, aspects, or dimensions is

therefore necessarily somewhat simplistic and artificial. In adopting any particular perspective or model, we are therefore necessarily adopting an arbitrary viewing framework which will appear to create specific "facts." In doing so, we may collapse many dimensions into a few, reduce process to stasis, view the interdependent as relatively independent, and create out of an omnideterminism in which all things determine all others, an apparent one way cause-effect relationship.

The physicist David Bohm<sup>7</sup> refers to the indivisible whole which he says underlies the physical world as the *holomovement* and suggests:

In certain cases we can abstract particular aspects of the holomovement (e.g. light, electrons, sound, etc.). But more generally, all forms of the holomovement merge and are inseparable. Thus, in its totality, the holomovement is not limited in any specifiable way at all. It is not required to conform to any particular order, or to be bounded by any particular measure. Thus the holomovement is undefinable and immeasurable. To give primary significance to the undefinable and immeasurable holomovement implies that it has no meaning to talk of the *fundamental* theory on which *all* of physics could find a permanent basis, or to which *all* of the phenomena of physics could ultimately be reduced. Rather, each theory will abstract a certain aspect that is relevant only in some limited context, which is indicated by some appropriate measure.

This suggests one reason why there have been so many psychological models. Each perspective and model will abstract out certain dimensions, facts, and implications, each of which may be relatively real, partially overlapping, and partially complementary to other models. This is another reason why it may be unrealistic to expect that psychology can elucidate any single fundamental theory, dimension, or model.<sup>8,9</sup>

However, many psychologists have tended to assume that truth is to be found in a single, or at best a very small number, of models and have adopted an either/or attitude, assuming that if one model is correct another must be wrong. This attitude has been reinforced by a common conceptual shortcoming: namely, the failure to recognize the vastly overdetermined nature of human behavior. Since multiple factors enter into the determination of any psychological outcome, one is likely to find any particular determining factor one looks for. Thus, for example, the Freudian analyst examining patients for libido motivators, the behaviorist looking for external reinforcers, the cognitive behavior modifier searching for contributing thought patterns, the Adlerian seeking superiority strivings, and the humanist anticipating self-actualizing tendencies have all been successful in their quest. Error arises, however, when it is assumed that such findings pro-

vide exclusive evidence for one particular theory. This is not to say that all theories are equally accurate or that testing theories is impossible. However, a fundamental tenet of the philosophy of science is that theories cannot be *proved* correct, they can only be disproved. This sometimes seems to have been forgotten by personality theorists. It must be recognized that in a complex, interdependent, overdetermined system, any and all motivational factors may be found and do not necessarily supply exclusive evidence in favor of one model over another.

Thus, in summary, we need to move towards a recognition that models and "facts" are part of a dialectical process. Facts suggest models, and models suggest validating facts. Multiple models are possible and will produce their corresponding body of supportive facts, and each will be relatively real. While broad integrative models are desirable, it may be that large-scale models are less precise in describing small subareas. We may need a dynamic epistemology in which we move between models of varying scale according to the scale of the phenomena under investigation. Synthesis is necessary whenever possible, but may not remove the need for the smaller models which it integrates.

### The Process of Integration

The integration of psychological models entails several processes. The first of these may be a willingness to question existing beliefs and assumptions. Most of us tend to identify with a particular model and argue its merits over all others. However, integration demands letting go of an either/or approach in favor of openness to the possibility of a both/and perspective. One must be willing to learn not just one, but multiple, psychologies in sufficient detail to be able to translate terms, identify commonalities, and recognize relationships between the models. In the resulting synthesis, each primary model now becomes a part of the integrative one, the set becomes a subset, context becomes content, and what was the whole system becomes a subsystem.<sup>10,11</sup> The result tends to be the inclusion of a greater number of variables, levels, and interactions. Hopefully, this greater complexity is rendered more coherent by the recognition of common dimensions which underlie what were formerly seen as unrelated phenomena.

### Criteria for an Integrative Model

Theories are easy to propose—witness the large number of them around—but good theories, and good integrative theories, are another story. What are the qualities of a good integrative theory?

Obviously it should be truly synthetic, capable of including a wide range

of concepts and data from its component models without ignoring major portions of them. Broad inclusiveness is desirable; hence the integrative model may include more dimensions than any of its components. At the same time, the principle of parsimony suggests that it be able to collapse aspects of the individual models along certain dimensions, for example, by showing how different models may reflect different levels or aspects of the same dimension.

The perspective or viewing frame of the integrative model should effectively be a metaperspective. That is, it should provide a new viewpoint from which the perspectives or viewing points of the component models can be identified. Since any viewpoint stems from assumptions and beliefs, those of the component theories should be identified to see how they may account for resultant interpretations and findings.

In view of this role of beliefs and assumptions in determining perspectives, it is important that the integrative model should be as explicit as possible in identifying and describing its own assumptions. In the case of the model described here, the assumptions can be found woven into the previous discussion on the nature of models. These include, for example, the statements that all models are limited and relative (probably partially true, probably partially complementary), that "facts" are partly created by a viewing framework, that integration consists of moving to a metaperspective, etc. Identifying these statements as assumptions does not mean that they are necessarily right or wrong. To us they seem reasonable, but of course that is the nature of theoretical assumptions: they always seem reasonable to those of us who propose them.

Thus we make no claims for objectivity in proposing this integrative model. Indeed, true objectivity is probably impossible for it seems that psychologies reflect personalities, representing the projections of their founders' belief systems upon the Rorschach test we call the world. Their value systems attest to the attractions and aversions, their profundity mirrors the depth of insight, and their scope reflects the range of experience of their proponents. What lies beyond this depth and scope remains unrecognized, unattended, or pathologized. Their description of human nature is but their founders self-image "writ large" upon humankind.

Every theory is a personal confession. It reflects a subjective bias, even in the very questions it selects to ask and how it sets out to answer them. If acknowledged openly and taken seriously into account, this personal bias may prove to be a scientific asset rather than a liability.<sup>12</sup>

We hope to mitigate these factors somewhat by trying to acknowledge our own assumptions and beliefs. For example, we acknowledge that models

proposed here are hypotheses, that the present model is only one of many possible integrations, and that our personal experience, however preliminary, of a wide range of both Western and non-Western psychologies, therapies, meditations, and yogas, has led us to believe that much of what have been called the "mystical psychologies" are "mystical" only because of our lack of acquaintance and research of them. We therefore feel that, given sufficient study, a partial though broad integration, both within and between Western and non-Western systems, is possible. The present chapter is our attempt to suggest preliminary components of such an integration.

The major dimensions that will be covered in this model include consciousness, perception, identity, motivation, defenses, and health. Since the only branch of Western psychology to attempt an integration of Western and non-Western perspectives has been transpersonal, the model presented here shares certain transpersonal orientations.

### Consciousness

Any attempt to integrate Western and non-Western psychologies must view consciousness as a central dimension since it has been the primary concern of Eastern traditions. This contrasts with the history of Western psychology and psychiatry in which consciousness has usually been either excluded from consideration (e.g., radical behaviorism) or examined indirectly through focusing on its contents (e.g., thoughts, emotions, sensations, and behavioral manifestations).

An integrative perspective must acknowledge a broad spectrum of states of consciousness. Both Eastern and Western models recognize our usual waking consciousness, sleep and dream states, as well as various pathological and dysfunctional states such as intoxication, delirium, and various psychoses. However to these the Eastern models add a variety of other states, some of which are said to be "functionally specific" and a few to be true "higher" states. The term "functionally specific" is used to indicate states in which certain capacities are enhanced above and beyond the usual waking condition whereas others are reduced. The term "higher" indicates states possessing all the capacities of the usual waking condition plus additional ones.<sup>13</sup>

Some Asian psychologies contain detailed cartographies and descriptions of these states. For example, Buddhist psychology contains detailed descriptions of the processes involved in attaining, and the phenomenology of, various functionally specific states of extreme concentration and mental imperturbability called *jhanas* as well as true higher states.<sup>14</sup> Because of differences in culture, language, philosophy, and practice, it has traditionally been very difficult to determine the precise relationship between the states

described by one tradition and those described by others. However, it now seems possible to make meaningful comparisons and to abstract some of the underlying commonalities (see Chapter 16).<sup>15</sup> At the farther end of this spectrum lies a family of states variously described as enlightenment, liberation, etc. Actually the farthest reaches or "ultimate state of consciousness" is probably not a state per se but rather the ground of all states.<sup>9,11</sup> Thus an integrative model acknowledges the possibility of the existence of a broad range of states of consciousness from the most severely pathological and dysfunctional, through the usual waking condition, to a range of functionally specific states, intermediate higher states, to enlightenment. Some of these states will be discussed further in the section on identity.

An integrative model must also recognize state dependency which suggests that some functions may be limited by the state in which they occur. This is a concept enunciated thousands of years ago in various non-Western psychologies<sup>16</sup> and recently explored experimentally in the West in both animal<sup>17</sup> and human<sup>13</sup> subjects. The concept is important to any model which encompasses a broad range of states and seeks to indicate relationships among them. For example, in state dependent learning, what is learned in one state may not necessarily be remembered or comprehended in another. Similarly, in state dependent communication, the insights of an individual in a particular state may not be comprehensible to another in a different state. On the other hand, cross state retention suggests that an individual may attain information or insights in one state and retain at least part of them in other states in which they would not normally be accessible.

State dependency is particularly important in any integration of Western and non-Western psychologies since several non-Western disciplines involve specific training in altered states.<sup>15</sup> The limits of cross state communication may therefore apply, and failure to recognize this appears to have led a number of Western investigators to misinterpret and dismiss Eastern claims.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most radical implications of higher states and an integrative model is that, contrary to traditional Western assumptions, our usual waking state may be suboptimal. The perennial psychologies such as Buddhist, Hindu, and Sufi psychologies, are unanimous in agreeing that our usual state is filled to a remarkable and unrecognized extent with a continuous flow of largely uncontrollable thoughts and fantasies which exert an extremely powerful but usually unappreciated influence on perception, cognition, and behavior. Trained self-observation such as that employed in a variety of meditative practices reveals that our usual experience is perceptually distorted by the continuous, automatic, and unconscious blending of input from reality and fantasy in accordance with our needs and defenses. These distortions are discussed in more detail in the section on perception.

We are all prisoners of our minds. This realization is the first step on the journey to freedom.<sup>19</sup>

Viewing our usual state from this expanded context of a spectrum of states of consciousness results in some unexpected implications. The traditional Western model defines psychosis as a distorted perception of reality which does not recognize the distortion. From the perspective of this multiple states model, our usual model fits this definition, being suboptimal, providing a distorted perception of reality, and failing to recognize that distortion. Indeed, any one state of consciousness is necessarily limited and only relatively real. Hence from the broader perspective, psychosis might be defined as entrapment in any single state of consciousness and the failure to recognize its relative and distorted picture of reality.

Since perceptual distortions, insensitivity, and defenses are self-masking, they obscure their own nature and effects. Thus, unless an individual examines his or her own consciousness with meticulous rigor, the true nature of this condition can go unrecognized throughout a lifetime. This claim, though radical from the perspective of traditional Western psychology, has actually been made repeatedly across cultures and centuries by a variety of disciplines whose central claim is that our usual state is suboptimal and distorted yet these distortions can be removed by mental training. These disciplines and their theories have been described as the perennial philosophy,<sup>20</sup> the perennial religion,<sup>21</sup> and the perennial psychology.<sup>4</sup>

In summary, the perennial psychologies suggest that in addition to the states of consciousness which Western psychology usually recognizes there exists a spectrum of other states which are attainable through specific mental training. Certain of these are said to be "functionally specific" or "higher," and it is said that understanding of them by those without direct experience is necessarily limited. Recent Western research and concepts such as state dependency are beginning to make these claims more understandable.

## PERCEPTION

Projection makes perception. The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that. . . . It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. As a man thinketh, so does he perceive. Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world.

Anonymous<sup>22</sup>

To understand the claim that perception is distorted to an unrecognized degree, it is necessary to draw a distinction between awareness and what we

will call here, mind. In this context, *mind* refers to the contents and processes involved in the production of thoughts, emotions, images, memories, and fantasies. In order to provide an integration of Western and Eastern perspectives on perception, it will be necessary to introduce a number of claims about the mind which are widespread in various Eastern psychologies and meditative practices. Many of the claims do not actually run counter to traditional Western assumptions but rather extend them to more pervasive and subtle levels.

Both Western and non-Western psychologies would agree that the mind is continuously active, producing an ongoing stream of mental content. Eastern psychologies have claimed that this continuous creativity is more prolific than Western models recognize and that much of the flux of thoughts, emotions, images, etc., goes unrecognized. Furthermore, the untrained person is said to spend a large percentage of time lost in unrecognized fantasy.<sup>4,6,23</sup> While in the fantasy, the person does not realize that he or she is in it; at the moment one is in it, it appears real. Recognition, if it occurs at all, happens only retrospectively.

A further claim is that the mind is largely outside voluntary control. The continuous stream of mental contents is said to be produced by conditioned automaticity and to trap awareness to an unrecognized degree. Like smokers who feel in control of their habit until they try to stop it, we as individuals without specific mental training are said to be unaware of the extent to which we are controlled by, and unable to control, our own minds. Part of this fragmentation and lack of control of awareness has also been noted by some Western psychologists. Carl Jung<sup>24</sup> remarked that

. . . the so called unity of consciousness is an illusion. It is really a wish-dream. We like to think that we are one; but we are not, most decidedly not. We are not really masters in our house. We like to believe in our energy and in what we can do; but when it comes to a real showdown we find that we can do it only to a certain extent. . . .

Several Western behavioral scientists have reported their amazement, on beginning meditation practice, at discovering the extent of this lack of control.<sup>11,25-30</sup> Thus in the words of Duane Elgin,<sup>30</sup> a social scientist with considerable experience of meditative practices,

We tend not to notice or appreciate the degree to which we run on automatic—largely because we live in an almost constant state of mental distraction. Our minds are constantly moving about at a lightening fast—pace—thinking about the future, replaying conversations from the past, engaging in inner role playing, and so on. Without sustained attention, it

is difficult to appreciate the extent to which we live in an automated, reflexive, and dreamlike reality that is a subtle and continuously changing blend of fantasy, inner dialogue, memory, planning, and so on. The fact that we spend years acquiring vast amounts of *mental content* does not mean that we are thereby either substantially aware of, or in control of, our mental process.

In our usual state of consciousness, this everflowing stream of mindstuff distorts and reduces the sensitivity of perception. When a stimulus enters awareness, it elicits a chain of conditioned associations, emotions, fantasies, etc.,<sup>31,32</sup> and it is these which are experienced rather than the stimulus per se which elicited them. Our inability to differentiate between raw percepts and the mental elaborations which they elicit means that we unknowingly perceive an illusory, fantasy-distorted image of the world.

This illusory distortion has been described for centuries by all the major consciousness disciplines and has been called by many names including "maya" or "samsara." The description of perception as illusory has often been misunderstood as implying that the world does not really exist. Rather, what is implied is that perception is distorted to such an extent that we do not perceive things as they really are, but instead see them colored by our own mental filters and projections. Thus our experience of the world and of ourselves is not a clear perception but rather an actively constructed interpretation or illusion—passive, but actively created and constructed.

Since perception is a function of the attendant state of consciousness, one's view of the world and one's sense of self may shift radically in different states. Thus what was taken to be fixed and absolute in one state may be perceived as relative in another. Experiences of altered states reveal that perception and the sense of self are far more fluid than usually recognized.

This suggests the potential for attaining perception which is clearer and more veridical than that of our usual state, and indeed this is one of the major aims of the consciousness disciplines. As Duane Elgin<sup>30</sup> comments,

The crucial importance of penetrating behind our continuous stream of thought (as largely unconscious and lightening fast flows of inner fantasy-dialogue) is stressed by every major consciousness tradition in the world: Buddhist, Taoist, Hindu, Sufi, Zen, etc. Yet, western cultures have fostered the inclusive understanding that a state of continual mental distraction is in the natural order of things. Consequently, by virtue of a largely unconscious social agreement as to the nature of our inner thought processes we live, individually and collectively, almost totally imbedded within our mental constructive reality.

As Fritz Perls<sup>33</sup> remarked, "I would say the majority of modern man lives in a verbal trance."

Training perception so as to free awareness from entrapment in the distorting influence of mind is a central method employed in many consciousness disciplines. For example, in Buddhist insight meditation, the practitioner is trained to focus bare attention on each stimulus.<sup>14,21,31,32</sup> Meditators state that with practice, they can observe the bare stimulus prior to the elaboration of mental associations to it. With further practice, the number and extent of these elaborations tend to be reduced so that the mind begins to become less reactive and agitated, thus allowing a clearer, less cluttered, and less distorted perception of one's moment-by-moment experience. This perceptual training, when carried to deeper and deeper levels, results in a progressive freeing of perception, thought, and behavior from the uncontrollable, unrecognized, conditioned automaticity which formerly affected one's every waking moment.

When the inner fantasy-dialogue ceases, then awareness is no longer captured, filled, distorted, and reduced by it. There is remarkable unanimity among the consciousness disciplines that at this point whole new realms of experience, perception, concentration, states of consciousness, and sense of self may emerge. Now there is the possibility of entering the "subtle realms" described by Hindu psychology—states in which one becomes aware of ranges of experience whose subtlety or faintness are such that they cannot be sensed above the noise of the usual, by comparison very loud, gross, or intense, inner fantasy-dialogue. Here also is the possibility of states such as the jhanas and samadhi of concentration meditations, the stages of insight of Vipassana meditation, and beyond these the still more refined "causal realms" described by Ken Wilber in his chapter on the evolution of consciousness.<sup>15</sup> This process appears to be an example of "perceptual release," the phenomenon in which the removal of intense stimulation allows the recognition of more subtle phenomena.

Consider the remarkable unanimity of the following quotations (more can be found in Chapter 15) taken from a range of disciplines and cultures.

The fundamental task which gives the key to many realizations is the silence of the mind. . . . All kinds of discoveries are made, in truth, when the mental machinery stops, and the first is that if the power to think is a remarkable gift, the power not to think is even more so.

Satprem<sup>35</sup>

Of all the hard facts of science, I know of none more solid and fundamental than the fact that if you inhibit thought and persevere, you come at length to a region of consciousness below or behind thought, and different

from ordinary thought in its nature and character. A consciousness of quasi-universal quality, and a realization of an altogether vaster self than that to which we are accustomed. And since the ordinary consciousness with which we are concerned in ordinary life is before all things founded on the local little self, it follows that to pass out of that is to die to the ordinary self and the ordinary world. It is to die in the ordinary state, but in another sense, it is to wake up and find that the I, one's real, most intimate self, pervades the universe and all other beings. That the mountains, and the sea, and the stars are a part of one's body, and that one's soul is in touch with the souls of all creatures. It is to be assured of an indestructible and immortal life and of a joy immense and inexpressible.

Edward Carpenter<sup>36</sup>

Whenever the dialogue stops, the world collapses and extraordinary facets of ourselves surface, as though they have been kept heavily guarded by our words.

Castaneda<sup>37</sup>

Thus, in summary, Western<sup>38</sup> and perennial psychologies are in agreement that perception is an active constructive process which yields a less than totally accurate picture of the world. The perennial psychologies extend this to say that the inaccuracies are more subtle, pervasive, and illusion producing than is appreciated without specific mental training.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, they suggest that it is possible to train attention and perceptual processes through specific practices such as meditation so as to greatly reduce or even eradicate these distortions, finally resulting in what Huston Smith<sup>40</sup> calls "the fully realized human being . . . whose doors of perception have been cleansed."

## IDENTITY

Perhaps the most fundamental question we can ask is, "What are we?" Deeper even than the question Who are we? (which essentially asks what type of people we are), What are we? takes us below implicit assumptions into the deepest realms of being. We might say that this question addresses the issue of what exactly it is which assumes itself to be a (particular type of) person.

The answer we give to this question seems awesome in its power to determine our view of both our self and our world. Everything we do, think, or feel, is touched by it, for all behavior seems at least partly based on our beliefs about what we are.

With few exceptions, Western psychology has tended to address the "who" level of this question and has answered in terms of such things as personality, intellectual capacity, etc. This too may be the first response of most

people when asked, "What are you?" Yet this particular range of answers appears to reflect the nature and limitations of our perceptual sensitivity and cultural beliefs, rather than the most fundamental levels of self-knowing.

Like perception in general, it appears that the self-sense is constructed. Furthermore, there appears to be not merely one possible self-sense which can be constructed, or even a narrow range, but rather an awesome breadth of possible identities. For what the perennial psychologies are unanimous in claiming is that as the perceptual processes involved in the formation of our constructed self-sense are recognized, halted, or seen through, which occurs in meditation,<sup>41,42</sup> then a deepening recognition of more and more fundamental levels of self occurs.

It appears, then, that we may have considerably underestimated the possible range of responses to the questions of who and what we are. Indeed, the self-sense appears to be vastly more fluid than previously recognized, perhaps infinitely so. It may be that this self-sense can attach to, or identify with, anything. In the material world, it can become identified with specific objects, the body, the environment, or even the entire universe,<sup>43</sup> and in the mental realm, with any mental content such as thoughts or emotions, or with consciousness itself.<sup>44</sup> Identification is defined here as the process by which consciousness assumes a thing to be self. That is, identification occurs when awareness, the faculty of knowing, does not differentiate itself from the object it knows.<sup>44,45</sup> (When awareness identifies with an object exclusively and differentially, then the me/not-me dichotomy occurs and the isolated, separate self-sense of the existentialist is created.)

One of the major demarcating points between traditional Western assumptions on the one hand, and transpersonal and Eastern perspectives on the other, is a recognition of the process of the identification of awareness with intrapsychic contents and processes. Traditionally, identification has been considered in terms of externals as when a person feels the same as, or like, someone or something else.<sup>44</sup> However, the non-Western perspective, while it recognizes this, also recognizes that awareness can identify with mental contents such as thoughts and emotions.

Furthermore, this type of identification goes unrecognized by most of us including psychologists, therapists, and behavioral scientists, because we are all so involved in it. That is, while one may ask "Who am I?" consensually validated identifications tend to go unrecognized because they are not called into question. Indeed any attempt to question them may meet with considerable resistance from others.

Attempts to awake before our time are often punished, especially by those who love us most. Because they, bless them, are asleep. They think anyone who wakes up, or . . . realizes that what is taken to be real, is a dream, is going crazy.<sup>45</sup>



The process of identification has far-reaching implications. The identification of awareness with mental content renders the individual unconscious of the broader context of consciousness which holds this content. When awareness identifies with mental content, this content becomes the context from which all other mental content and experience are viewed. That is, what was the object of awareness now becomes the subject, the seen becomes an attribute of the seer, and what was being perceived becomes the perspective, framework, and filter from which perception occurs. Thus the content-become-context may now interpret other content, and determine meaning, perception, belief, motivation, and behavior—all in a manner which is consistent with, and reinforces, this context. Furthermore, the context sets in motion psychological processes which also reinforce it.<sup>27</sup>

For example, if the thought "I'm scared" arises, and this thought is observed and seen to be what it is (i.e., just another thought), then it exerts little influence. However, if it is identified with, then the reality at that moment is that the individual is scared and is likely to generate and identify with a whole series of fearful thoughts and emotions, to interpret nondescript feelings as fear, to perceive the world as frightening, and to act in a fearful manner.<sup>46</sup> Thus identification sets in train a self-fulfilling, self-prophetic process in which experience and psychological processes validate the reality of that with which it was identified. For the person identified with the thought "I'm scared" everything seems to prove the reality and validity of his or her fear. Remember that with identification, the person is unaware of the fact that his perception stems from the thought "I'm scared." This thought is now not something which can be seen, rather it is that from which everything else is seen and interpreted. Awareness, which would be transcendent and positionless, has now been constricted to viewing the world from a single self-validating perspective. This is similar to the process which occurs with unrecognized models as described earlier.

We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified.  
We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify.<sup>47</sup>

As long as we are identified with an object, that is bondage.<sup>48</sup>

It may be that thoughts and beliefs constitute the operators or algorithms which construct, mediate, guide, and maintain the identificatory constriction of consciousness and act as limiting models of who we believe ourselves to be. As such, they must be opened to review in order to allow growth. It may be that beliefs are adopted as strategic, defensive decisions about who and what we must be in order to survive and function optimally.

When it is remembered that the mind is usually filled with thoughts with which we are unwittingly identified, it becomes apparent that our usual state

of consciousness is one in which we are, quite literally, hypnotized. As in any hypnotic state, there need not be any recognition of the trance and its attendant constriction of awareness, or any memory of the sense of identity prior to hypnosis. While in the trance, we think we are the thoughts with which we are identified. Put another way, those thoughts from which we have not yet disidentified create our state of consciousness, identity, and reality. As Globus and Globus said in Chapter 14, this internal dialogue "serves to maintain an order we know as the world."<sup>49</sup>

The most commonly assumed identity of most adults is the ego. Presumably this has not always been so, and in *Up from Eden*, Ken Wilber has recently put forward a broad-ranging view of the historical and ongoing evolution of humanity through a sequence of progressive refinements of identity.<sup>50</sup> Ego appears to come into existence when awareness identifies with thought, and this process is described with great clarity by Wilber in "The Evolution of Consciousness" (Chapter 16).<sup>51</sup> Thus the nature of ego is essentially conceptual. Ego might therefore be defined as the self-sense which arises from the identification of awareness with a constellation of thoughts. Ken Wilber<sup>6</sup> describes it as follows:

The ego is a self-concept, a constellation of self-concepts, along with the images, fantasies, identifications, memories, sub-personalities, motivations, ideas and information related or bound to the separate self-concept.

Existential and psychoanalytic schools have pointed out that the ego perceives itself as an isolated entity, unalterably separate from the remainder of the universe, and locked in a perpetual and insurmountable struggle with both psychodynamic forces and existential limits. While it may adjust to, and cope with, these conflicts and limits and their attendant suffering, it can never ultimately escape them at this level of consciousness. Many psychologies recognize this problem but not the possibility of states in which it is not operative, e.g., Freudian psychoanalysis, existentialism, and behaviorism. From this perspective the human condition is seen as a no-exit situation to be met with courage, authenticity, problem solving, and acceptance. These psychologies are in agreement with Buddhism's first noble truth which notes the pervasiveness of suffering, but not with the subsequent truths which describe a way out.

Suffering may attend any state of consciousness where exclusive identification results in a self/not-self dichotomy. As soon as there is a distinction between subject and object, between me and not-me, fear and suffering are inevitable say the consciousness disciplines. In the words of the millenia old Upanishads, "Wherever there is other there is fear." The key to escape is said to lie in the transcendence of this dichotomy.



If transcendence of the self/not-self dichotomy and freedom from suffering are actually possible, then how are they attained? All the major consciousness disciplines offer answers to this question. In fact, teaching the means for escape from suffering constitutes the reason for their existence. The key feature of all of them is mental training in which formerly uncontrolled processes are brought under increasing voluntary control.

All scriptures without any exception proclaim that for attaining Salvation mind should be subdued.<sup>31</sup>

Ramana Maharshi

The mind of a yogi is under his control; he is not under the control of his mind.<sup>32</sup>

Shree Ramakrishna

As this occurs, it induces a sequence of states of consciousness in which awareness disidentifies from more and more subtle mental phenomena. A detailed account of the process is provided by Ken Wilber in Chapter 16.

Finally, states of consciousness may emerge in which identification of awareness with some objects to the exclusion of others is permanently dismantled. When it endures, such a state of consciousness is known by a variety of names such as enlightenment, liberation, etc. Freed of any exclusivity, the me/not-me dichotomy collapses or is transcended. Awareness now experiences itself as both nothing (no thing, i.e., pure awareness) and everything (the entire universe). Detached from any identification with material or mental objects, it now experiences itself as being nonspatial, nowhere and everywhere, and outside time, eternal, always in the unchanging now. That is, shorn of dualism and exclusivity, awareness now experiences itself as transcendent to both time and space, as pure consciousness and yet one with the universe, transcendent to the limitations and suffering which seemed so real, absolute, and inescapable from its former perspective.

In the utmost depths of the human psyche, when all dualism and exclusivity have been dropped, awareness finds no limits to identity and directly experiences itself as beyond both time and space: that which humanity has traditionally called God.

To me God is a word used to point to our ineffable subjectivity, to the unimaginable potential which lies within each of us.<sup>33</sup>

Now we can begin to understand from a psychological perspective some of the statements of the world's great mystics and religious figures, all of whom have been unanimous in claiming that the source of true religious experience

is internal. Note the convergence or "transcendent unity"<sup>34</sup> of religions evidenced in the following statements.

The kingdom of heaven is within you.

Christianity

Look within, thou art the Buddha.

Buddhism

Atman (individual consciousness) and Brahman (universal consciousness) are one.

Hinduism

By understanding the Self all this universe is known.

Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad, 4, 5

God dwells within you as you.

Siddha Yoga

I am God. This is a statement of total humility.

Sufism

He who knows himself, knows his Lord.

Islam (Muhammad)

He who knows himself knows God.

Christianity (St. Clement)

Recalling that our usual self-sense is egoic and hence primarily conceptual or thought based,<sup>35</sup> we can now understand the startling claim which mystics have made for millennia that "who you think you are is a thought in the mind of God." This is reminiscent of William James:<sup>35</sup>

Out of my experience . . . one fixed conclusion dogmatically emerges . . . there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental forces, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea.

## MOTIVATION

The integrative perspective proposed here recognizes a broad hierarchical organization of motivation which encompasses most motives recognized in

Western psychology. This model does not necessarily deny the validity of other psychological models. Rather, it attempts to set them in a broader context which recognizes that behavior is overdetermined (many motives enter into any behavioral outcome), that motivational systems may be organized hierarchically in that motives tend to emerge sequentially, and that this hierarchy includes motives towards "higher" goals such as aesthetics, self-actualization, and self-transcendence.

### The Hierarchy of Needs

This model owes a great deal to Abraham Maslow who was the first Western psychologist to explicitly formulate a hierarchical model encompassing "higher" motives. However, analogous ideas can be found in other schools, both East and West. For example, Gestalt psychology acknowledges that increasingly subtle incomplete gestalts arise and predominate in awareness whenever a preceeding gestalt is completed.

One of Maslow's major contributions was his recognition of the hierarchical organization of needs according to their potency and primacy. He identified a broad range of needs which he felt were present in everyone, and he therefore called them basic or instinctual. The most powerful and prepotent were fundamental survival needs with a clear physiological basis, such as hunger or thirst. When these needs were fulfilled, other less powerful ones such as needs for shelter, sex, affection, and self-esteem could become effective motivators in their turn. Only after these prepotent deficiency or D-needs were filled could more subtle, growth-oriented Being needs, or metaneeds, play a primary motivational role.

To this second group Maslow assigned such uniquely human desires as impulses to freedom, beauty, goodness, unity, justice, and self-actualization. These higher needs are initially weak, subtle, and easily disrupted by adverse environments, attitudes, and habits. For most people, they require considerable nurturing if they are to flourish, but flourish they must if the individual is to find full expression for his or her basic humanity and avoid what Maslow termed the "metapathologies" such as boredom, cynicism, and lack of inspiration.<sup>56</sup>

In ascending this hierarchy the needs appear to shift from clearly physiological to apparently more psychological in nature, from strong to subtle, from prepotent to less potent and more easily disrupted, from spontaneous to requiring cultivation, from deficiency to sufficiency, from egocentric to selfless, from avoidance to approach, from external to internal reinforcement, from field dependence to field independence, and from frequent to rare in occurrence in the population.

### "Higher" Needs

In his later years Maslow added a still higher need beyond self-actualization: namely, the need for self-transcendence.<sup>56,57</sup> In this Maslow saw a drive towards a mode of experiencing and being which transcended the usual egoic states of consciousness and limits of experience and identity, i.e., the drive towards the transpersonal realms. Similar hierarchical models incorporating transcendent components are to be found in a number of non-Western psychologies such as Sufism and Hinduism.

Thus in recent decades there has been an interesting trend in Western psychology towards the recognition of increasingly "higher" motives. Early psychoanalytic formulations emphasized libido. Self-actualization was initially placed at the peak of Maslow's hierarchy, but subsequently gave way to self-transcendence. Thus self-transcendence has been suggested as the summa of human motivation.

However, in examining various non-Western psychologies and consciousness disciplines, another possibility appears. All of these disciplines are in agreement about the motivation of the fully enlightened master, the person firmly ensconced in the highest realms of transcendent states of consciousness, the arahat of Hinayana Buddhism and the bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism, the master of Zen, the jivanmukti of Hinduism, the sage of Taoism, the tzaddik of Hassidic Judaism, the prototypic saint of all traditions. This person, they agree, is totally unmoved by egocentric desires. "There is no motivation without ignorance."<sup>58</sup> Rather, such a person is held to act "in accord with the Tao," that is, to respond effortlessly, appropriately, compassionately, and selflessly to the needs of the situation, in such a way as to most effectively contribute to the well-being of others. In the words of the third Zen patriarch, "Sengtsan" writing in the sixth century, "For the unified mind in accord with the Way all self centered striving ceases."<sup>59</sup> In these rare individuals, it is said that

whatever is, or is thought to be, necessary for sentient beings happens all the time of its own accord.

Gampopa<sup>58</sup> (p. 271)

In these people it seems that selfless service may be the prepotent guiding principle.

Fools think only of their own interest,  
While the Sage is concerned with the benefit of others.  
What a world of difference between them.

Mahayana<sup>58</sup> (p. 195)

In addition to emerging spontaneously in the fully realized master, selfless service may also be consciously cultivated by any individual. As such it can be used as a means of reducing egocentric motivation ("purification") and as a pathway to the transpersonal; it is then called karma yoga, the yoga of service.

Even the motivation towards self-transcendence can apparently be sublimated in favor of selfless service. For example, a major division in Buddhism is between the Hinayana and the Mahayana schools. In the Mahayana tradition, the ideal prototype is the bodhisattva, the individual who renounces the pursuit of his or her personal enlightenment in favor of first facilitating the liberation of others. In the Hinayana tradition on the other hand, the individual is encouraged to strive first for personal liberation, thus eradicating egocentric hindrances in order to become a more effective teacher and instrument of service.

One should not be over-anxious and hasty in setting out to serve others before one hath oneself realized Truth in its fullness; to do so, would be like the blind leading the blind. As long as the sky endureth, so long will there be no end of sentient beings for one to serve; and to every one cometh the opportunity for such service. Till the opportunity come, I exhort each of you to have but one resolve, namely, to attain Buddhahood for the good of all living things.

Milarepa<sup>60</sup>

Thus it is that the highest aim of every sincere yogi, be he Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Taoist, Sufi, or Gnostic Christian, is first to fit himself to become a World-Teacher and then to return to human society.

Evans-Wentz<sup>60</sup>

Thus, whether it emerges spontaneously in the enlightened individual or whether it is consciously cultivated either as a means to, or even in favor of, personal enlightenment, it seems possible that selfless service may warrant a position above self-transcendence as the highest of the hierarchy of motives.

The cultivation or free expression of selfless service suggests a general principle: namely, that the hierarchy may actually reverse such that the highest experienced motive tends to become predominant. Individuals who have either tasted the fruit of higher motives or sufficiently satisfied the lower ones may begin to experience such a shift, finding satisfaction of the lower needs now less fulfilling than the higher. Even an intellectual discovery of the existence, nature, and attainability of higher motives may be sufficient to initiate such a shift, and suggests the importance of disseminating information about their existence. In other cases individuals may engage in a

discipline of one type or another (e.g., meditation, yoga, service, or study) with the specific intention of cultivating higher motives and making them predominant. For example, a strong creative drive may supersede a need for acquiring wealth. Likewise, a desire for transcendence may predominate over a desire for esteem and recognition.

Such a model makes comprehensible some of the concepts which are central to a variety of consciousness disciplines and the esoteric core of the great religions. Among these are statements about "attachment," "purification," "giving up the world," and the ultimately unsatisfying nature of lower needs.

Most such disciplines state that the lower needs can provide no ultimate or permanent satisfaction. Rather, such lower needs as desire for prestige and material possessions are said to result in only transient satisfaction (rapid habituation) with each new acquisition, and to be addicting in that their transiency demands a continual supply of novel possessions and stimuli. The individual is thus dependent for his or her sense of well-being on access to a regular supply of external objects which, in order to counteract the tendency to habituation, should preferably be of increasing intensity or value. Such a situation is obviously self-limiting and ultimately frustrating. Yet the failure to recognize this fact can lead to the familiar syndrome of compulsively increasing consumption and decreasing satisfaction so characteristic of affluent cultures.

This discussion leads automatically to another central concept of many disciplines—namely, "attachment"—for which the closest Western term is addiction. Attachment signifies a condition in which the failure to fulfill a desire results in suffering. For example, if one wants or desires an ice cream but is not attached to having it, then one can be happy and enjoy the ice cream if it arrives but also be quite content if it doesn't. On the other hand, if one is *attached* to having the ice cream, then again one can be happy and enjoy it if it is available, but if it isn't the result will be frustration and pain.

Attachment is held by many disciplines to be a central cause of human suffering. For example, Buddhist psychology states quite explicitly, in the Buddha's second noble truth, that "the cause of suffering is craving." The path to liberation from suffering is said to lie in the third noble truth: reducing craving. The means for this is described in detail in the fourth noble truth as "the eightfold path," a prescription for ethical living and mental training. While stating it less explicitly, a variety of both Western and non-Western psychologies would agree with these principles.

Whenever there is attachment  
Association with it  
Brings endless misery

Gampopa<sup>58</sup>

Whenever we are still attached, we are still possessed; And when one is possessed, it means the existence of something stronger than oneself.

Jung<sup>61</sup>

The power to reduce our wants is all we have to oppose the forces of our lives . . . without it we are dust in the winds.

Castaneda<sup>62</sup>

However, in most cultures, including our Western ones, the lower-order motives predominate and there is little recognition of the existence and attainability of higher ones. Certain lower-order motives such as the acquisition of wealth and many material possessions are culturally valued and reinforced, and attachment to them is regarded as normal and even necessary for psychological well-being.<sup>63</sup> Whether the satisfaction of these desires is viewed in terms of tension release, positive reinforcement, gestalt completion, or other alternate models, Western psychologies have generally confused desire and attachment, and a certain degree of attachment is regarded as normal and necessary for motivation.

From this it can be seen that traditional Western psychologies and cultural beliefs differ significantly and centrally from non-Western psychologies and the consciousness disciplines. The latter differentiate between desires and the attachment to fulfillment of desires, stating that attachments represent the source of suffering. The indiscriminate satisfaction of lower-order needs is held to reinforce attachments, producing temporary satisfaction but a residual tendency towards stronger attachments and resultant suffering. Psychological well-being is thus seen as involving the relinquishment of attachments.

If you drop motivation there is no frustration in life. Then nothing can make you unhappy. . . . A Buddha becomes a Buddha only when all desires have disappeared. If you ask what motivates a Buddha you are asking him an absurd question. Nothing can motivate him. That's why he is a Buddha.

Rajneesh<sup>64</sup>

Higher-order motives however are held to be ultimately less entrapping, although it is said to be quite possible to become attached to desires such as self-transcendence and to suffer accordingly. In the words of the sixth century Zen monk Sengtsan,<sup>65</sup> "Even to be attached to the idea of enlightenment is to go astray." However what is different is that behavior motivated by such higher-order desires tends to ultimately reduce the number and strength of attachments rather than reinforce them. For example, it is

reported by many individuals and disciplines that for persons attempting to train the mind and develop transcendent states of consciousness, the pull of such attachments as wealth, power, and fame is now experienced as agitating, disruptive, and hence aversive. Thus they are likely to be voluntarily and happily relinquished without any sense of sacrifice.

This allows an understanding of the concepts of "purification" and "letting go the world." From this integrative hierarchical model of motivation, "purification" can be seen as a conscious attempt to cultivate higher desires, especially those aimed at self-transcendence, and to extinguish lower ones. This is usually done by the simultaneous and long-term frustration and nonreinforcement of lower-order attachments (extinction), emulating advanced practitioners (modeling), and the practice of behaviors and attitudes which are increasingly consistent with the desired motives (successive approximation).

Since lower- and higher-order desires are externally and internally oriented, respectively, purification involves relinquishment of seeking external objects, situations, and reinforcement as the primary sources of satisfaction (letting go the world), in favor of internal reinforcers. From other perspective and models, this transition may be seen as involving shifts from gross to subtle realms (Hinduism), from field dependence to field independence (perception theory), from predominantly egocentric to predominantly selfless motivation, from attachment to nonattachment, and from environmental to self-control.

The hierarchy of motives and the concept of purification also relate to the Buddhist model of mental health. The central constituents of this model are the so-called mental factors. These are said to be psychological factors which determine the relationship between consciousness and its stimuli. For example, the mental factor of greed is said to result in a state of consciousness in which the individual tends to grasp and cling to the stimulus. The factor of aversion results in a state in which consciousness seeks to avoid awareness of the stimulus. Most systems list some 50-odd mental factors of which some are said to be associated with psychological health and others, such as greed and aversion, are said to be unhealthy (see Chapter 9).<sup>14</sup>

Healthy and unhealthy factors are said to counteract one another by a type of reciprocal inhibition. Healthy factors include some motives which clearly belong at the upper end of the hierarchy, e.g., compassion, loving kindness, and altruistic joy, the joy which occurs with awareness of another's pleasure. Certain unhealthy factors clearly correspond to lower-order motives, e.g., avarice.

Purification and growth in the Buddhist tradition is said to involve "skillful means," the adoption of those behaviors, attitudes, motives, and meditative practices prescribed by the eightfold path. This path is designed

to cultivate healthy mental factors and inhibit unhealthy ones, a goal that could also be described as cultivating the higher-order needs and inhibiting the lower.

### The Major Human Motive

The nature of motivation has been a central concern for most psychologies, which have frequently centered on the question, What is the central human motive? Many have assumed that there is one fundamental motive and, having settled on what they believe this to be, have interpreted other motives as expressions, distortions, or denials of this fundamental drive. In doing so, different schools of psychology have thus focused on different levels of the hierarchy of needs. For example, Freud assumed sexual libido was the prime motivator of human behavior; Adler felt it was superiority-esteem striving; Becker thought it was heroics, the desire for central importance and "cosmic significance." While not denying the role of other motives, humanistic psychologists have emphasized that even the most neurotic defensiveness represents unskillful thwarted attempts towards self-actualization. For Carl Rogers,<sup>45</sup> "the basic actualizing tendency is the only motive which is postulated in this system." Transpersonalists have recognized the pull towards self-transcendence, while behaviorists have tended to focus on reinforcers more than on the nature of the desires with which they interact.

In general, there has been a tendency for each school to recognize and acknowledge as valid and independently real, motives lying below theirs on the hierarchy. On the other hand, they have tended to deny the independent validity of, and to explain and diagnose away, motives above their own. For example, in psychoanalysis the drive towards self-actualization might be perceived as a sublimation or defense against repressed sexuality, while some humanistic psychologists might deny the independent validity of the pulls towards self-transcendence and selfless service.

On the other hand, some Western (e.g., Jungian) and non-Western psychologies view the fundamental human motivator as essentially open, formless, transcendent, not attached to any particular object, a kind of free-floating available energy. In the perennial psychology, specific needs are said to represent constrictive expressions of the objectless transcendent energy, which is focused, constricted, shaped, and funneled towards specific objects. These then function as inherently less satisfying, substitute gratifications for the transcendent.

We thus have two divergent sets of views. In the traditional Western set, a specific motive is often seen as primary and others as secondary expressions of it, yet schools differ in what they see as the primary need. In the Eastern set, the primary component is seen as essentially formless and transcendent

yet capable of expression as any specific motive. How are we to integrate these divergent perspectives?

Western psychologies clearly agree that there are many things that most of us desire but there is little agreement on what we desire most. Here we must ask a radical question. Is it really a thing or object that we desire? Is it really sex, power, prestige, cosmocentricity, self-actualization that we want, *per se*, or is it the state of consciousness and affect that they produce in us? Have we confused the object and the state of mind which the object elicits? For example, would one want sex if it elicited a state of deep depression? At the opposite extreme, would one want sex if one were already blissfully happy? This latter question suggests one reason why the Eastern traditions say that desires such as sex and power tend to extinguish as one begins to experience the extreme pleasure of transcendent states. That is, there is little desire for objects, activities, and experiences which elicit states of mind that one is already experiencing.

The next question is, What is the state of consciousness and accompanying affect that is most strongly desired? Simple logic would suggest a state of total positivity, of total bliss. Here we are in agreement with the perennial psychology which says that is exactly what is desired. That state and its attributes are described in many ways, but one of the most familiar is *sat-chit-ananda*, translated as total unbounded unlimited awareness, being, and bliss.<sup>46</sup> This is the condition occurring in the states of nirvana, formless jhana, samadhi, fana, etc. We are now in a position to suggest an integrating answer to the question which has divided so many schools of Western psychology: What is the fundamental human motive, what is it that men and women most deeply want? The answer is simple: a totally positive state of consciousness.

Eastern psychologies are unanimous in agreeing that this state of *sat-chit-ananda* can only be attained through mental training. It cannot be elicited or obtained by means of any object or thing. If this is so, why do most of us spend so much of our lives struggling to acquire objects, persons, or experiences which are so much less fulfilling? Why do we spend our lives desperately attached to what are, by comparison, relatively trivial concerns? Several answers suggest themselves.

Failing to appreciate that we really want the states of mind and not the objects which elicit them, we look outside rather than within for our sources of satisfaction. Unable to control our own minds to any significant degree, we have no experience, and in Western cultures usually no knowledge, of any transcendent states except orgasm and occasional brief peak experiences.

We seek then those stimuli which elicit the most positive experiences we know and think we can attain. However, as Norman O. Brown points out, "Mankind is unconscious of its real desires, and therefore unable to obtain

satisfaction."<sup>67</sup> The paradox, according to Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj,<sup>68</sup> is that "you do not ask for too much but for too little." Our pleasures are partial and substitute gratifications, and leave us with a sense, no matter how subtle, of unsatisfactoriness. This corresponds to the Buddha's first noble truth which stated that life is inherently unsatisfying for the untrained mind.

As soon as one desire is satisfied, another arises to take its place. The perennial psychologies are unanimous in agreeing that desires can be insatiable. Desires are likened metaphorically to an all-consuming fire, or a treadmill in which the pursuit itself maintains the illusion that one could be happy "if only one had. . . ." It seems one can never get enough of what one doesn't really want and that no *thing* can ever be fully satisfying. Satisfaction is said to come only to the person who recognizes the futility of looking outside him or herself for the source of satisfaction, who frees the mind from attachments to substitute gratifications and brings it under voluntary control, free from the distorting effects of uncontrolled fantasy-dialogue. The natural experience of such a mind, it is said, is that which is most desired, namely *sat-chit-ananda*.

### Is the Hierarchy of Motives a Hierarchy of Desires, Needs, or Attachments?

Having differentiated desires from attachments to fulfilling desires, we can examine more closely the nature of the motives discussed in the hierarchy of motives. To what extent do these motives represent true needs whose lack of satisfaction will be pathogenic, to what extent do so-called needs derive from attachment, and to what extent do they represent only desire or wanting independent of need or attachment?

Maslow called his model a hierarchy of needs, arguing that the fulfillment of both lower needs and metaneeds was necessary for the avoidance of pathology and the development of the fullest human potentials. The failure to satisfy lower needs led to obvious physical and psychological pathology. For the metaneeds he suggested the existence of metapathologies such as loss of meaning and direction, cynicism, and anomie.

The question then arises as to whether the failure to fulfill the self-transcendent and selfless service motives also results in metapathologies. Here we are outside the realm of traditional Western psychological theorizing and research. We can, however, examine some of the non-Western psychologies in which there has been extensive discussion of this question, especially with regard to self-transcendence.

What we find in these psychologies is a broad consensus of far-reaching implications. The fulfillment of the drive towards self-transcendence is

equivalent to the attainment of those states of consciousness described earlier as enlightenment.

From the perspective of those states, the absence of self-transcendence results in identification with the ego and its sense of isolation, aloneness, and angst. In this view, *all* states short of transcendence are viewed as relatively pathological, and the motivation towards transcendence would be labeled as a true need whose nonfulfillment results in the pathology and suffering of *maya* or *samsara*.

When we ask to what extent the strength of individual motives, and hence their position in the hierarchy, springs from desire and to what extent from attachment, we are on difficult grounds. The concept of attachment is so new to Western psychology that we can find no information here. Nor to our knowledge are the relative strengths of the two in determining overall motivation explicitly differentiated in non-Western systems. Presumably the two factors interact, but how is less certain.

One source of possible preliminary information is the phenomenological reports of advanced meditators and of individuals who are supposedly free of attachments. They suggest that desires without attachment function more as signs or indicators of need, rather than having any inherent compelling power. The sense of compulsion or being driven is said to be a function of attachment.

### DEFENSES

Our prevailing cultural beliefs about defenses are largely psychoanalytic in nature. In general, defenses are held to be universal, essential, and part of a necessary, continuous, vigilant, self-monitoring to guard against an essentially untrustworthy self-nature. Some models hold that all motivation is basically defensive, and that conflict and defenses are essential to motivation and creativity. However, other perspectives are possible. In order to examine them fully it is necessary to first examine the fundamental nature, cause, and aim of defenses.

Let us begin with a definition as follows: defenses are processes in which we attempt to protect what we think we are by reducing or distorting awareness. Like all behavior, defenses originate from our beliefs about who and what we are. We defend whatever we think we are, our self-image or identity, against whatever we think we are not, including objectified, alienated parts of our psyche. We especially defend any perceived deficits or vulnerabilities in what we assume ourselves to be. Since most of us assume ourselves to be an ego, that is what we defend, and we defend it against anything and everything nonegoic, both intra- and extrapsychic.

### Categorization of Defenses

Let us now consider how we can categorize defenses. Here there are four main dimensions to be considered.

1. What is defended (this is always an aspect of the self-image or identity, i.e., that which one thinks one is)
2. What is being defended against
3. The mode of distortion of awareness
4. Intensity of defense

### Reducing and Distorting Awareness

One of the characteristics of defenses used in the definition was that they employ reductions or distortions in awareness. This differentiates them from more adaptive coping strategies which attain their ends without compromising awareness.

While it is probably true that all defenses exert both reducing and distorting effects, they differ in the relative amounts of these effects. Thus, for example, repression and denial clearly operate predominantly by reducing awareness. On the other hand, displacement and projection show marked distorting effects.

It is possible to rank defenses in a hierarchical order depending on the degree to which they compromise awareness. For example, rationalization involves explaining behavior in socially acceptable terms and tends to result in relatively little distortion. However, at the other end of the scale, denial involves a blotting out of reality, a traumatic reduction in awareness. A number of studies<sup>69-72</sup> have reported that healthier individuals tend to employ defenses which result in milder compromises of awareness, whereas more severe pathology is associated with more frequent use of grosser defenses.

The most important criterion which determines whether a defense is relatively sophisticated or primitive is the amount of reality testing the defense retains.

Giobacchini<sup>73</sup> (p. 29)

From this discussion, it is possible to point to some bridges between non-Western and our traditional Western conceptualizations of defenses. In the consciousness disciplines, the major problem confronting humanity is said to be distorted and reduced awareness resulting in suboptimal states of consciousness. The task of these disciplines is, very simply, to enhance

awareness to optimal levels. What reduces awareness and what must be counteracted by these disciplines are defenses which have been mapped and categorized in considerably more detail by our traditional Western psychologies than by the non-Western traditions.

Again, according to the Buddhist model of mental factors,

Of the fourteen basic unhealthy factors the major perceptual factor is delusion, a perceptual cloudiness causing misperception of the object of awareness. Delusion is seen as the fundamental source of unhealthy mental states.<sup>74</sup>

Delusion then, in this model, corresponds to a basic tendency towards misperception which underlies distortions of awareness produced by defenses.

In this system, delusion is counteracted by the major healthy factor of insight or understanding, which is "clear perception of the object as it really is." Delusion and insight cannot coexist in a single mental state. Thus, meditative training in the Buddhist system places great emphasis on the practice and cultivation of insight.

### Creator/Victim of Defenses

A close examination of the dynamics of defenses suggests that they are actively, intentionally, and specifically created. Yet we perceive ourselves as their passive experiencers and helpless victims rather than as their creators.

Two possible explanations for this lack of awareness suggest themselves. The first is that defenses may originate in deep levels of the unconscious and hence remain inaccessible to us. Another possibility is that the awareness-compromising nature of defenses involves an active repression of awareness of their creation. There is some evidence from the consciousness disciplines that the latter perspective is correct. In deep meditation it is possible to observe an extraordinarily rapid process by which stimuli are recognized and evaluated for their threat potential, and defenses are chosen and constructed.<sup>26,27</sup> Similarly, some of the consciousness disciplines state that defenses are created intentionally but that the awareness of this process is repressed. For example, the following quotation is taken from an anonymous mystical Christian text:

Defenses are not unintentional, nor are they made without awareness. They are secret, magic wands you wave when truth appears to threaten what you would believe. They seem to be unconscious but because of that rapidity with which you choose to use them. In that second, even less, in



which the choice is made, you recognize exactly what you would attempt to do, and then proceed to think that it is done.

Who but yourself evaluates a threat, decides escape is necessary, and sets up a series of defenses to reduce the threat that has been judged as real? All this cannot be done unconsciously. But afterwards, your plan requires that you must forget you made it, so it seems to be external to your own intent; a happening beyond your state of mind, an outcome with a real effect on you, instead of one effected by yourself.

It is this quick forgetting of the part you play in making your "reality" that makes defense seem to be beyond your own control. But what you have forgot can be remembered, given willingness to reconsider the decision which is doubly shielded by oblivion. Your not remembering is but the sign that this decision still remains in force, as far as your desires are concerned. Mistake not this for fact. Defenses must make facts unrecognizable. They aim at doing this, and it is this they do.

Anonymous<sup>75</sup> (pp. 250-251)

### What Are We Defending?

We defend what we believe ourselves to be. Since most of us assume ourselves to be our ego, or more precisely our persona or acceptable self-image, that is what we defend.

Let us now recall the earlier discussion of the fundamental nature of the ego as a self-concept. That is, the ego is a conceptual self-image, a constellation of thoughts about the attributes we assume ourselves to be. At the most fundamental level then, *what we defend are our thoughts about who and what we are.*

As discussed earlier, the sense of self as ego appears to be created when consciousness identifies exclusively with thought. Moreover, precise trained observation such as in advanced meditation reveals that there is no abiding ego but rather a continuous shifting flux or succession of thoughts. The sense of a solid, permanent, and relatively unchanging ego or self is experienced as a result of imprecise perception and hence is fundamentally illusory. This is a key concept of most consciousness disciplines.<sup>14,23</sup>

This sense of self as ego therefore reflects a compromised awareness, and we then compromise awareness further in order to defend this illusory ego. This then may be the fundamental nature of defenses: *that they are distortions of awareness designed to protect distortions of awareness—illusions defending illusion!*

If the ego is a product of, and is maintained by, distortions of awareness, and if such distortions are the modus operandi of defenses, then is the ego itself a defense or defense system? Most Western developmental psycholo-

gies agree that the ego is constructed as a coping strategy. Could we argue then that the ego is that constructed self-sense which we believe we need to be in order to cope optimally?

If this is so why would we not construct a self-sense which was perfect, self-assured, and conflict free? The answer may lie in the belief systems that we adopt. The vast majority of us introject numerous limiting beliefs about who and what we are, can be, and what we need to do and be in order to survive and cope. Once these limiting beliefs are accepted, then the ego constructed in response to them may represent a perfectly logical response, an apparently appropriate self-construction for dealing with reality as it is believed to be. Within the context and matrix of the psychological reality created by our overall belief system, we may construct a subset of concepts and beliefs about who and what we are and what we need to believe in order to cope most effectively. Furthermore, once this ego self-sense is constructed, then the specific pattern of defenses which the individual creates to protect it may also follow quite logically and consistently. The total patterning of distortions of awareness, of both the ego self-sense and the defenses designed to protect it, may therefore represent perfectly logical responses to reality as it is believed to exist. From within the thought system each step may seem not only logical and appropriate but optimal.

You cannot evaluate an insane belief system from within it. Its range precludes this. You can only go beyond it, look back from a point where sanity exists and *see the contrast*. Only by this contrast can insanity be judged as insane.

Anonymous<sup>75</sup> (p. 164)

### What Do We Defend Against?

We defend ourselves against anything which we perceive as threatening the survival or integrity of our self-image. Potentially this includes anything conceived to be "not-self," including alienated components of our psyche.

Deeper analysis into the fundamental nature of the mental processes involved in defense leads to some radical conclusions. The first question we must ask is, "What is it we defend against?" The answer is one which will be surprising, even unbelievable, to some and perhaps perfectly obvious to others, particularly those who have explored any of the non-Western psychologies or personally examined their own mental processes under the microscope of meditation. For what these divergent sources of information point to is that we do not defend ourselves against what actually exists at any given moment. That is, we do not defend ourselves against reality but rather

against our interpretations and expectations of it, against our thoughts, fantasies, interpretations, and projections about the past and the future.

Let us take fear as a cogent example since fear is perhaps the primary emotional motivator for defense. At first glance it seems obvious that what we fear are aspects of reality, but a few moments' thought, and particularly a period of trained intensive introspection, reveals that we do not fear reality but rather our thoughts and fantasies about the possible future effects of that reality on us. What we fear are our own mental products, our own thoughts! Thus we are drawn to the far-reaching conclusion that both what we defend and what we defend against are none other than the creations of our own mind. We defend those thoughts we assume to be self against those we assume to be not-self.

### The Cost of Defenses

Much has been written about the cost of defenses. Anxiety, fear, perceptual insensitivity, and symptoms of every kind are but some of the obvious effects. Here we will not go further into those costs which have been so fully described elsewhere. Rather, we will examine certain aspects which have not been clearly recognized in traditional models.

Defenses function by escape-avoidance learning. That is, we learn to reduce our experience of aversive stimuli by avoiding or escaping from them. One of the characteristics of escape-avoidance learning is that by virtue of its effectiveness it is very long lasting.<sup>76</sup> We can be so successful in avoiding experiences which we once found threatening that we may not give ourselves a chance to reexperience them and find out whether they remain threatening. Defenses therefore perpetuate the belief in the existence of vulnerability, illusory deficits, the aversiveness of the stimuli against which we defend, and the belief that defenses are necessary. *Defenses may therefore maintain the very deficits they are meant to protect.*

### The State Specific Nature of Defenses

In our traditional Western psychological models, we have usually assumed defenses to be an inescapable part of human existence. However, in the non-Western psychologies we find frequent suggestions that defenses may be state specific. In those states where awareness no longer identifies exclusively with some aspects of self or reality to the exclusion of others, defenses are said to no longer operate.

In advanced stages of the consciousness disciplines, defenses and their attendant distortions of awareness are gradually pared away, the ego is recognized as a limited and illusory self-sense, and awareness starts to detach

from this exclusive identity with ego to a new, more encompassing self-sense. This process is detailed in Chapter 16.

In the most extreme cases of detachment, such as various states of satori or nirvana, awareness no longer exclusively identifies with anything. With no exclusive identification, there is no dichotomy between self and not-self. There is only pure awareness which identifies itself with no thing, and because there is now no dichotomy, also with everything. Being no thing there is nothing to defend, being everything there is nothing to defend against. "Who is NOTHING will be afraid of no thing."<sup>77</sup> Indeed, with the realization of this state, there is the recognition that there never was anything that needed defense, the former self-sense and its perceived limitations and vulnerabilities are now recognized as illusory. Defenses are now seen as not only superfluous but as impediments to clear awareness and well-being.

Insights of this nature may underlie some of the long-lasting beneficial effects reported to follow even very brief transcendental states such as satori or peak experiences.<sup>76,78</sup> For example, even an instant of direct experience of the state of nirvana is said to permanently eradicate the belief in the existence of a solid, permanent ego and to result in corresponding personality changes (see Chapter 9).

Thus, defenses may not be the universal, essential, and creative coping devices they are sometimes thought to be. Rather, they may represent coping strategies designed to maintain a self-sense constructed in response to limiting and distorting beliefs about who and what we are and need to be. In states of consciousness and well-being in which these beliefs are recognized as incorrect, or when the me/not-me dichotomy is transcended, defenses may be recognized as superfluous and counterproductive maintainers of an unnecessarily constricted self-sense.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Having presented a preliminary integrative model of the person, how can we use this to gain some insight into the nature of psychological well-being? At first glance it seems relatively simple. Theoretically, we simply examine the model and describe the positive ends of the dimensions which the model suggests. Experimentally, we examine groups of people, identify the characteristics of the most healthy, and see how they fit with the theoretical predictions. However, in both cases it is obvious that assumptions have already been made as to what health is. How else could we identify the healthy subpopulation? So it seems that we bring unexamined assumptions to our attempts to describe models of health, a point detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

We therefore begin our examination of psychological well-being by prob-

ing one of the most fundamental assumptions of all and asking the question, What is it that is healthy? We have seen that our usual concepts of what we are dissolve upon deeper examination, and we therefore approach a model of health in terms of the deeper structures which such examination reveals. For example, to define health in terms of personality types as most Western psychologies have done is clearly insufficient. Remember that who we experience ourselves to be in the ultimate depths of our being, when all constricting limitations and exclusive identifications have been dropped, is both no thing or pure awareness, and everything, or the entire universe, transcendent to space, form, and time. From this realm of identity we can acknowledge a corresponding realm of very different possibilities for defining health. From this perspective, ego and personality are viewed as either subcomponents of self or illusory identifications. They do not define health at this transpersonal level.

Thus what we experience ourselves to be in the depths of the psyche is clearly transcendent to any dimension or concept of health. Like so many, perhaps all, subjective dichotomies, that of health and illness collapses in the deepest levels of being. In other words, who we experience ourselves to be behind our selective and partial identifications is beyond both health and illness, indeed beyond all definition. We are what we are, and any attempted definition, as the sages of the consciousness disciplines have told us for centuries, is meaningless.

Such paradoxes are familiar to those who explore the consciousness disciplines since paradox commonly results from comparing observations from different perspectives and levels. It is sometimes said that the twin lions which guard many Eastern temples represent confusion and paradox, and that the person who would have true wisdom must be willing to pass through both. Let us see how we can clarify this paradox of the nature of psychological well-being by integrating perspectives and levels.

If, as the perennial psychology claims, our true nature is pure awareness, transcendent to all definitions and dichotomies including that of health/illness, then what are we to make of the vast and incomprehensible amount of suffering which human beings endure and of our usual concepts of psychopathology and well-being? How are we to integrate these apparently radically oppositional viewpoints of Eastern and Western psychologies? An answer seems possible by contrasting the nature of the self which these psychologies assume to be real.

For the perennial psychology only the state of pure transcendent awareness is consistent with any true definition of mental health; all else is pathological. That is, all states of consciousness in which awareness undergoes selective, constricted identification are regarded as pathological. The result is seen as a case of mistaken identity (i.e., the ego). Awareness can

experience itself as transcendent, unconditioned, unattached, and enjoying unlimited being, awareness, and bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). However, awareness can also mistakenly and illusorily experience itself at the mercy of the distorting and suffering mind-body system and as a victim of emotion, thought, and sensation. This is the defining characteristic of psychopathology according to the perennial psychology.

Our traditional Western perspective, on the other hand, usually takes the ego to be the true self. Health is therefore logically defined in terms of the ego's adjustment and coping with its perceived nature and limitations. Western and non-Western discussions of health are therefore operating from different identity baselines, and many apparent contradictions and paradoxes can be attributed to this fact. In both systems, major pathology is seen as a function of disturbances in what is taken to be our true self. In both systems, a constriction of the self-sense through exclusive identification is viewed as pathological. For example, in the model of Carl Jung, when unfavorable aspects of the ego are denied and alienated as the shadow, what is left is a shrunken self-sense: the persona. It is thus possible to recognize a spectrum of states of identity and consciousness, at each level of which constriction of the self-sense represents pathology.<sup>4</sup>

From this it follows that movement towards health will be viewed differently by Eastern and Western systems. In the West, changes in psychological well-being are almost invariably measured in terms of ego or personality change. From the Eastern perspective, on the other hand, health is seen most fundamentally as a shift in identity away from ego. Here, ego and personality change may be regarded as useful or necessary preliminaries and facilitators but are seen as of secondary importance to this shift. From this perspective, our usual egoic state of consciousness is seen as a *dream* (*maya*, *samsara*), and the various psychopathologies with which we are familiar in the West are regarded as nightmares. The well-adjusted ego and the functional personality may indeed be less painful and more functional but at bottom remain a happy dream. Since one can awaken from any type of dream, it is not always necessary to change it. As the perennial philosophy would have it, "There is nothing to do, nothing to change, nothing to be." On the other hand, certain dreams are usually easier to awaken from than others. The aim of the consciousness disciplines could be described as developing lucid dreaming in which one knows that one dreams and is able to create that dream from which awakening is most easy.

Let us now turn to the integrative model of the person as outlined earlier and attempt to define the characteristics of those dimensions associated with well-being.

The first two dimensions of the model were consciousness and perception. Enhanced voluntary control of mental processes, which includes simple non-

interfering awareness or mindfulness (Krishnamurti's choiceless awareness), would probably be a hallmark of well-being. This control might extend to a range of psychophysiological processes as in some of the reports of voluntary control of cardiovascular and other systems.<sup>41</sup> A less extreme example of this is the simple relaxation response.

One of the skills of an advanced practitioner of a consciousness discipline such as meditation is the ability to enter and hold specific states at will. For example, the expert meditator who is proficient in directing attention may be able to elicit a range of states of extreme concentration, known as jhanas in Buddhist psychology or samadhi in Hindu traditions, and to move between various states within this general family of concentrative conditions.

In addition to being able to enter a wider range of states, the very healthy individual may be able to elicit a wider range of functionally specific and true higher states and to use them to further enhance well-being. For example, Buddhist psychology provides detailed instructions for inducing states characterized by the predominance of mental factors such as compassion, loving kindness, or joy, and using them to counteract personality traits such as greed or anger.<sup>41</sup> Thus the attainment of such experiences can be used as a tool for further purification.

In the area of perception, attributes of health might include sensitivity, clarity, and *relative freedom from distortion*. "The fully realized human is one whose doors of perception have been cleansed."<sup>40</sup> Since these distortions appear to arise from the largely uncontrolled and unrecognized internal dialogue and fantasy, it might be expected that psychological well-being and its concomitant perceptual enhancement would be accompanied by a greater sensitivity to, and control of, this stream of dialogue and fantasy. This is indeed a common aim of most consciousness disciplines and is equivalent to stopping the internal dialogue which Maria and Gordon Globus<sup>49</sup> describe as a central component of the training of a man of knowledge.

Most psychologies of both East and West are unanimous in agreeing that perception is not a passive registration of reality but rather an active constructive process.<sup>38</sup> Since different states of consciousness may reveal different pictures of reality, it follows that we learn to construct a reality, not *the* reality. However, most of us learn to construct only one "reality," see it as "the truth," become attached to it, defend it, and panic if we experience perceptual shifts.<sup>26,52</sup> Nevertheless, it is clearly possible to cultivate other perceptual perspectives. For example, certain consciousness disciplines train their practitioners to view the world in selective ways, such as seeing all people as fundamentally loving. Such perceptual shifts also occur as concomitants of the states of consciousness which these disciplines elicit.

In summary then, we might expect extreme psychological well-being to be associated with certain perceptual characteristics. We might predict en-

hanced clarity, domination by positive mental factors, reduced attachment to any one viewpoint, and a greater range, fluidity, and voluntary control of perceptual perspectives (*multiperspectivism*).

In the earlier discussion on consciousness, it was pointed out that from the perspective of a multiple states model our usual state of consciousness fits the definition of psychosis, being suboptimal, providing a distorted perception of reality, and failing to recognize that distortion. Since any one perceptual perspective and its attendant state of consciousness are necessarily limited and only relatively real, from the broader perspective psychosis might be defined as attachment to, or being trapped in, any single state of consciousness or perception.<sup>23,52</sup> Thus the ability to perceive clearly, without attachment to any one perspective, represents awakening from psychosis.

We grow up with one plane of existence we call real. We identify totally with that reality as absolute, and we discount experiences that are inconsistent with it. . . . What Einstein demonstrated in physics is equally true of all other aspects of the cosmos: all reality is relative. Each reality is true only within given limits. It is only one possible version of the way things are. There are always multiple versions of reality. To awaken from any single reality is to recognize its relative reality.

Ram Dass<sup>52</sup> (p. 21)

## Identity

For identity, perhaps the most relevant dimension for health would be the degree of conscious and choiceful relinquishment of self-other dualism. In most cases this would involve a choiceful inclusivity of identification in which what was formerly seen as other is now identified as self. That is, the more inclusive one's identity, the greater is the degree of health that would be expected. It should be noted that this inclusiveness involves both intra- and extrapsychic components. Intrapsychically we would expect that the individual who has recognized, owned, and integrated the shadow would be healthier than the person who has denied it. Similarly the individual who has recognized, owned, and integrated multiple personas (the social masks which we display to the world) and subpersonalities would be healthier than someone locked into a single one.

The perennial psychology extends this expansion of identity to the entire universe. The more highly developed individual is seen as one who identifies with others, with humanity at large, and with the cosmos rather than with self as an isolated entity. Ultimately the self-sense is said to transcend all dualisms and result in an all-encompassing sense of *tat tvam asi* (I am that

also). At this level there comes the final recognition that, in the words of Norman O. Brown,<sup>82</sup>

The rents, the tears, splits and divisions, are mind made: They are not based on the truth but on what the Buddhists call *illusion*.

The concept of the healing of self-other splits as central to growth is found in a diverse range of psychological systems. This is the movement "from separation to oneness," one of the "classical metaphors of transformation."<sup>83</sup> The process is one of integrating and blending dichotomies, the classical *coincidentia oppositorum*, the alchemical *coniunctio*, and the perennial psychologies' transcendence of dualism. As Wilber pointed out in "Where It Was, There I Shall Become," the process is also consistent with a range of Western therapies, e.g., Freudian, Jungian, and Gestalt. Freud stated<sup>84</sup> that he "decided to assume the existence of only two basic instincts, *Eros* and the destructive instinct. . . . The aim of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities." For Plato,<sup>85</sup> "this becoming one instead of two is the very expression of mankind's need. . . . and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love."

This unification usually occurs by stages. For example, the first alchemical level is that of the *unio mentalis* (mental union),<sup>86</sup> corresponding to Wilber's<sup>42</sup> integration of persona and shadow; secondly, the *unio in corpore* and Wilber's mind-body or centaur level; and finally, the union of the individual with the *unus mundus* or Wilber's level of merger with the environment or cosmos.

Speaking of the difficulty that many Westerners experience in accepting the validity of this last level, Carl Jung<sup>87</sup> wrote:

I have studied these psychic processes under all possible conditions and have assured myself that the alchemists as well as the great philosophies of the East are referring to just such experiences, and that it is chiefly our ignorance of the psyche if these experiences appear "mystic."

Paradoxically this same realization may be attained by a process of progressive disidentification. For example in one technique of jana yoga, the practice which employs a refinement of discriminating intellect, one may minutely observe one's experience, noting that no component of experience contains a "self." This is the path of "neti, neti" (I am not this, not this), in which one progressively detaches the self-sense from the elements of experience with which it had formerly identified. By this process, said to be one of the most rapid but also one of the most demanding paths, one may eventually disrupt all self-other dualisms and arrive at the same nondualistic state

of consciousness as revealed by the opposite path. This is an example of the adage that all paths converge at the top of the mountain.

### Motivation

We would expect healthier individuals to be motivated more by higher-order needs and less by basic survival and security ones. Pulls towards self-actualization, self-transcendence, and selfless service might predominate along with concomitant behaviors and experiences such as ethicality, compassion, and commitment to humanitarian concerns. Maslow<sup>88</sup> pointed out that the lower-order needs were basically deficiency motivated, while the higher order needs or metaneeds were what he termed "being" needs or values. He suggested that when deficiency motivation predominates, an individual tends to react defensively and cling to current or former modes of coping, whereas when being needs predominate, the individual is open to novelty and growth. He, therefore, pointed to the possibility that the ratio of being needs to deficiency needs might provide an index of actualization. Since lower-order needs are basically aversive or avoidance motivators and metamotives are primarily approach motivators, the approach:avoidance ratio may be a similar measure.<sup>89</sup> Finally, a ratio of service-oriented to egocentric behavior might be a further indicator of psychological development.

Healthy individuals would probably be expected to display fewer and weaker attachments. One might predict from this that such individuals would be happier, experience less suffering, and be less caught up in the so-called material triumvirate—the desire for wealth, power, and prestige. With less desire for material acquisitions, one might anticipate greater voluntary simplicity. This is the term given to a life-style in which people consciously choose to simplify their lives, relinquishing those activities and possessions experienced as superficial and less satisfying so as to deepen and intensify those aspects of life felt to be most central and significant.<sup>90</sup>

To have but few desires and satisfaction with simple things is the sign of a superior man.

Precepts of the Gurus<sup>91</sup>

It is interesting to note that a similar shift has been observed at a cultural level by the noted historian Arnold Toynbee.<sup>92</sup> He found that the flowering and height of a civilization could not be measured solely by material parameters such as the degree of mastery over the physical world. Rather, an essential corollary and index of cultural development manifests as what he

called "the law of progressive simplification," a trend towards reduced concern with grosser physical stimulation accompanied by a refinement of attention and interest in more subtle realms of experience. This may reflect movement up the hierarchy of needs at a cultural level.

As a concomitant of a clearer perception, expanded self-sense, and reduced attachment, one might also expect fewer and weaker defenses. In accordance with the finding that some defenses are more likely to be associated with relatively less perceptual distortion and with healthier modes of adjustment (e.g., intellectualization) and others with more distortion and pathological modes (e.g., denial and projection), then it would be expected that healthier individuals would display a corresponding pattern of defenses. This has in fact been found.<sup>69-73</sup> At the upper extreme, all defenses might be relinquished as unnecessary and burdening anachronisms.

Closely related to both perception and motivation are the Buddhist mental factors which were discussed earlier. Buddhist psychology provides an explicit and articulate description of factors said to be conducive to psychological well-being (e.g., concentration, calm, and equanimity) and their unhealthy opposites (agitation, anger, and greed). Mental health is said to be determined by the prevailing balance between healthy and unhealthy factors.

## Summary

These then are some of the attributes which this preliminary integrative model suggests might characterize extreme psychological well-being. Although these attributes appear consistent with the suggestions of the major non-Western and some Western psychologies, they are largely lacking in empirical data. At the present time therefore, they must be considered preliminary hypotheses for future thinking and research rather than established principles.

This has been a partial and preliminary description which necessarily cannot do justice to the full range of the human potential. Perhaps no description can. On the other hand, however preliminary it may be, it does point to the possibility of future broad-ranging integrations between Western and non-Western psychologies. Each can contribute something to the other, and together they may be able to span the range of human development. We have only just begun.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## REFERENCES

1. Jung, C. *Collected Works*, Vol. 17. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 7.
2. Royce, J. Psychology is multi-: methodological, variate, epistemic, world view, systemic, paradigmatic, theoretic, and disciplinary. In *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1975: Conceptual Foundations of Psychology*. Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1976, p. 38.
3. Corsini, R. *Current Personality Theories*. Itasca, Ill.: Peacock, 1977, p. 8.
4. Wilber, K. *The Spectrum of Consciousness*. Wheaton, Ill.: Quest, 1977.
5. Wilber, K. *No Boundary*. Los Angeles: Center Press, 1979.
6. Wilber, K. *The Atman Project*. Wheaton, Ill.: Quest, 1980.
7. Bohm, D. Quantum theory as an indication of a new order in physics: B. Implicate and explicate order in physical law. *Foundations Physics*, 1973, 3, 139-168.
8. Royce, J. How can we best advance the construction of theory in psychology? *Canadian Psychological Review*, 1978, 19, 259-276.
9. Welwood, J. Self knowledge as the basis for an integrative psychology. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1979, 11, 23-40.
10. Erhard, W., Gioscia, V. and Anbender, K. Being well. This book.
11. Wilber, K. *Odyssey*. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1982, 22, 57-90.
12. Maduro, F. and Wheelwright, R. Carl Jung. In *Current Personality Theories* (R. Corsini, Ed.). Itasca, Ill.: Peacock, 1977, p. 84.
13. Tart, C. *States of Consciousness*. New York: Dutton, 1975.
14. Goleman, D. and Epstein, M. Meditation and well-being: an Eastern model of psychological health. This book.
15. Wilber, K. *The evolution of consciousness*. This book.
16. Buddhagosa. *The Path of Purity* (P.M. Tin, translator). Sri Lanka: Pali Text Society, 1923.
17. Overton, D.A. Discriminative control of behavior by drug states. In *Stimulus Properties of Drugs* T. Thompson and R. Pickens, Eds.). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971.
18. Walsh, R. *The psychologies of East and West*. This book.
19. Ram Dass. *Association of Transpersonal Psychology Newsletter*, 1975 (winter), p. 9.
20. Huxley, A. *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York: Harper & Row, 1944.
21. Smith, H. *Forgotten Truth*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
22. Anonymous. *A Course in Miracles, I: Text*. Tiburon, Calif.: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975.
23. Goldstein, J. *The Experience of Insight*. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Unity Press, 1976.
24. Jung, C. *Analytic Psychology: Its Theory and Practice*. New York: Pantheon, 1968.
25. Ram Dass. *Grist for the Mill*. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Unity Press, 1977.
26. Walsh, R. Initial meditative experiences: I. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1977, 9, 151-192.
27. Walsh, R. Initial meditative experiences: II. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1978, 10, 1-28.
28. Kornfield, J. Meditation: theory and practice. In *Beyond Ego: Transpersonal Dimensions in Psychology* (R. Walsh and F. Vaughan, Eds.) Los Angeles: J. Tarcher, 1980.
29. Hendlin, S. Initial Zen intensive (sesshin): a subjective account. *J. Pastoral Counsel* (in press).
30. Elgin, D. *Voluntary Simplicity*. New York: Morrow, 1981.
31. Mahasi Sayadaw. *Practical Insight Meditation*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1976.
32. Mahasi Sayadaw. *The Progress of Insight*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978.

33. Perls, F. *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*. Lafayette, Calif.: Real People Press, 1969, p. 124.
34. Korafeld, J. Higher consciousness: an inside view. This book.
35. Satprem. *Sri Aurobindo, or the Adventure of Consciousness*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
36. Harmon, W. An evolving society to fit an evolving consciousness. *Integral View*, 1979, 1, 14.
37. Castaneda, C. *Tales of Power*. New York: Simon Schuster, 1974, p. 33.
38. Royce, J., Coward, C., Egan, E., Kessel, F. and Mos, L. Psychological epistemology: a critical review of the empirical literature and the theoretical issues. *Genetic Psychological Monographs*, 1978, 97, 265-353.
39. Tart, C. (Ed.). *Transpersonal Psychologies*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
40. Smith, H. The sacred unconscious. This book.
41. Brown, D. A model for the levels of concentrative meditation. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, 1977, 25, 236-273.
42. Wilber, K. Where it was, there I shall become. This book.
43. Walsh, R. and Vaughan, F. Beyond the ego: toward transpersonal models of the person and psychotherapy. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1980, 20, 5-31.
44. Brenner, C. *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Anchor, 1974.
45. Laing, R.D. *The Politics of the Family*. New York: Pantheon, 1971.
46. Keisler, S. Emotions in groups. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1973, 13, 19-31.
47. Assagioli, R. *Psychosynthesis: A manual of Principles and Techniques*. New York: Hohles and Dorman, 1965.
48. Wei Wu Wei. *All Else Is Bondage*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1970.
49. Globus, M. and Globus, G. The man of knowledge. This book.
50. Wilber, K. *Up From Eden*. New York: Doubleday, 1981.
51. Ramana Maharshi. In *Who Am I?* (T. Venkataraman, Ed.; 8th ed.). India, 1955.
52. Ram Dass. *Journey of Awakening: A Meditator's Guidebook*. New York: Doubleday, 1978.
53. Bugental, J. *Psychotherapy and Process*. New York: Addison Wesley, 1978, p. 139.
54. Schuon, F. *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
55. Murphy, G. and Ballou, R. (Eds.). *William James on Psychological Research*. New York: Viking, 1960, p. 324.
56. Maslow, A.H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
57. Roberts, T. Beyond Self actualization. *ReVision*, 1978, 1, 42-46.
58. Gampopa. *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (H. Guenther, translator). Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala, 1971.
59. Sengtsan. *Verses on the Faith Mind* (R.B. Clarke, translator). Sharon Springs, N.Y.: Zen Center, 1975.
60. Evans-Wentz, W. (translator) *Tibetan Yogas and Secret Doctrines*. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.
61. Jung, C. *Collected Works*, Vol. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.
62. Castaneda, C. *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
63. Maslow, A.H. *Toward a Psychology of Being* (2nd ed.). Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968.
64. Rajneesh, B.S. *The Alpha and the Omega* (tape recording). Poona, India: Shree Rajneesh Ashram, 1977.
65. Rogers, C. A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In *Psychology: The Study of a Science* (S. Koch, Ed.), Vol. 3: Formulations of the Person and the Social Context. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959, pp. 184-256.

66. Smith, H. *The Religions of Man*. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.
67. Brown, N.O. *Life against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959.
68. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. *I Am That*. Bombay, India: Chetana Publishers, 1973.
69. Vaillant, G.E. Theoretical hierarchy of adaptive age mechanisms. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1971, 24, 107-118.
70. Vaillant, G.E. Natural history of male psychological health, II: Some antecedents of healthy adult adjustment. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1974, 31, 15-22.
71. Vaillant, G.E. Natural history of male psychological health, III: Empirical dimensions of mental health. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1975, 32, 420-426.
72. Vaillant, G.E. Natural history of male psychological health, V: The relation of choice of ego mechanisms of defense to adult adjustment. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1976, 33, 535-545.
73. Giovacchini, P. Psychoanalysis. In *Current Personality Theories* (R. Corsini, Ed.). Itasca, Ill.: Peacock, 1977, pp. 15-44.
74. Goleman, D. A guide to inner space. In *Beyond Ego: Transpersonal Dimensions in Psychology* R. Walsh and F. Vaughan, Eds.). Los Angeles: J. Tarcher, 1980, p. 131.
75. Anonymous. *A Course in Miracles, II: Workbook*. Tiburon, Calif.: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1975.
76. Bandura, A. *Principles of Behavior Modification*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.
77. Pant, A. Foreword. In Maharaj, N. *I Am That*, Vol. 2. Bombay India: Chetana Publishers, 1973, pp. ix-x.
78. Livingston, D. Transcendental states of consciousness and the healthy personality: an overview. Ph.D. thesis, University of Arizona, 1975.
79. Heath, D. The maturing person. This book.
80. Shapiro, D. *Meditation: Self Regulation Strategy and Altered States of Consciousness*. New York: Aldine, 1980.
81. Walsh, R. The ten perfections. This book.
82. Brown, N.O. *Love's Body*. New York: Random House, 1966.
83. Metzner, R. Ten classical metaphors of self-transformation. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1980, 12, 47-62.
84. Dorn, G. *Physica Trismegisti, Theatrum Chemicum, IV*. Ursel, 1920.
85. Jung, C. *Mysterium Coniunctionis, Collected Works*, Vol. 14. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955, p. 535.
86. Walsh, R. and Davidson, P. Towards a behavioral estimate of mental health. *Proc. Cong. Roy. Aust. New Zealand College Psychiat.*, 1977.
87. Evans-Wentz, W.Y. (Ed.). *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, translator). New York: Oxford University Press, 1935, p. 80.
88. Wilber, K. The pre-trans fallacy. *Re Vision*, 1980, 3, No. 2.