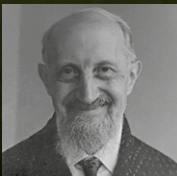


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The Birth of an International Psychosynthesis Movement

The 1958 Valmy Conference with Roberto Assagioli:
Foundations, Vision, and the Future of Psychosynthesis.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION
TRANSCRIPT OF CONFERENCE
May 23rd – 25th, 1958



"We are not — and I hope we never become — a 'school' — one school of thought. If there is one distinguishing feature, it is that of bringing together, synthesizing, the best of all schools and all conceptions."

Roberto Assagioli



AAP



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The Birth of an International Psychosynthesis Movement

© **Published by:** The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis and Kentaur Publishing 2026



Editor: Kenneth Sørensen ks@kennethsorensen.dk
www.kennethsorensen.dk/en/

The E-book is a collaboration between The Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis and Kentaur Publishing. The AAP website can be found here: www.aap-psychosynthesis.org

Editorial Assistance: Jan Kuniholm

Source: Derived from the AAP Archive

Cover: Simona Meloni

Design: Simona Meloni



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Foreword to the 1958 Valmy Conference Report

The First International Gathering of Psychosynthesis Practitioners

By Kenneth Sørensen, MA, Psychosynthesis

The 1958 Psychosynthesis Research Foundation Conference, held at “Valmy” in Greenville, Delaware, represents a decisive turning point in the history of psychosynthesis. It was the *first international gathering* of practitioners, scholars, scientists, educators, and clinicians who were consciously meeting for one purpose: *to establish an organized, worldwide movement for the advancement of psychosynthesis*. For the first time, psychosynthesis stepped beyond Assagioli’s individual teaching centers and entered the public sphere as an international initiative with collective purpose, shared research aims, and long-term organizational vision.

The delegates who gathered at Valmy — from Italy, Greece, France, and across the United States — were not simply students or supporters of Assagioli’s work. They were the first generation of what Assagioli consistently called *workers*: individuals committed to applying psychosynthesis in psychotherapy, education, group work, and social fields. The conference was therefore both practical and visionary. It brought together people from diverse professional backgrounds and asked them to imagine what a mature and structured psychosynthesis movement might look like.

In this sense, the Valmy Conference is the *birthplace of psychosynthesis as an international movement*. Previous seminars in Italy had been exploratory; this was the first meeting with a clearly institutional intention. As Frank Hilton remarked in his opening address, these were “the launching discussions of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.” And with Assagioli physically present and chairing the sessions, this conference became the moment in which he articulated — publicly, systematically, and with great clarity — the foundational principles, aims, and research priorities of psychosynthesis.

A Movement that Refuses to Become a “School”

One of Assagioli’s strongest and most enduring statements appears in the very first session:



"We are not — and I hope we never become — a 'school' — one school of thought. If there is one distinguishing feature, it is that of bringing together, synthesizing, the best (or what we may think is the best) of all schools and all conceptions."

This declaration is crucial for understanding the spirit of psychosynthesis. From its inception, the movement was defined not by doctrinal boundaries but by a willingness to synthesize diverse psychological traditions. Psychosynthesis was conceived as a dynamic framework capable of integrating multiple approaches rather than defending a single theoretical system.

Assagioli reinforced this orientation by pointing to the emerging global context of psychology:

"I think the time is ripe for — a synthesis of American, European, and Eastern psychologies."

This vision anticipates developments that would not become mainstream until decades later — the dialogue between Western psychology and Eastern contemplative traditions; the integration of cognitive, emotional, somatic, and spiritual aspects of human development; and the emergence of positive psychology and transpersonal psychology. At Valmy, these ideas were not future possibilities; they were declared as immediate and essential aims.

The Two Pillars: Psychotherapy and Education

Early in the conference, it became clear that the new Foundation would commit itself primarily to two fields:

1. *Psychosynthesis Psychotherapy*
2. *Psychosynthesis Education*

These two pillars reflect Assagioli's view that psychosynthesis was never intended to be confined to therapy alone. It was conceived as a broad psychological, educational, and developmental approach. The conference discussions repeatedly emphasize the need for training centers, new literature, seminars, counseling practices, educational programs, and eventually networks of psychosynthesis centers across the world.



Three Neglected Fields: The Will, the Superconscious, and the Self

Among the many topics discussed, Assagioli placed special emphasis on the need to explore the *neglected and unexplored aspects of psychology*. He identified three fields as having *highest priority* for research and practice:

“There are three fields which I think should have priority because they are neglected areas, and because of their supreme importance:

(1) the will,

(2) the superconscious or higher unconscious (including inspiration, genius and all those aspects), and

(3) the Self — the will, the superconscious and the Self.”

These areas, he insisted, had been repeatedly overlooked, dismissed, or treated superficially by mainstream psychology. Yet for Assagioli, they were central to understanding human growth, creativity, altruism, and self-realisation. The Valmy Conference thus established a research agenda that would shape psychosynthesis for decades to come: techniques for the will, exploration of superconscious states, the nature of peak experiences, and above all the direct experience of the Self.

The Self: Identity and Universality

One of the most significant contributions of the conference is Assagioli's clarification of the twofold nature of the Self. Already in his article “Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis” he had outlined the distinction between the personal “I” and the Higher Self, but at Valmy he gave one of his clearest formulations:

“The experience of the Self presents a dual aspect; first an enhanced sense of self-identity; second, at the same time, a sense of universality. This Self is part of the universal reality. A criterion of genuine experience of the Self is that it should have these two subjective experiences.”

This statement is historically important. It articulates a non-dual and phenomenological understanding of the Self that avoids both egoic inflation and metaphysical abstraction. The experiential Self is both deeply personal and deeply universal — rooted in individuality yet simultaneously connected to a larger Reality. This dual aspect becomes a defining feature of psychosynthesis spirituality.



The Key to Psychosynthesis: Disidentification and the Nature of the “I”

In the opening session, Assagioli stresses a principle that recurs throughout the conference:

“...the key for all psychosynthesis, for self-realization, is to distinguish the self from the contents. The self is constant; the contents are ever fleeting.”

This emphasis on disidentification — the ability to observe thoughts, emotions, impulses, and roles without becoming them — is one of the cornerstones of psychosynthesis practice. At Valmy, Assagioli repeatedly explains that the “I” is *not* the personality, nor the emotions, nor the mind, nor even the content of consciousness at any given time. It is the observing center, the point of pure self-awareness, constant through all change.

This clarification was not merely philosophical; it formed the foundation for the training methods later introduced at the conference: the disidentification exercise, the Ideal Model, techniques for developing the will, and early forms of guided imagery.

The Birth of an International Network

Another significant outcome of the conference was the explicit plan to establish *psychosynthesis centers worldwide*. Assagioli envisioned a constellation of interconnected centers — in the United States, Italy, France, and beyond — each working with a shared set of principles but maintaining freedom and creativity. He insisted that the movement remain flexible, decentralized, and experimental.

There was also an emphasis on *training* — not only academic training, but what Assagioli called “didactic psychosynthesis”: learning psychosynthesis through personal experience, self-training, and reciprocal support among workers. This approach helped ensure that psychosynthesis would develop organically rather than as a rigid institutional program.

Why the 1958 Conference Matters Today

The Valmy Conference was not simply a historical event. It remains a crucial reference point for anyone concerned with the integrity and future of psychosynthesis. It was here that the following core elements were established:



- Psychosynthesis would be *international*, not national.
- It would be *synthetic*, not doctrinal.
- It would prioritise *research into neglected areas* of human psychology.
- It would focus on *psychotherapy and education*.
- It would train workers capable of embodying psychosynthesis in life and practice.
- It would preserve the essential distinction between *the personal I and the Higher Self*.
- It would insist that psychosynthesis remain a dynamic, living framework — never a closed “school” or rigid system.

In revisiting this 1958 report, we rediscover not only the intellectual foundations of psychosynthesis but also its original spirit: pioneering, inclusive, forward-looking, and anchored in the belief that human beings are capable of far more integration, freedom, and creativity than modern psychology had yet recognized.

The Valmy Conference was therefore both a beginning and a declaration. It marked the moment when psychosynthesis ceased to be the work of one founder and became the shared task of a community — a global project grounded in the conviction that *the synthesis of the human being* is essential to the future evolution of humanity.



PSYCHOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

CONFERENCE - May 23/25, 1958

Delegates

Roberto Assagioli, M.D., Psychiatrist, Founder, Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence, Italy. Chairman P.R.F.

Charles B. Dawson, M.S., Art Therapist (Psychologist) McLean Hospital, Boston.

Mrs. Alexia duP. O. de Bie, Director and Founding Member P.R.F., Wilmington.

Robert Gerard, Ph.D., Psychologist, Orthopaedic Hospital, Los Angeles.

Frank Hilton, F.C.I.I. (Eng.), New York, Administrator P.R.F.

Mrs. Hilda Hilton, Librarian, McCalls Magazine, New York.

E. Russell Jones, Wilmington, Director and Treasurer P.R.F.

Miss Elizabeth V. Knight, Springlake, N.J., Secretary to P.R.F.

Miss Ruth Lofgren, Ph.D., Biologist, Brooklyn College, New York.

H. Richard Mades, Vice—President, M.M. Mades Co., Boston (Food Processing). Fund Raiser P.R.F.

Miss Helen Cabot Miles, M.A., Art Educator, Newton High School, Newtonville, Mass.

Richard Price, M.D., Psychiatrist, Wilmington.

Triant Triantafyllou, Ph.D., Psychologist, Athens, Greece.



PSYCHOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Transcription of Discussions—

Opening session 9:30 A.M., Friday, May 23, 1958.

Mr. F. Hilton:

My task in opening these meetings — before asking Dr. Assagioli to officially take the chair — is a brief but a pleasant one. For me, it is a real privilege to be playing a part in what are really the launching discussions of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.....

As regards the missing delegates, Dr. Price should be here about 10 o'clock. Dr. Ruth Lofgren is on duty today but will be coming this evening, and because she is primarily interested in the educational side, we are suggesting that today be kept more on the therapeutic side and reserve tomorrow for the main educational issues. From Dr. Crump, we have had no word, but we know that he has been on a twenty-four hour, seven days a week call in the hospital for the past weeks, owing to the head man having been taken ill and no substitute having yet been found. But if he can possibly get away, then he will fly up if only for a few hours.

I would like to make a brief reference to Valmy, to this old house in which we are meeting, because I think that if walls had ears these walls would be listening very eagerly to our deliberations, and if they had tongues they would be whispering encouragement, for I think there can be very few houses in this country that have given hospitality as Valmy to so many people from all parts of the world who are dedicated and are working quietly to help mankind fulfill its destiny.

And if Mrs. de Bie will pardon a personal reference at this point, I would like to thank her for ensuring that Valmy will always be used for charitable purposes; and it may — after we have established a sound working program — become the future home and headquarters of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.

That, of course, depends upon building soundly and wisely from the start so that these meetings are partly concerned with the long range view and partly with planning of a modest immediate program. To me, it is essentially a synthesizing conference of key people who I believe have the work at heart and who are coming together not to ensure uniformity but unity of purpose. To use a musical simile, if we all sounded the same note we would make a pretty monotonous tune, but if our notes can be blended we can produce a chord of power and real beauty.



Individually, we come from a rich variety of backgrounds and of experience. And perhaps we are typical of the many facets of human personality, or of society, which have to be synthesized, but as to how we synthesize them I think that Dr. Assagioli is the one best qualified to speak.

Dr. Robert Assagioli:

May I express in a few words my cordial welcome to you and my warmest thanks to Mrs. de Bie who made possible both the creation of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation and its first outer manifestation, this Conference.

Basis of Psychosynthesis

I think there is a platform of agreement on essential points which needs only to be mentioned; that is, holism, organismic conception, whole-functioning, Self-realization. These have been brought out most ably by Prof. Maslow of Brandeis University; so, I take these for granted. But this is, almost in a literal sense, a foundation — a basis; and the important thing is to build upon it and for this I appeal to your cooperation.

Another basic point is that our general purpose is the application of the principle of synthesis in every connection. First, the synthesis of schools of thought and conceptions. We are not — and I hope we never become — a “school” — one school of thought. If there is one distinguishing feature it is that of bringing together, synthesizing, the best (or what we may think is the best) of all schools and all conceptions.

Synthesis of various “schools” of psychology

Leibnitz said one thing which is not totally true but has much truth in it. He said, “All schools of philosophy are right in what they affirm and wrong in what they exclude.” I think we may take that as a leading principle. In a special way we may attempt — I think the time is ripe for — a synthesis of American, European and Eastern psychologies.

From the synthesis of conceptions follows the synthesis of all the good psycho-therapeutic and educational techniques. One of our cooperators, Dr. Guilhot of Paris, has an association of techniques. He is quite along our line — and I would like to mention right away that he is actually founding a center of psychosynthesis — a branch of this Foundation — in Paris. I will say more later on about this.



Unexplored fields

The third basic principle which requires immediate application is the emphasis, the application and the research on the neglected and unexplored fields. The field of psychology is enormous; it includes practically the whole of human life, so we have to have preferences and priorities, and it is obvious that we will attend to what has been neglected and unexplored. This includes: first, the so-called higher aspects and functions. “Higher” and “lower” are, I think, unfortunate but unavoidable terms; but we can use them if we give them no moral connotations. The “lower” is fully justified, not to be condemned, nor accepted wholly, for all these drives have their proper legitimate place. However, we can and should say “lower” in comparison with other aspects — finer, more mature, and so on. So, we can and must speak of the higher and lower, for this is connected with some of the most fruitful techniques — the technique of ascent which Desoille so ably uses in his *“rêve éveillé.”* I think we are all agreed on that — that we speak of higher and lower with no moral connotation.

This higher part of the human being has been curiously — we can speak frankly — deplorably neglected by scientific psychologists. There is a curious notion that it is not scientific, so that one of our talking points — I might say “fighting points” — will be that the higher manifestations of the human being are as scientific as the others. By this I mean *they are facts* — facts in the most empirical and pragmatic sense. We can say that facts are such happenings which modify reality, which impinge on and modify existing reality. Gurdjieff¹ has expressed it so well: “Reality is something real, something which is effective.”

For example, some of the intuitions are effective; the intuitions of an inventor can change civilization; the intuition of a poet can inspire multitudes, and so on. So these are *facts* — and a fact is a fact because it is effective. Such is inspiration; such is — in a general sense — genius; such are the higher feelings (chiefly altruistic love, which Prof. Sorokin has so well propounded lately, and he has shown how it can be studied scientifically).

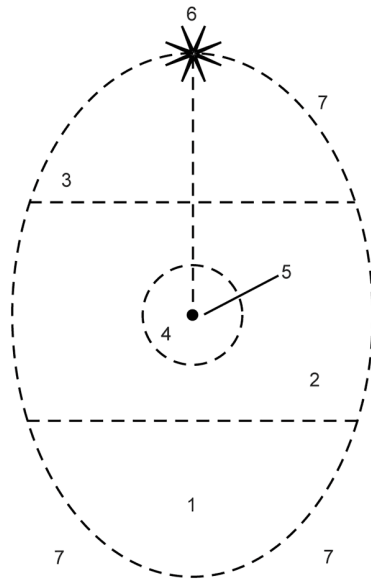
Before I come to less obvious points, may I just point out this diagram. I think all of you know it, for it appeared in my article, Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis², and will serve as a crude frame of reference.

¹ It was not Gurdjieff (sic) who said it, it was Goethe: “Wirklich ist was wirkt”, that is “It is real that which has an effect.”

² Now revised and reprinted under the title, “Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis.”



DIAGRAM I



1. The Lower Unconscious
2. The Middle Unconscious
3. The Higher Unconscious or Superconscious
4. The Field of Consciousness
5. The Conscious Self or "I"
6. The Higher Self
7. The Collective Unconscious

Psychoanalysis is only concerned with this part of the unconscious (#2), and grudgingly some part of this (#1); but this higher part of the sphere (#3), the higher unconscious or superconscious, is still practically unexplored, although there have been a few pioneers. This is the whole of the personality (dotted oval). This circle (#4) corresponds to the conscious part of the personality at a given moment, for it is always changing as psychological contents enter it from outside and become part of it. This point (#5) is the "self," the "I-consciousness," and this (#6) represents the Higher Self.

The Self

As regards the "self," there are many hazy concepts in psychology. It is used with many quite different meanings; generally speaking, the psychologists [who] deign to have some interest in the "self," consider the self to be the



whole personality of man. Also, when one of them speaks of “myself” it connotes one’s own personality. But there is a very different meaning which the old introspective psychologists have indicated; that is, the self as pure self-consciousness. By that they indicated that which fundamentally distinguishes man from animals. Animals have sensation, emotions, and some simple mental processes — or at least, some believe they have — but animals do not seem to have this “I-reference,” this consciousness of oneself as an individual self-consciousness.

So this is the primary point on which much depends; also practically, in the use of the techniques of psychosynthesis. To be able to distinguish the pure self from the contents of the personal consciousness, and even more from the whole personality. This can be done comparatively easily if one deigns to use the technique; that is, if one takes the attitude of the detached spectator of the stream of consciousness — of the stream, or of the “film,” to use a more modern term. It is like a screen with the passing images which are projected on it.

These may seem elementary distinctions, but they are not always made. They are accepted theoretically and ignored practically; yet the key for all psychosynthesis, for self-realization, is to distinguish the self from the contents. The self is constant, the contents are ever fleeting.

Another connotation of “self” is more difficult. It is connected with the “peak experiences” (as Dr. Maslow calls them). I think it is a very good connotation because it is useful. Incidentally, I would just mention a point, the higher spiritual experiences have up to now been too tied up with specifically religious experience; but there is a variety of higher experiences, of experiences of the superconsciousness, some of which have no religious connotation whatsoever. They can be aesthetic; they can be heroic, as impelling to self-sacrifice without any religious belief. There have been great artists without any religious beliefs, heroes who were agnostics as far as theology or philosophy were concerned.

So here we have to make the same distinction at a higher level. One is the “peak experience” (that is, the activation of the superconsciousness, the eruption into the field of consciousness of higher contents), the other is the experience of the Self. When a poet is inspired, it is as if something within him dictates; he just receives passively, as I-consciousness, what comes from above, but that is *not* the experience of the Self. It is just as if the I-consciousness raised itself to this level (Diagram I, #3), and then the circle of his consciousness is here. This constitutes the “peak experiences,” but not the Self (#6). This is a point which I hope will be amplified by the work of the Foundation.

What specifically connotes the Self has been very ably put forward in a very simple way by the contributors to the book, “The Self.” This experience



of the Self combines a keen sense of individuality, of being one's self, of discovering one's true Self, and the sense of universality. What would seem in formal logic a contradiction is instead a most wonderful living experience — individuality and universality; being oneself fully and yet being identified with the fullness of life.

The Will

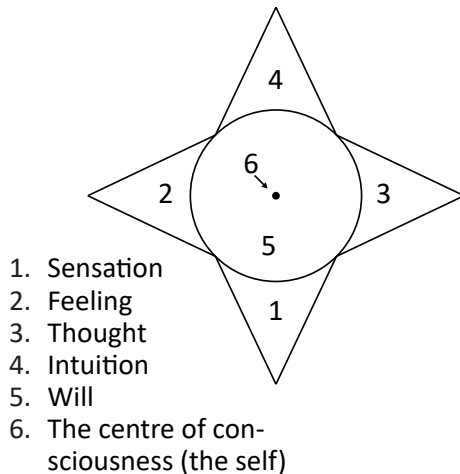
Another neglected field, a forgotten ground, is that of the *will*. In the meeting we had last year at Capolona I said that this could be considered “the scandal of modern psychology.” You know the humorous phrase which was used at the time when behaviorism was the fashion: “Psychology first lost its soul; then it lost its mind; then it lost its senses and only had some behavior left.” For me, that is very good, but incomplete. After losing its soul, psychology *lost its will*, and only then the mind and the senses.

Now, we have to do the inverse process. Psychology has regained its senses, it has dealt with and discovered some imagination and especially drives and emotions. It has now a little mind, but practically no will — and certainly no soul.

Freud and Jung ignored the will; Adler slandered it — he spoke only of the “will to power;” Coué ridiculed it — he said that the will is always defeated by the imagination. There are only two or three scientists who deign to mention the will — such as, Baudoin and Frankl — but in a very cursory way. Rank praised it, but without using any systematic approach based on the will or any techniques for the development of the will. Yet the will exists in spite of modern psychology. Many people use it spontaneously, intensively and, generally, very badly. Other people do not use it at all — that may be one of the real causes of the present situation of humanity!

Yet the will is one of the most powerful synthesizing factors because it is centered; it is nearest to the self. St. Augustine said, “Men are wills,” and the Polish philosopher Chaikowsky said, not as Descartes, “I think, thus I am,” but “I *will*, and thus I think and I am.”





This small diagram³ illustrates the central position of the will. Jung's classifications of the functions are apt to be criticized, but taking for granted the elementary classification of "sensation, feeling, thought, and intuition," these four (#1–4) indicate the main functions, according to Jung; but I would add the will. In the diagram, the Will is here (#5), in the middle of them; and this center (#6) is the self. So, the self through

the will can influence — and *should* influence — these four functions.

The will has various aspects⁴: *deliberation*, which is connected with motivation. And I think that the wedge (into the field of the will) in modern psychology is through motivation. I hope and I think they will be obliged to recognize the will in the study of motivation; and motivation implies values.

Then there is *decision*; and the third stage of the will is *planning*; and the fourth is *execution*. So you see what an interesting and enlightening field of research is the will.

Goal of Psychosynthesis

Now, let us come to the specific task and goal of psychosynthesis. In this, I give you the key words of *integration*, *growth*, and *Self-realization*.

Integration; I used the word here in a rather specific sense, that of coordinating and harmonizing the existing elements and functions which are already activated. That means the elimination of conflicts and complexes, and the harmonious functioning of the active elements existing. That would be the goal of Psychoanalysis in its best and most constructive aspects.

³ The diagram leaves out the desire function, which later in the *Act of Will* (1974) became part of his seven psychological functions. Ed.

In later years Assagioli developed this diagram further and added two functions that are not shown here: Impulse/desire and Imagination. See his book *The Act of Will* (1974). -Ed.

⁴ Assagioli later developed the six stages of the will in his book *The Act of Will* (1974): Purpose, Deliberation, Choice, Affirmation, Planning, and Direction. Ed.



There is a curious neglect by psychoanalysts — the inclusion of the body. Integration can and should include integration of the body. If the title would not have been too cumbersome I would have preferred to use the word “bio-psychosynthesis.” So please remember always that when I speak of psychosynthesis, I mean BIO-psychosynthesis, with the full inclusion and acceptance of the body. All this is integration, but (as pointed out very well by Jung, Maslow and others) integration in the strict sense is not enough.

There is growth, development; this includes maturing, the spontaneous maturing which happens when obstacles are eliminated — but that is not enough, in my opinion. There is *the active training of undeveloped functions* and *the awakening of latent possibilities*. Here the body, and the training of the body, gives evidence and encouragement. You know the merits of physical training, from the feats of the acrobats to the field of the various sports. It seems to me strange that so much faith and work have been given to the training of muscles, of nerve coordination, of sense perception, and not to the training of pure psychological functions. Well, it is a fact — proven in therapy, in education, and in self-training — that all functions are amenable to development through training; thus the need for the Active Techniques of Psychosynthesis.

But all this is still not enough. The third point is Self-realization, self with a capital S. That is the great spiritual adventure — I am not afraid of the word “spiritual.” We may not use it much for technical reasons, but here we can use it. The great psychospiritual adventure of finding, of realizing the Self, and then making of the Self the living center of our whole life.

These are the main points: integration, growth, development and Self-realization. And therefore I will speak of the techniques for all this.

Differential or Individual Psychology

Another field which has been comparatively tilled and sown is that of differential or individual psychology. It has been called “personality typology,” or “psychological types.” Here there is ground for much discussion and research. There are many classifications; one of the good ones — although not complete — is that of Jung’s psychological types, according to the four functions and the two directions of vital interest - extraversion and introversion. I have worked on that and developed further differentiations: those of active extraversion and passive extraversion, active introversion and passive introversion. That I simply mention as a field of research.

In all our approaches, successive approaches, we should consider the uniqueness of the individual; each human being is unique and any description must be multi-dimensional, made from different approaches. So the need for multiple approaches.



Fields of Application of Psychosynthesis

Then come the fields of inter-individual psychosynthesis, interpersonal relations. Here one has to distinguish what is not always clearly recognized; first, inter-personal relations between one individual and another, between two persons, and second, the inter-individual relationship between an individual and a group. Here we have burning problems — man and woman, other couples — doctor–patient, teacher and pupil, parents and children. Then man and society; this is a very up-to-date problem. Fromm and a recent book by Jung take up that — conformity, originality, dependence, etc. Then, there is the relationship of various social groups — races, nations, continents and so on.

I will now mention the fields of application. There are three: the medical-psychologists, psychosynthetic therapy; *the educational*—education in the family and education in the schools, and their relationship or conflict; then self-integration—development made by each individual on himself, another most neglected field.

This self-development is hampered because too often man turns outward seeks to find the answer in everything outside — the priest, the doctor, the teacher, the leader. Just because we do not know the Self, which is the inner doctor, the teacher, the inner leader, the inner inspirer. There is a name for this, a time-honored name, for Plato used it: “psychagogy.” And a modern writer, an American — I do not remember who — has used it (Maslow quotes him). Philologically it has to be psychagogy.

You know that in Europe education is often called pedagogy; “paidos” in Greek means “child,” and “agogos” is “leading.” So, pedagogy is the “leading of the child;” and psychagogy is the term for education of the personality by oneself. Also, Baudoin and his Institute; it was called Institut International de Psychagogie et de Psychothérapie. As you know, he is on the Board of Advisors of the P.R.F.

So we have special applications of the techniques to psychotherapy, education and to self-integration and the development of psychagogy. Then the interpersonal and the group and social applications.

.....



Research Work

Now I will mention briefly the program of research. There are two points here. All constructive projects within this inclusive framework, carried out in a spirit of synthesis, are welcome; so any investigator who has already a project or who would like to carry out a project in this synthetic spirit, within this very broad framework, is welcome.

But in the initial work of this Foundation, we must give priority to the most urgent and neglected fields. It is not a judgment of values, but as we cannot do everything at the same time, it is obvious that we had better give priority and active help to the most neglected and more important fields.

Now we come to the crucial point on which the Foundation will succeed or fail — the workers and their training.

As psychologists it is for us to recognize the essential value of the human element. Emerson said so well that “all institutions are the projection of a human being.” So the problem of the workers is essential, but I would qualify what Emerson said, and refer to the projection not of an individual, but of a *group of individuals*.

Didactic Psychosynthesis

Psychosynthesis is not the result of *one* mind. I am one of the workers in the direction of synthesis, and many are needed, very many are needed; and on the discovery, the training, the cooperation among workers, I repeat, will the success or the failure of the Foundation rest. So, I ask all of you to give fullest attention to this, beginning each with oneself - start self-training - which is necessary - which will last happily during one's whole life; there is no “finis!” Then the subsequent or contemporaneous training of other workers. The ideal is to undergo didactic psychosynthesis, the undergoing of psychosynthesis with the help of a synthesizer, parallel to the didactic psychoanalysis which Freud and psychological associations rightly demand. They are very strict, in a sense too strict in that they demand years of training and practice. That seems to me unrealistic, especially for psychosynthesis.

There is, happily, a paradox, and that is that psychosynthesis is much more inclusive than psychoanalysis, and yet a didactic psychosynthesis can be much shorter than a didactic psychoanalysis. It is not difficult to explain this paradox. Psychosynthesis is less detailed, less minute - let us say less pedantic - than psychoanalysis. But the main reason is that it (psychosynthesis) appeals to the increasingly active cooperation of the trainee.



In psycho-therapeutic psychosynthesis we appeal to the active cooperation of the patient as much as possible; similarly in education — active cooperation and development towards independence and self-help. It is, I think, the education and the therapy of the future.

Then, on the practical side, it can be cyclic; that is, made at intervals — to use a commercial word, by installments. And this is not mere expediency, but is based on a very important psychological law; that is, the periods of elaboration, of assimilation, of psychological digestion. That law can and should be applied in psychotherapy, and I find it very successful to interrupt and then to resume psychotherapy. The intervals are creative; they are either consciously, unconsciously or super-consciously creative. So, for practical purposes that is very good, because it can be done at intervals, at fairly long intervals.

And here I will put in a practical note and an appeal which is quite novel. That is, we can point out, quite sincerely, the enormous *practical* advantages which a psychosynthesizer can have. Any doctor or practicing psychologist is sure to have a clientele, many patients; and, from my experience, many of these will be disappointed or only partially satisfied psychoanalyzed people — so that is already a very large field: (laughter).....It repays the efforts, the trouble and the expense to go in for this training because if the person has the essential qualities, practical success *is* assured.

So, our immediate and most important practical aim is the self-training of the workers, and in this we can cooperate in a friendly way to help each other; and then call for future workers to be trained.

Other Centers

Then there is a vast work to be done of creating centers in every big city, region or state — and this is already in process. Of course, there is the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Florence now, which was active from 1926 in Rome, up to the interruption of the war — and after the war went forward in Florence. Then there is “Valmy,” which will be the center of the constellation. I would like to see a network or constellation of centers which can be established here on the planet. And, as I mentioned, there is a budding center in Paris, which is to be legally established by Dr. Guilhot during these present weeks.

The activity of each center is to teach and to train, individual counselling, and later on clinics can be created for patients, and schools. So you see that there is eminent opportunity; there can be periodical conferences. We have already had two conferences during the preceding summers in Capolona, Italy — one in the French language and one in English.



We have started with this overall picture, and I hope I have given you an hour not only of interest but aroused your eagerness and perhaps enthusiasm for the wonderful and unlimited possibilities; and I should end with the human values. Psychosynthesis in this sense conveys many answers, I think, to the burning, urgent problems and dangers which face humanity now. This is subconsciously or superconsciously realized by many, and a trend towards psychosynthesis is rapidly growing under other names. Dr. Maslow has raised this question of values, and it has been a rallying point for those thinking along these lines. We will be very happy to cooperate with him; we have a link with him which can be extended. We should keep all this cooperation and relationships loose, not over-organized at all. We can be a team of pioneers which can bring something vital and valuable to humanity.

With this conference — a starting, creating conference — I think it is more advisable not to discuss minor questions but principles; we should speak of cooperation and action. In the future, on many occasions, either by conferences or correspondence or meetings, we can discuss things in detail and with more precision, but I think the primary purpose of this conference is to proceed to action and that means the contribution of each, cooperation and so on. That seems to me the main line to follow. It is not exclusive but the main line of our conversations.

.....

Mr. Hilton:

Well, the picture that Roberto has given to us of psychosynthesis was essential, because unless we are relating whatever projects we may work out, or plan, or discuss, to the overall purpose, we could quite easily get off base. We have down for this same session “Questions and Exchange of Views,” and I suggest that, initially, we see if we have any questions related to this *overall* picture that Roberto has given to us.

Dr. Gerard:

I had in mind something very specific, related to the field of action and cooperation. I would like to ask your (Dr. A.) cooperation from the viewpoint of ideas, in a psychosynthetic frame of reference, as to how a certain project which I am involved with now could be best carried out.

Rehabilitation Work and the Will

Now it involves, in my opinion, essentially the concept of will. Briefly, as you know, about four weeks ago I joined the staff of the Orthopaedic Hospital in Los Angeles which, like many other orthopaedic centers, is concerned with



the rehabilitation of disabled and crippled children and adults. Now, when you have what is called a catastrophic illness, certain very important changes of a psychological nature occur, and the main problem is one of rehabilitation and of reorientation of one's life's purpose; and, again, of translating this into action, which first starts with being able to ambulate again. You have lost limbs, you have to be able to walk again, sometimes to be able to find a new occupation and start work quite different from what you had done before; for example, if your job was a jewelry repairer, watchman, or a farmer, and you suddenly lose your hand, you have lost the very center of your livelihood; or, if you become crippled, you can no longer do farming.

Now, in cases like this, the major problem — as they discovered — is not strictly physical, physical medicine, but the psychological aspects. So the hospital was able to get a grant for about \$50,000 over a period of about three years from the office of Vocational Rehabilitation to assess what are the psychological factors which make for rehabilitation and what are the psychological factors which impede the rehabilitation of people. By rehabilitation they do not mean only physical rehabilitation, but also psychological rehabilitation. Of course, I had very little time to think about the problems since I have just started in that area, which is a new area to me. Yet, in that short period of time I came to the conclusion that one of the fundamental things that I would have to assess is “will;” and that even if I do not mention that term, I myself will have to think in those terms. Then the problem becomes: how can you assess first the “will to live” — because many patients, at the beginning, are suicidal after a catastrophic illness. Then the will to conquer the physical disability, or at least to overcome it as much as possible. As is seen in the amount of energy, for example, they expend in their physio-therapy in learning to walk again, or in learning to move a muscle which is no longer coordinated because they have a brain damage; or if you have a polio or cerebral palsy case, you learn how to walk again, or learn how to talk; all that — to express oneself, to coordinate — needs the will to physical rehabilitation.

Then there is the will to learn a new occupation; the will to find again a new purpose in life; and the will to do this in actual conditions of work among people who are less crippled. All these things are “will.” Now some psychologists have expressed it in terms of motivation; actually the whole research is written in terms using the word motivation, but when you begin to assess motivational energy you are indirectly assessing the problem of will. So it becomes a problem of assessing to what extent is an individual able to use his psychological energies - we speak always in terms of energies - to what extent is he able to use his psychological energies to constructive purposes? And mind you, this is a question which extends way beyond the rehabilitation.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, yours are acute cases of a general condition.



Dr. Gerard:

Yes, the research is supposed to be in that area, but the other psychologist who is also working on this research with me, he and I are in complete agreement that whatever we find should have some application to a much broader field of work.

Dr. Assagioli:

May I say just a word now, then you can continue? This brings up a most interesting point: the difference between *motives and incentives* on the one hand, and *will* on the other. I think that in many cases it is not necessary to arouse the will, especially of simpler people. It is the higher feelings, the emotional incentives which can constitute the drive to the rehabilitation and not really the central will in the specific sense which I gave to that word. So, practically, it simplifies the matter because I think that in the first place it is not so much a direct appeal to the will, but the arousing of the specific motivation for that person, which can be quite a selfish motivation — affection, emotional motivation, purely economic self-interest motivation, but these are not will.

Dr. Gerard:

I agree with you.

Dr. Assagioli:

You can go from motivations of economic security to affection for family, or for a personal looking for approbation from the doctor. All these are not will, and yet they are very powerful incentives and in many cases sufficient. We have to start with those; they are general with children and so on. The will is something much higher, more central, which can and should come afterwards because these incentives are powerful but not reliable and not constant; they can vary, they can fade. So the idea, then, is to add this will, which can first enhance and strengthen the motivation and when a certain motivation fails, can replace it.

Dr. Gerard:

The practical question then becomes: "How can you, in a specific case, distinguish whether behavior is will-directed or desire or higher feeling?..."

Mr. Dawson:

At times, in rehabilitation cases, I have detected depressive factors, a negative will, a suppression; that is, a willing not to realize anything coming up from within oneself, a forced emptying of consciousness of any desire or any wishes.

Dr. Assagioli:

That might be considered as if it were a negative will. I think, in a sense, it is a contradiction in terms to say there can be a bad will; I think the real antithesis is between will and inertia, or will and all drives.



The will seems to be a real function of the self, and only in the proportion that there is a measure of awareness of the self can there be will. Starting all this from the individual, there is never will per se, but there is a willing self.

Mr. Dawson:

A person can control, can direct himself and his actions.

Dr. Assagioli:

...not such an organismic view as Goldstein — we have to take into consideration the independence of the various drives. I admit the independence of the various drives, and in this respect a drive can be unconscious so that it is not an expression of the self considered as the acme of self-consciousness, of the point of self-consciousness. Remember always the distinction between Self: self of the whole personality, self as I — the conscious I. So a drive is not an expression of the self in this sense, but will — yes. Only will can and must be an expression of the self.

Dr. Gerard:

I think that since this concept of will in psychology, modern psychology, is unknown; and since one of the fundamental emphases in psychosynthesis is on the knowledge of that will as something which is part of reality, and needs to be developed, I feel that we would benefit from having a clear conception, or as clear a conception as possible, as to what the will really is. Could you tell us something about this?

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, may I refuse now — just to keep to the practical? But I will propose, in our resolutions, to take up research on the will myself. Well, I will start it myself but, of course, I will need much cooperation; but that will be my special project, so we shall hear much about it by and by.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, but it seems to me to be a very practical angle. If I am going to talk about “will” with my colleagues, to begin to introduce the term as a seed idea, they will immediately ask me what I am talking about.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, may I advise you not to talk of the will. It is far too soon until we ourselves “have the wares in stock” — and we do not have them. Only one suggestion I will give: that we must not start with the will, but with the *self*, because the will is a function of the self. So, in my research project, I will combine the two — the self and the will. This is not the self with a capital S; this self is a most important fact — the experience of this self, and its direct expression through the will. All this is a different project, a different field, but some people are agnostic or indifferent to this, and yet it has a great theoretical and practical value — meditation on the self and its will, its will energy.



Dr. Triantafyllou:

Can we say that the expression of the will is based upon experience?

Dr. Assagioli:

I would say theoretically — yes, but empirically — no. If we admit the existence of spirit empirically it has to be reserved to this (Diagram I, #6): this self (Diagram I, #5) and this will can be completely selfish.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

My point is this: that the will is not something that can be acquired through experience, but is innate.

Dr. Assagioli:

It is innate, but latent. It is latent and for all practical purposes non-existent, but it is liable to be evoked, aroused, awakened, activated — let us say — for immoral, selfish purposes. So, it is not spiritual; only this part is (Diagram I, #6). This is slightly spiritual (Diagram I, #3), not as spiritual as this. But the self and the will of which we speak is not spiritual.

Dr. Gerard:

So you distinguish between “will” with a small w and “will” with a large W?

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes; just as I distinguish the self with a small s and the self with a large S.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, this is always something I had in my mind.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, and a corresponding distinction exists in the will. So, the will is not of value per se; it is an energy, not a value.

Dr. Gerard:

Then, we are faced with very practical problems. If we are to talk about a “self” among the psychologists, what do we mean by a “self?” There are as many definitions as there are points of view. Now, what — from a practical point of view — do we mean by the small, little self, and the big Self? Now, I have my own conceptions, and I am sure that all of us have some conceptions; and it would be of great interest to us to know, to have a little more clarity, as to your conception of the large self (capital-S-self).

Dr. Assagioli:

I come back to the fundamental attitude of psychosynthesis and research. It is an *experience*, not a conception. Then we can formulate the experience, more or less, in a conception, *but it is primarily an experience*. Psychology, human life, *is* experience; so we should not start, in my opinion, with a conception of the self, but with techniques to have the experience of the self.



And here we come to the exercise of dis-identification, which is a fundamental exercise, and if you like I can speak about it this afternoon. This “I” dis-identifies itself from the contents of the conscious area. So, always let us speak in terms of experience, experience of the little self, experience of the will, experience of the big Self, aesthetic experience — everything is experience. First the experience, the life, and then utilization.

Dr. Gerard:

I am, personally, very much in favor of that approach because(Dr. Assagioli, “It is empirical!”), because it is an easy approach to present to psychological colleagues; and this is essentially the approach that Maslow has taken. Here are people who are Self-actualizers and this is the way they behave; but I think we have to go one step further — that is, the Techniques. I am convinced that the strength of this organization is in the emphasis on techniques — on the “How to,” how to do this, how to do that. What you try, you know by experience.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, that is the basis of empiricism — experience; only we have to make a clear distinction between experience and experiment in the physical connotation. We can make techniques; they are experimental, but in this sense are not the experience — not in the sense of the physical and chemical natural sciences.

Dr. Gerard:

I would like to know whether the other members here feel the same. I feel that in this launching discussion an emphasis on the Techniques, on how to arrive at these things, would be beneficial.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for it.

Miss H. C. Miles:

Definitely, definitely! I have wanted more than I got in that one little week at Capolona. I have wanted to do things in teaching this year, but there were too many questions. My impulses were in that direction, but I wanted something in print — are we going to get something in print pretty soon? (Dr. Assagioli, “I think so — we’ll see!”) We need it desperately.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

There are two ways of doing research like that. The first one is to clarify our concepts and define exactly our terms and then proceed to find out the techniques. The other one is the opposite: find and follow the techniques and then use them.

Dr. Assagioli:

The techniques are there, only we do not use them.



Dr. Triantafyllou:

In your discussion of the self and will, will and self, it seems to me that the self is an internal organizational power which reorganizes all experience and produces new forms of behavior.

Dr. Assagioli:

That could be more the *result* of its behaviour, rather than what it is. For instance, one can lead a predominantly contemplative life as they do in the East, in which they have a very intense and keen sense of self-realization. One can say it is creative and active in a subtler creative sense, subjective sense, but in itself it is a point of pure actuality, self-awareness, and then it has creative results, organizational results — leading to action and so on.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

And this creativity comes through the will?

Dr. Assagioli:

No, no. I was speaking of the self, not of the will. I think that the great misunderstanding about the will has been that will has been considered in the sense of action. In the old psychology — the will and the emotions, love and all that, the fight between the emotions and instinct, the will and the imagination — the will was often the loser.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

I do not know if I am right, but it seems to me that this is a great mistake which most psychologists and leaders in different professional fields make. It is much easier for someone to do something in the sense of *being* something...

Dr. Assagioli:

So the reaction has come, we have gone to the other extreme, and the will has become... the false will.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

That is what I was trying to say. Are we going to start by trying to do something or by trying to be something?

Dr. Assagioli:

But the function of the will — here I anticipate something of our research, but we can sow seeds in this talk — using a crude but rather mechanical analogy, can conceive of someone who has a car and pushes it from behind laboriously instead of being seated comfortably in the driver's seat, and without effort or expenditure of much energy just presses buttons and moves levers and uses the steering wheel.

You see, that is the will; the will is the deciding and directing thing — the expression of the self, not the doing. And here comes in Coué's badly formulated definition. *The will has to utilize the imagination*, because if will and



imagination are in conflict the imagination wins. He was right, but it is the stupid will which pits itself against the imagination. The wise will exploits the imagination, exploits the emotions, exploits all motives, utilizes them, uses them as a driver utilizes his car, the machinery. So you can call it quite a revolutionary conception of the will from the old classic viewpoint.

Mr. Dawson:

Well, there is a trend now in psychology, in ego-psychology, that is beginning to get back to this.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, it is an approach to this — an approach in a good direction. They have sensed that this is necessary, but I think they are still confused about it.

Mr. Dawson:

Oh, yes, they have preconceptions which force them in the wrong directions; but at least there is a certain vocabulary available.

Dr. Assagioli:

Good! Let's utilize it.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

There is another question that I would like to ask, if I may. Is there a certain age at which we can start to use the will?

Dr. Assagioli:

In childhood I do not think we can speak of the will — it is not the real will.

Dr. Gerard:

It is the will of the little self. (Dr. Assagioli: No; not even that.) Not even that?

Dr. Assagioli:

No; a child has very little will. The psychologists do not know the will, so how can a child? The same with the self; psychologists do not know the self, so how can a child? (Dr. Gerard: The little self?) No, psychologists do not know the little self — remember that; they do not know it. They confuse it with the personality because myself, my empirical being, is not the self, the small self.

Miss Miles:

How would you define the small self?

Dr. Assagioli:

It is difficult to define it because it is *an experience*. As far as I can say the small self is a point of pure self-identity, or self-awareness. Its quality is that of being persistent, permanent and self-identified through all the vicissitudes of personal life. It is the permanent point in the state of consciousness or experience.



Mr. Dawson:

Yes, I think the word “identity” is the key to an understanding of this.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes; and in the whole of the book, “The Self,” this does not appear, except a few places here and there by the Hindu contributor.

Dr. Gerard:

Eric Erikson has this concept of identity. He is a psychoanalyst and wrote a book on this, on identity. (Dr. Assagioli: What is the title?) I do not know the title but we could look it up.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, please, will you make a special note and look it up. I am especially interested. (Dr. Gerard: It may not be the same concept that we have.)

Dr. Assagioli:

Anyhow, if there is another approach it may be a linking and I will be glad to read it up.

Mr. Dawson:

It is a most important point of linking, for it is becoming more fully accepted. I think “childhood” is the last word in the title of the book.

Dr. Gerard:

Where one speaks of “willful,” “very determined,” it has a more emotional basis. (Dr. Assagioli: Entirely; it has nothing to do with the will.)

Miss Miles:

But would it be true to say that if certain things were done that are not now done with children, that the will would develop at its normal time — whenever that is? There should be different things done with the child at various times in order to bring it to a point where the will would cease to become latent and become functioning.

Dr. Assagioli:

I don’t know. I think that the discovery of the self, and consequently of the will, normally does not happen before adolescence. There is exception in the cases of gifted children, but normally it does not come until the big crisis of adolescence.

Miss Miles:

But suppose you take two children — matched pairs — and treat one a certain way up to adolescence, and another another way; do you have in mind but one treatment?



Dr. Assagioli:

One can pave the way, one can prepare. (Miss Miles: We are going to have to think about this. I want to think about this much more, but will you sometime this weekend give us some specific suggestions, some techniques or something so that we can be making experiments ourselves in this direction?)

Dr. Assagioli:

Experiments with children or with ourselves? (Miss Miles: Yes, with ourselves; can we get our hands on something?)

Dr. Assagioli:

I think that, as a general proposition, we have to experiment on ourselves, try everything before we try it on others or train others. We are the living, wonderful laboratory for psychology and psychosynthesis; only by trying the experiments on ourselves are we given the authority — not authority in the ordinary sense, but that conviction which carries the authority of experience. So all must be first experienced, and then practiced and utilized and taught.

Mr. Dawson:

For the purposes of research, it is only by ‘recognising’ in ourselves *first* that we are able to look outside.

Dr. Assagioli:

Right. And we — and all psychologists — should remember that human beings are generally immature, adolescent, emotional; they have not yet discovered the mind as independent from the emotions, and then the self as independent from the mind and then the will as the direct expression of the self. So “it is a long way to Tipperary” — to the “Tipperary” of the will!

Mr. Dawson:

“Childhood and Society” is the name of Erikson’s book! (Dr. Gerard: Yes, that’s it!)

Dr. Assagioli:

You see — that is the working of the unconscious!

Mr. Dawson:

In his book, Erikson talks about the typical, the major characteristic problem of the age levels, and he says the period of adolescence produces the question of establishing identity. This is something I have been particularly concerned with this past year, the *quality* at these different age levels — developmental stages of integration, I call them. I think that there are characteristic qualities of experience, and perhaps it is possible to devise concrete measuring instruments of the type of experience that the individual is characteristically undergoing.



Dr. Assagioli:

Well, they could correspond. What they do only for the intellectual function you could do for the different functions.

Mr. Hilton:

In your talk this morning, Dr. Assagioli, you covered the overall picture of psychosynthesis, and I was translating it in my mind in terms of material going out to the public. Do you feel that the new paper, the revision of “Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis” gives the basic presentation?

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, it is good enough to go out as a basis — but, we should have many papers, for one paper cannot cover the whole field, and there is a very good technique which is that of using the same theme expressed in different ways; you know, Beethoven’s “Thirty-Two Variations” on the same theme. And it is a technique which Hitler consciously, and unfortunately very successfully, adopted. In his “Mein Kampf” he spoke of the “magical repetition,” so I think we shall have to present the theme of psychosynthesis over and over again in different connections.

Mr. Hilton:

We are all anxious to see the techniques in writing; we cannot move into the larger American field — any field, really — without them.

(Dr. Assagioli: Yes!) I was wondering if our discussion this morning — on the Self and the question of the will — will form part of the same eventual book, or whether we can assume that this revised paper, “Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis,” will give the basis, so that we need think only in terms of getting the specific techniques down into writing.

The Pamphlet — Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis.

Dr. Gerard:

I am wondering if we cannot improve this paper. I will tell you why. I will be very frank, and sometimes to be very frank one hurts feelings; I took the liberty of showing the papers — not the latest revision which I saw yesterday, but the one before that — to some of my psychological colleagues who are fairly open-minded. They had nothing *against* it, per se, because many of the ideas were ideas they already held; but they said, after reading this paper, “We still do not know really what psychosynthesis is.” (Dr. Assagioli: Good!) In other words, they asked, “What are you talking about?” That was the type of reaction. Frankly, there was a certain amount of irritation — a sense of “you have wasted ten minutes of my time reading this stuff because I end up with nothing that I already did not know, and you have a word, ‘psychosynthesis,’ but what is really behind that word?” Now I am



wondering from the point of view of communication, could we not be in certain ways perhaps just a little bit more specific?

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, I will speak with the same frankness. I think they deluded themselves — basically because they saw in that paper, they put into that paper, what they knew or believed. But it is much more revolutionary than they realized. All that I have said today is implied there, and I do not think it would be a wise technique in any case to indicate all those implications which we developed; it would be too much too soon; this is a first framework. And I am very glad that they consider it not new because then, when they see the implications, it will be difficult for them to deny them. So my opinion is the reverse. It is good because it does not show everything. I call this and other pamphlets “appetizers,” not “meals” — it is a paper, not a book.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, but this was just a criticism which was leveled. They said “a lot of people give appetizers, but we want meals;” for America is ready for *meals*, not appetizers.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, appetizers have their function!

Miss Miles:

Will the Techniques in print take care of this — to follow immediately the pamphlet?

Dr. Assagioli:

It will take months at least; and it will be a different thing — the Techniques will be much more specific. I think this morning you heard nothing new from me, but I hope it was a life-giving incentive. It is not the newness which counts, the mental and theoretical newness, but the stimulation to action. So, I think, within the limits of an appetizer, a reasonable presentation of psychosynthesis first; then, when they get “the Self and the self,” *and* the will, they are more or less committed. When they say, “We agree with the general framework,” then it is their problem to say where to stop.

You see this point? It is not a question of publishing something complete and something effective and all that; it is *a first entering into* the subject. I do not think this morning that you were annoyed during the first hour, though you knew it all; but for me the first hour was needed (Dr. Gerard: Oh, yes!), and a lead to the second hour; and this paper (Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis) may correspond to the first hour, and then for the second hour which followed there will be the Techniques and so on.



Mr. Hilton:

What is your reaction, Chas and Triant, to that paper — the paper on Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis — virtually the one you saw before entitled Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis, because only the introduction has been changed, the historical side.

Mr. Dawson:

This is just the thing I talked about last night to Dick Mades, because he found that it did not communicate; and I pointed out that the whole purpose is to stimulate and not communicate (Dr. Assagioli: Good!). In other words, in order to bring out something that is in you, rather than put something into you.

Dr. Assagioli:

I firmly agree — that *is* the point.

Mr. Dawson:

When I first read it, this was my reaction. Of course, I had gone through many of the books you cited and read about these ideas and so on; so that this was just a stimulation. It was a focussing of many of the interests I had had; and for which I did not have external reasons for focussing before. This provided me with a category at which to aim my energies, which I did not have before.

Dr. Assagioli:

Fully justified! And the first thing I referred to this morning was a “platform,” not a “building.”

Miss Miles:

I have a thought. You are a color reactor; Dick is not; you do not know for sure about Bob; we can guess about Dr. Assagioli.

Dr. Gerard:

Wait a minute; you assume my reaction... (Miss Miles: No, no, I don't!)

Miss Miles:

What, I ask, might be the implications, the meaning of the last few minutes discussion. What I am driving at, is that probably we need another paper geared to the other personality types; because I think we have here a basic issue that Chas and I are working on so hard — which is the fact that what communicates to one (this is an oversimplification in a way to say one personality type and another type, we know this), what will stimulate one, will be a dead duck to someone else. (Dr. Assagioli: “But you cannot please everybody!”) No, but taking what you said that you must repeat and say things in different ways, it seems to me that the implication of this is that somebody who operates mentally in another way, perhaps Bob, might be the interpreter into terms that his pals would grasp (Dr. Assagioli: “Good!”),



in addition to the present paper. I think we need this (Dr. Assagioli: “Good, yes”) for these more concrete-minded people.

Dr. Assagioli:

I will only be too glad if others re-express these ideas for the different types. I should only add, about the paper, that it has been widely circulated in Italian, French, German and it has evoked a positive response. I do not know the percentage because the negative responses generally don't get to me but there has been enough positive response to justify its existence.

Dr. Gerard:

But you have to consider that European and American psychologies don't have exactly the same point of emphasis.

Dr. Assagioli:

I don't direct myself primarily to American psychologists. May I be blunt? Many of them are of the past or, at best, the present. I am interested in the future, in the pioneers, in the young — psychologically and spiritually speaking. Universities represent the Past and, at the best, some of the Present. All pioneering work is of a different kind, so I am not really concerned — for the present — about approval or acceptance. Every vital impulse is something which arouses opposition and that is all right — criticism, neglect, and so on.

Dr. Dawson:

You do not mind being discussed by academic psychologists or you do not *want* to be discussed by academic psychologists?

Dr. Assagioli:

It is all right if they discuss or if they criticize. Personally I like discussions and I would enjoy a good mental battle. But that is a personal thing, and psychosynthesis is much bigger and wider, and I am concerned with giving vital impulses to workers for the future.

Mr. Hilton:

What Roberto was saying regarding your (C.B.D.) question made me think that you had not get the point he had made. He (Dr. Assagioli) is not concerned with devising a program just so that it will find ready acceptance among the academic psychologists.

Dr. Assagioli:

I do not look primarily for acceptance, but for co-workers who also do not look only for that. Any consideration of academic acceptance in the next few years would only be a dampening. We are entering into pioneer work, and we accept criticism or we do not do it!



Mr. Dawson:

What about this point that the success of the Foundation rests upon the discovery of psychosynthetic workers? This is a thing that I would be interested in, in terms of acceptance by academicians, and that is, whatever aid a certain general knowledge of this would be to the attraction of students who are of the proper synthetic frame of mind.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, if I am not mistaken by the personal element, this paper seems apparently harmless enough to appear dull, so it is all right in this reference. I am not interested in appearance, I am interested in *living seeds*.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

I was just going to say that, there is, of course, a difference between the European and American psychologists. Sometimes the implications of wrong emphasis are very great, but if we take just the term “psychology” — the derivation of psychology, which is the logos, or the word of the psyche, of the soul, and start from these two points, then we can synthesize all the psychological schools as Dr. Assagioli said before. So it is not a matter of emphasis, but it is a matter of the starting point. As to the paper you were talking about, when I looked at it and saw the title “Psychosynthesis” I immediately got the impression that the physiological part of the human being was disregarded. Now when I read the paper, of course, my impression was *not* that; but it seems to me that the title gives you the very first impression, and you corrected that today and called it “bio-Psychosynthesis” and when I heard that I caught myself thinking “psycho-somato-psychosynthesis.” (Laughter)

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, the important fact is that we clearly include the body: but the long title would be too cumbersome.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

I also did the same as Robert Gerard, and showed the paper to some people, and their reaction was “You are playing with terms again.” (Dr. Gerard: I got that reaction, too.) “We are speaking about intelligence,” they say; “do we know what intelligence is? We don’t, but we can measure it and we know what it does. You can say the same about will, which means that we know what will does, but we do not know what it is. That is their reaction. And we do not know how to measure it.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, may I speak frankly — state frankly an historical fact? That all the major impulses in modern psychology have come from Europe. That is an historical fact. It is not my fault (laughter) (Miss Miles: We are not a creative people.) Let us not make it inter-continental, but *human* and *planetary*



synthesis; or, as I would say, America, Europe and Asia. So you see the opinion of a *small* group of *academic* American psychologists is just a little thing.

Dr. Gerard:

The people I showed it to are not academic psychologists. They were practicing psychologists and psychiatrists who were themselves trying, in their own ways, to use psychosynthesis without mentioning the term, because they did not know that it even existed.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, for those we will have the Techniques.

Dr. Gerard:

That is what I feel is all important.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for it! I will anticipate something about the Techniques, of which I will be speaking this afternoon — techniques, exercises and methods. I will make them clear this afternoon. So I think we could conclude that we should prepare, as soon as possible, a paper on techniques, which would be a second paper, a follow-up to the first pamphlet (Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis).

Dr. Gerard:

I think we could even present a third one to the people whom I know. I would give them the two papers at the same time in order to avoid the negative reaction we got after showing them the first paper. (Dr. Assagioli: “That is your ‘technique’!”) You have to know your market.

Dr. Assagioli:

I would prefer the other way...

Dr. Gerard:

At least they would have something to chew on; and even if they do not like what they are chewing, they will at least chew!

(End of Friday morning session)



Transcript of afternoon session

Friday, May 23, 1958. 4:30 to 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Hilton:

We have just received a letter from Dr. Y. R. Masani of the Indian Council for Mental Hygiene in Bombay, India, indicating his willingness to serve on the Advisory Board. I think he is also assistant to Mr. Saiyidain with whom we have been in correspondence, who is the Joint Advisor on Education to the Government of India. So this is our first representation in the other half of the world; this is very helpful.

Miss Miles:

I wonder if this man is tied up with the New Education Fellowship, too — I would not be surprised, just as is Mr. Saiyidain. (Mr. Hilton: Yes, most probably.)

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, our subject this afternoon is “Psychosynthetic Techniques,” and particularly their medical application.

For clarity’s sake I will explain the use which I am making with these techniques, exercises, and methods. The Techniques are each independent procedures aiming at a certain result. But often techniques can and must be associated — two or three, several techniques blend into what we call an exercise, a psychological exercise; but in a treatment one exercise is certainly not sufficient; one has to alternate, combine various exercises. This constitutes a method.

In a general way, one can say that the practice of psychosynthesis as a whole *is* a method, compared with other methods, but I use “method” in a more specific sense for the plan of treatment and the execution of the treatment for each patient. And in a sense one has to find or create a new method for each patient — a method suited to the peculiarities of that unique case, a method consisting of various exercises which utilize all the techniques suitable to the purpose. That is just a general survey of what I am going to speak about.

I will describe one exercise as applied to a specific case, so that on and from a concrete example, we can base our consideration and discussion. This exercise will show how the successful eliminating of particular symptoms can and have a more general value and application. I can give the name of the person concerned — it was the niece of Einstein — and I can give the name because she is dead. She was killed by the Nazis — and her mother and sister.



Example of Dual Technique — Visualization and Imagination — Emotional Catharsis — Active Training to a Situation

She came to my consultation rooms in Rome in 1938. She had come a few months earlier from Germany (when the persecution had become more acute) and she attended what we called the highest class of a secondary school, preparatory to a university. At the end of that class there is a rather serious examination, called the “maturity examination,” which gives access to the university. She was a very bright girl, ambitious in the good sense, and for all reasons she wanted very much to pass this examination and to go to the university. She was very cultured; although she knew Italian well it was not perfect, and this gave her a feeling of inferiority in the school.

This anxiety to pass, this sense of inferiority prevented the full use of the language which she possessed, and produced a blank in her memory during class interrogation. She knew well what she had to say, but momentarily could not recall it or phrased it badly. This worried her, and this worry had the ordinary psychosomatic effects: she began to digest badly, to have insomnia; she was depressed and emotionally upset and this increased her difficulty — a vicious circle we so often find in this connection. This case is a clear and representative example of a great number of cases; a vicious circle between psychological cause and psychosomatic effects, which reinforces the psychological trouble, which reinforces the psychosomatic effects. She was, therefore, in pretty bad shape when she came to me, and a real neurosis developed. When she came to me she was very tense, so I made her lie down on the couch and began with simple relaxation exercises; and then I used this special method which I am going to give to you. I told her to imagine in advance the scene of the examination. She told me more or less how it would be and I described it as vividly as I could to her. Then, my instructions to her were *not* to imagine she was calm and to pass successfully, which would be a [leading] suggestion, but just to live in imagination through the scene and let spontaneously happen in her what would happen. And what happened was a real nervous crisis. Almost violent; she shivered, broke out into a cold sweat and she lived through this anxiety evoked by the scene of the examination. I told her not to suppress any of it, but to let it come out.

The next day we did the same thing, with the same intensity of reaction; and the same happened on the third and fourth days. On the fifth day the anxiety and intensity grew less; and it continued to diminish on the sixth, seventh and eighth days. By the ninth day of treatment, she had no anxiety at all. She could perform in imagination all the actions that would be needed in the examination, and all without anxiety and with a sense of security. In the examination she felt that she would be successful. To



this we added making fun of the system of exams, “debunking” the system generally—how stupid was the procedure, the system of exams, the need for memorization, etc.

The tenth session was so successful that she said that she needed no more treatments. That was two weeks before the examination. She came to me after the examination; she had responded very well, both objectively and subjectively; that is, she had been unafraid and subjectively very calm, and she had kept her sense of humor throughout the performance.

The case was simple and clear, but it led to many interesting considerations from a theoretical and therapeutical standpoint. This exercise included visualization and active imagination; the catharsis, the letting out of the free expression of emotion without any inhibition; the accepting of the unpleasant psychosomatic symptoms, pain in the solar plexus and all that; and all the trials of the emotional crisis. Then, through the exercise, there was a sense of detachment; she knew that she was deliberately going through it as a therapeutic exercise; so she was not fully identified; she was in the psychological situation of an actor playing a part — actors do really feel the emotions and have no difficulty in crying, for instance. Also, the technique of humor increased the detachment from the emotional condition.

I applied this technique in various other cases of students and always succeeded very well. As I said this morning, there was a time when I was known as “the doctor who makes students pass examinations.”

And the same can be applied to every foreseeable difficult performance — to a singer, an actor, a music performer who gives a concert, all who have stage fright. So it can be applied to a great variety of situations which have that in common — where there is something that creates anxiety and which more or less can be foreseen. In the exercise we use various techniques to lead to the therapeutic result — in a certain sense different — almost opposite — techniques. The first session was an outlet of the emotions, catharsis prevailed; in later sessions the training prevailed, the active training to the situation.

Technique of the Ideal Model

To come to another fundamental technique which is more specifically psychosynthetic — the previous simpler exercise can lead to the understanding of this one. This is the Technique of the Ideal Model. It uses vivid imagination — imagine vividly the end result of the treatment; that is, first the elimination of the troubling symptoms — but more than that, the achieved psychosynthesis, the ideal image of what the patient can and, of course, should become. Here there are various things to be noted. The



ideal model first of all, must be adequate – that is, actionable. As you know, Karen Horney has much emphasized an idealized image — she calls it the “idealized self” which she considers neurotic, often exaggerated, over-compensatory. Well, the classical, the typical case — it can arise in psychopathic cases in delusion — is the weakling who believes himself Napoleon; that is extreme over-compensation.

Of course, we must be wary not to create such neurotic, impossible, idealized images, but this should not make us shy, prevent us from using the positive ideal model, the attainable ideal model. And that is the first task in cooperation with the patient, to decide what can be achieved, and even how far a patient wants to go. There are patients who merely ask me to help them eliminate some nervous symptom, to be what they were before the trouble, or to gain a very modest, a very easy-to-reach condition. That is all right, if they do not want to go further, but often that does not prevent them from relapses if other difficult situations arise. So they can and should be encouraged to reach for the maximum achievable; that is, not only to get well clinically, but to become much better than they were before getting ill, because if they became ill it shows that their psychological state was rather shaky, rather imperfect. Work on the basis of the growth principle, that is not homeostasis, but cooperating with the tendency to grow, to mature, which Maslow has very well put into evidence — as one normal, spontaneous drive in human nature. And so, taking into consideration all the circumstances, inner and outer, we try to decide *with* the patient an achievable, ideal model of what he can and wants to become.

(About two minutes missing here from the tape)

...There are two stages in this technique: first static and then dynamic. The static is just the picture of the appearance and the inner feel in the patient of his new “ideal” personality. The dynamic is seeing himself or herself behave, act and feel in various circumstances; first, easy ones, and then more and more difficult ones — such as a crisis, an emergency, etc.

It is, in a sense, an acting, subjective acting, using the “as if” technique, and seeing oneself act and react as if he were already what he wanted

to be. With all this “acting” — I don’t like the word “suggestion” for it is rather shallow, but in its deeper sense it suggests, it evokes, it models the man or the woman into the reality expressed or represented by the model. In this process various things can happen: often resistance, counter-action from the unconscious, fears of failure or sometimes over-excitement. There are various reactions which have to be noted, examined and analyzed, and corrected.

It is an exercise which is very, very effective, has a high therapeutic value, combining as it does many helpful influences. This is the general outline of the exercise, but then it can, as I said, be made at diverse levels — at



the adjustment level, at the growth level, or at the self-realization level of which we spoke this morning. The end may be different, but the structure of the exercises remains practically the same.

Technique of Visualization

All this presupposes a certain skill and an ability to use the simpler techniques of which it is composed, and this leads to one of the most important techniques — that of visualization.

Here I will read a few notes which were taken at the Capolona Conference last year: Visualization is a technique for the release of the imagination. The imagination is one of the most important psychological functions. It is surprising that Jung did not include it in his list of functions. He has sensation, feeling, thought and intuition, but he left out imagination and will. The importance of the imagination has been rediscovered; there is an old Chinese saying that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” We now find businessmen making a more systematic, widespread and intelligent use of the power of imagination than our psychologists and educators. Much of modern advertising, in reality, makes able use of imagination.

There are also philosophers and thinkers who have given due — even exaggerated — importance to the imagination. I think, first, Schopenhauer — in a sense; but Fawcett in his “God, the Divine Imagery,” almost deified the imagination. So, I think we should do as much and as well as advertisers, at least, and use the imagination for therapeutic purposes and not for high pressure selling.

Now according to the practical character of our work, I suggest you make a few simple exercises of visualization with me, and then we will comment upon them. I can tell you the result: how, in the most simple exercises of the imagination, arise practical and theoretical problems — much more than we may think beforehand.

Visualization Exercise with Numbers

The following is the most simple exercise: first I will describe it, then we will do it together. First imagine the setting — a classroom with a blackboard, an ordinary blackboard, grey or dull black. When we have visualized it more or less clearly — it does not matter much — let us imagine that mysteriously a number appears on the blackboard. So let us imagine a classroom, we are seated and in front of us is the blackboard — a fairly large blackboard, the details can be imagined as one wishes — a blackboard with a frame of wood. Now, in the middle of the blackboard appears the number (five) 5, as if written with white chalk, regular, fairly large, well defined. Let us visualize



it, a 5, on the grey blackboard, let us keep it vividly before our mental eyes, so to speak. Now on the right of the 5 a 2 appears; we see two numbers — a 5 and a 2; it makes 52. Keeping our attention riveted on this number 52 as if it were important, there appears a 4 at the side of the 2 — 524. Three numbers written in white chalk, same size, regularly outlined

(Missed about a minute during changing of tapes.

Dr. Assagioli continued in similar vein, adding a 7 to the 524.)

5247 — 5 2 4 7. Let us visualize this four figure number as a unit. (A long pause) That is enough for the present! Will you please tell me the results?

Mr. Hilton:

Results in what way?

Dr. Assagioli:

Vividness, steadiness, any mental or emotional reactions, degree of introspection.

Mr. Hilton:

Reasonably steady, although I also had one eye on the tape recorder; but there were no reactions apart from that. (Dr. Assagioli: Could you keep the figures reasonably steady?) Yes, I could keep them quite steady.

Dr. Assagioli:

Would you like to tell us what was your experience? (Question addressed to Dr. Price)

Dr. Price:

Well, I had a little difficulty — they would go away and then come back; it seems silly, but a six would keep trying to slip in there. That was because, when you told us with what number to begin, I was thinking about a six, and that six would keep coming in. (Dr. Assagioli: Any other comments?) No.

Mr. Dawson:

Everytime you said a number I saw a hand write the number and then when I was waiting for the next number something else began to come in, some other phantasies — like a red barrel or something. (Dr. Assagioli: What type of phantasies?) Just other objects kept coming in, but when you said the number that brought it all back clearly.

Mrs. Alexia de Bie:

I had a battle with number 4. I tried to make it be a four and not five, and then when it became 5 I thought it was a spiritual number for some reason — I don't know why — five levels, maybe I read it somewhere, but that was my thought.



Dr. Assagioli:

So your associations started with the number 5?

Mrs. de Bie:

No, it started with a 4 first, and then with the 5.

Miss Elizabeth V. Knight:

Now I saw 524 beautifully, and I lost it because this (the tape recorder) went on the blink.

Mrs. F. Hilton:

I did exactly as Alexia; and before you spoke the 5 I saw a four and then I had to superimpose 5 on top of the 4.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

I kept telling myself that my only expectation was that after 5 I expected 7 — adding them up; if so, the 7 has significance. (Dr. Price: I started multiplying the seven too...)

Miss Miles:

I had trouble getting the blackboard in the beginning because I live in the blackboard world, so I had to decide which blackboard it would be. I jumped around from room to room and quickly thought what had happened when I had a group of students at my house to do this experiment — so this took quite a while; and then I finally settled on one and then the numbers appeared very clearly in a kind of writing or a way of making figures which I rather dislike. It was not the way I would make them; it is probably the Palmer penmanship way which someone tried to teach me in my youth — flourishes; then it would kind of fade until you gave me a new number and then it would come back, but always in this kind of drippy writing.

Dr. Gerard:

Well, once or twice I had to remake the number with an imaginary chalk. At one time you said “five hundred,” so this 5 0 0 stared at me; and then you said again 5 2 4, so I saw again 5 2 4. I had no associations whatsoever, because I had said to myself that I will just concentrate on numbers and see numbers and think of nothing else.

Mr. Hilton:

May I add something, Roberto, which I have just remembered? What Bob said brought it back to my mind. I had difficulty in holding the numbers — at the beginning as they appeared, but when I chalked over them — in imagination — then they stayed there. After that I had no trouble.



Relation or Exercises to the Will and Realization of the Self

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, you see, there have been interesting results which showed how the reproductive imagination is disturbed by productive imagination — your flourishing writing, all those things intruding, associations and all that. How difficult it is, to use ordinary terminology, to keep the mind steady — the attention, rather — fixed and steady on a point. Well, I would say that this simple exercise includes imagination, concentration, attention, visualization and will — not will as a deliberate intention, but in reality it includes, it as an unconscious exercise of will. And exercises of this kind are very helpful to that fundamental realization of which I spoke this morning, of differentiation between the self and the contents of the consciousness. This strain, this difficulty in keeping in the field of consciousness the content, the complete content which one wills to keep, makes us realize — let us say dramatically — the difference between the willing, the self-who-wills and the activity, the normal activity, of the various functions — psychological functions: attention, imagination and so on.

So, it is the first step towards a great thing, the realization of the self as distinct from psychological activity, from the various psychological functions. This morning I emphasized that as a chief point, which has been utterly neglected in modern psychology. I will repeat my words on this fundamental principle in psychosynthesis. This book, “The Self,” which has been published by various contributors; in it practically no one made the clear distinction between the self and the “personality-self”, in the sense that one speaks of oneself, myself, myself as an individual with all my make-up and idiosyncrasies and so on. That is our personality, but it is not *the* self. *The* self in the strict sense is the point of self-awareness — pure, neutral, without any content. It is what distinguishes us from the animal, the I-reference; and the fundamental difference is that the self always remains the same — self-identity, while the contents of the consciousness change all the time, streams of sense impressions coming in from outside, the contents from the unconscious come in just as, with a stage, many characters come in and out, but the stage remains the same; but more than the stage is the consciousness of the self, the I.

Well, this fundamental distinction can be discussed theoretically — I do not think one can give real reasons against it — but it has to be realized practically; and the way to realize it is through exercises in which the self, the willing self, the self that wills, and the unruly psychological functions and activities are put in contrast. Through this contrast we realize the self; and I say that it is a real fight if one wants to do more elaborate and protracted exercises. This one with the set of figures can be expanded and is



practically unlimited. There are many personal differences which come out. There are some who have difficulty in vividness but have persistence; others will have very vivid mental pictures under suggestion or auto-suggestion, the suggestion of the doctor, or, when he performs alone, of the inner man; but then the picture disappears and it has to be made over and over again. So ...the degree of vividness and persistence; then, the width of the field of consciousness — one can visualize very well single figures but have difficulty with three or four or five. Others, instead, who have difficulty in vividness and persistence, have a large field of attention and can visualize any number of figures — four, five, or six figures.

Training makes improvement in these directions — in vividness, in persistence and in the width of the field. So you see that this is the simplest exercise you can imagine and yet how much research can be done with it. And this simplicity has great advantages because it isolates us from other factors such as color, of emotional interest, or other things which can complicate the matter.

Therefore, I used that number exercise specifically, the first exercise in the Active Techniques; and in each case we got rich results from it. It is also good because of the progress during the training — the patient sees week after week how much he or she improves; and although it is not an objective measurement, subjectively it really *is* a measurement; it measures the improvement. Suppose we imagine that at first he could only imagine one or two figures and then he finds it easy to visualize three, four, five or six, then the patient sees the improvement — he is aware of sure improvement, of some vividness, of some persistence; and so also in the inhibition of the spontaneous images. But one should not inhibit too drastically what comes up, for it may be significant of resistance or of associations — significant associations and so on. Well, I need not enlarge, and those who are present can very well develop them.

This same kind of instructive exercise can and should be made for other four senses: auditory exercises, olfactory, gustative and tactile. And also, here is a good training for the patient for his will, for his attention and concentration; also in expression, in inner reporting. More and more he gets the sense that he can direct at will the attention and the imagination to the field he or she chooses. Shall we do together an auditory exercise?

While most of these exercises are neutral, emotionally neutral; in themselves, we can use them for the invocation of desired emotions. You see, when I speak of the cultivation of the feelings, the desired feelings, this cultivation is not made directly. If we want to be joyous, we try to feel joyous; we use great imaginary stimuli which are evocative of the desired feeling. Therefore, we will make the following exercise. For this purpose we will not eliminate associated images or other senses; if visual pictures come up we will not suppress them. In the pure training we do, but in the second stage



of the exercise we will do now, intended to evoke a certain feeling, they will not be suppressed. We concentrate the attention on the auditory feeling, and if other images come in we do not eliminate them; we keep them on the border of consciousness, so to speak; but they can help.

Auditory Exercise

Let us imagine we are sitting in the country on a bench, and suddenly we hear the sound of bells announcing a festivity. Try to hear three bells coming from a church, sounding joyously. (A long silence) That is much too short a period for the exercise, but our time is limited. We will now see, very rapidly, what were the results.

Mr. Hilton:

That was very interesting, Roberto. I heard the three bells on a kind of upsweeping note, and they kept increasing in speed (here F.H. whistled the three notes, a moderate tone, a high one, one half-way in between); at the end they were ringing very quickly — most interesting!

Dr. Price:

Well, I could hear — of course at first — various bells that I had heard before. One came to mind: I spent some time in Dusseldorf many years ago and I lived across from a small church; so of course I could hear those bells. Then I thought: they do not sound very joyous, especially when they used to wake me up at six o'clock in the morning. Then I heard some other bells that chimed — I had the pleasure of trying to play these chimes; there were more than three bells, but finally I got this rhythm: the final one would ring twice. I would hear two bells, but by that time maybe the first ones had gone by. Anyhow, the rhythm kept going.

Dr. Assagioli:

That is interesting, for it shows the relative independence of the imagination when it receives a certain task to perform. It does not conform strictly to instructions but has an initiative of its own which can be constructive or antagonistic or deviative.

Mr. Dawson:

I had a very vague experience this time so that the sound of the bells was more of a “space feeling” experience. It was not that there was a visual image of sound or space; it seemed the sort of thing one felt with the body (Dr. Assagioli: The visual prevailed on the auditory?). No, it was more of a bodily thing, this feeling of pressure, of bells, something surrounding. (Dr. Assagioli: A sort of organic reaction?) Yes, there was some organic reaction.



Dr. Assagioli:

Well, there is no time to go through it all, but we have had simple samples; but here, when we come to the emotional overtones, there is a wide field: first, diagnostic, then therapeutic, that need not be described by me. You can very well develop and apply it yourselves.

Then, the third stage — or complication, let us say — is the conscious associating of sensations of different kinds.

There is another very definite, a complete, exercise with a very definite psychosynthetic purpose which I have used often before with really striking results; well, it is apparently simple in itself, but it is pregnant with meaning. And this introduces us to the big subject of symbolism, which I will take up tomorrow, because that applies equally to therapy and to education; so it is a common ground. This is the exercise. We had better do it right away.

“Rose” Exercise

Let us imagine vividly a perfect rosebud, closed — only the stem, and green sepals and at the top just a point of the rose emerging, the points of the petals. Visualize it clearly in a static way, a closed rosebud. Now let us imagine that it opens slowly, very slowly, a little more of the delicate rose, the beautiful rose hue of the petals; it opens more and more. Now it is half open. (I am doing this more rapidly than it should be done.) Now the rose emerges in its beauty, the delicacy of the rose petals, the delicate quality, and presently we can smell the scent. Let us imagine vividly the perfume, the special quality, the blazing rich quality of the perfume of the rose. At the same time, our attention is directed to the beauty of the rose and the sweet smelling scent. Contemplate it with a sense of admiration and of joy. Now let us recognize it as a vivid symbol, a significant symbol of inner growth, inner development, unfolding, expansion, Self-realization, and radiation around us of our best inner being and quality. We are like a rose, with the same hidden potentialities of the bud: growth, expansion, actualization of latent potencies, developing harmoniously, actively radiating.

(All the foregoing was spoken very slowly with long pauses between each phrase, followed by about one to two minutes silence.)

That was too short, much too short: The results with patients have been very different in different cases; but in some cases they have been apparently out of proportion to the simplicity of the exercise. A real self-realization, an awakening of hitherto latent inner qualities that has certainly speeded up the healing process.

Of course the efficiency of the exercise depends on the ability to introject the rose, to have the sense of the living symbol, so that the symbol in a



sense works in you creatively. There is deep similarity between the process of unfoldment in a plant and what happens inwardly in ourselves. Of course, here one could speak at great length about the secret of Self-realization, of actualization, the seed interest — the ordinary personality considered as a seed of what one can become; and here also are many psychoanalytic elements — of resistance, of doubt, of oscillation and all that. Of course, the patient is encouraged to speak freely of his spontaneous reactions, and then they are analyzed again and again until they are dissipated, and the blossoming takes place freely and unimpeded.

You see, these are very different from other techniques which are more personal, more “attention-riveted” on the individual and his problems. These psychosynthetic techniques are more objective, they take the attention away from narcissistic or egocentric attitudes; they create a certain objectiveness, detachment and an interest in the performance; and the results are a reaction from the exercise to the symbol. And that is very important, for in my opinion one of the pitfalls of psychoanalysis is to feed the egocentricity of the patient and the importance of his own emotional reactions. They are emphasized, made too important; they occupy the field of consciousness. Here, on the contrary, we substitute quietly other contents, impersonal, objective in the sense of having no I-reference; and they give ample occasion for explanation of the functions. So we interest the patient in impersonal psychology, in the human machinery, its wonderful workings, its complications and so on, and less and less in *himself*, which is a very healthy thing because with each patient the mere fact of suffering leads to egocentricity, to introversion — the bad kind of introversion.

So you see how many advantages there are in the most simple active techniques. That was the point that I wanted to make specially today — the value of the Active Techniques in general. You can imagine that if the simplest exercises have all this value, the more definite and complicated and specific exercises have even more and more. As the Active Techniques are so neglected in psychotherapy I wanted to stress this point: the value of Active Techniques. Thank you for your attention.

(End of first half of afternoon session)

Dr. Assagioli:

(Brief opening period not recorded, but Dr. A. said he would discuss *Impersonal Psychology* and began with a description of organic symbols.)

...one can be called the cycle of the wheat, from tilling the ground, sowing, performing various agricultural operations — weeding, putting in manure, fertilizers; then the action of water and sun; the seed becomes the tiny plant and then the ripening and the beginning to form of the seeds within the plant; their ripening and then the collecting, the storing and the



grinding of the wheat; then the making of the bread and the eating of the bread which is transformed into living organic substance with its contents of proteins and so on.

You see what richness in symbolism can be found. Take the other, which I mentioned more or less jokingly, coffee. The growing of the coffee plant, the beans, the grinding of the beans, the powder, the making of the coffee by the action of fire and water, of steam. We obtain the *essence* of the coffee — I am thinking of the espresso which is made through steam, the result of the combined action of fire and water — the active part of the coffee, the aromatic ingredient, leaving the dregs; and then the stimulating, the psycho-physical effects of coffee. The symbolism is apparent, and I bring them to you to lead into more complete exercises which demand more attention, imagination and concentration — and are also full of meaning.

Training in Perception

I ask patients to apply such symbols themselves and to their situations.

I could add many more examples, but I think first comes the training of perception, of observation. For instance, on entering an unfamiliar room we stop and look around and observe for a few seconds, and then sit down and write out a report as fully as we can of what we have observed. This is one of the most sobering and humiliating exercises; sometimes one neglects to see the most large and obvious objects — I mean normal people, not patients!

What I do in the consulting room is to ask patients to observe a picture or an object, and then to describe it in detail. Then we check. They examine the picture for about a minute at first. Then I again give them the picture for half a minute and ask them to observe what they have missed before. And then a third time if necessary. There comes a difference between the beginning of the treatment and after a certain time; the proficiency they acquire in observation is encouraging to them. Here again there is not any measuring in figures, but yet one *can* measure the improvement.

Then the same for auditory exercises — the training to recognize each of the seven notes, and later the semitones, the fundamental chords, simple melodies, one theme throughout a sonata or a symphony. Of course, there are those who are not auditory at all, but these exercises are for auditory or fairly auditory types.

Training Organs of Action

That is all under the first heading of training of perception, of observation. Second comes the training of the organs of action. Training in hand-writing;



practice writing in a slow careful manner. There is also another method — I don't practice it, but there are some graphologists who have very good results in training pupils to write in a kind of way corresponding to the qualities, the functions which they have to develop. It sounds a little fantastic, but anyhow it can be done. But for people who are tense and hurried, writing in a slow, regular way *is* educational.

A second item under this heading: practice the right intonation and modulation of voice—diction. It has a psychotherapeutic, an educational and a practical value.

Then there is the large subject of muscular movement — the respective value and uses of gymnastics or exercises, set exercises and free movement, spontaneous free movement, free movement with music. This is a huge subject — the relative values of the exercises, their combination, their application to certain types. I would just mention that among the prescribed muscular exercises, the best one, I think, which is therapeutic and educational, is: "My System," by Müller. It is very well known in Europe — the book has been a bestseller, over a million copies in different European languages. Müller had an institute in London until he died. He was a living example of the miracle of training. He was an example of constructive over-compensation. He was a very delicate child, but he decided that he would become strong physically. He experimented and developed his system — whole physical functioning. Generally, sports develop one side, either arms or legs, and so on, but he gave an all-around development without any instruments. He became champion of various sports in Denmark, and I have here his photograph at age 63. He looks like a Greek statue, skating at St. Moritz in many degrees below zero, yet clad only in shorts.

So he was an example of the will, of constructive over-compensation; because, you see, psychoanalysis has so much emphasized the negative that analysts forget the positive side of many things they have found. Over-compensation can be quite constructive.

Dr. Gerard:

Are there any copies of his books written in English?

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, yes. He had an Institute in London. His book, "My System," came out in three books: "MY System," "My System for Women," and "My System for Children." I think it would be for your children quite helpful. And for women it has an aesthetic value because it is an all around harmonious development of the muscular apparatus.



Training in Concentration

The next thing is what we have mentioned before — the training of the reproductive imagination and its evocation. Here, in my notes, I have a heading which is “Training of Concentration” — all these things which have no emotional content, which are purely intellectual exercises. Visualize successively and slowly a series of numbers — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — and notice how far you can go without allowing your thoughts to wander. That also is rather a sobering exercise, for you get up to 20 or 30 and then fly off! That can really be translated into quantitative measures, for at first you may wander at 10 or 12; then you can go on to 100, 200. So that is a *measure* of the power of concentration.

Dr. Gerard:

You visualize the series of numbers one at a time?

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, one at a time: 1, 2, 3 (spoken slowly) — you see, that is pure concentration. It has no other interest, no helping interest whatever, except the exercise itself. I think that can be a measure of the power of concentration, which is an expression of the will.

Training in Inner Observation

Another heading is “The Training of Inner Observation,” which can be called “the consciousness of the spectator.” To observe in a calm, uncritical, impersonal attitude the spontaneous flow of the psychological activities — thoughts, sensations, emotions. It is a most difficult exercise, i.e., not to react, neither approving nor disproving. And this is preparatory to the pure “I”-experience, “self”-experience.

Mr. Dawson:

I am concerned as to whether it can be done with students in art education classes; I am thinking about a different approach, one we can call the “content approach” (Dr. Assagioli: Content approach?) or what we could call a “structural approach,” or a “process approach”. These exercises in concentration and visualization which you have mentioned fit into my conception of a process approach. This *is* experience of a process. You are observing changes, progressive changes. I have been thinking about something very much along this line, something that involves symbolism such as you have here; but now that you have mentioned this, this is quite simple; it makes very little demand upon dramatic imagination, so that it might be possible to initiate a course by seeing how richly people can visually conceive of these; and then, through the course, attempt to bring out ability to do this. Then, at the end of the course, once again have them make, reproduce their experience of one of these — like the wheat cycle — perhaps comparing



the richness of detail, the completeness of the cycle, the measure of the growth they have achieved.

Dr. Assagioli:

Now I will give some hints about the working out of these things. Of course my chief interest has been in treatment, but pure Psychologists could do very useful research work with no directly utilitarian purpose. This is an unlimited field of research; these exercises could give helpful results for both doctors and for educators. And, in the opposite direction, doctors and educators from their individual and case experiences can give very fruitful suggestions of techniques and of problems to be worked out by the academic psychologists in their classes and laboratories — so it is a two-way street.

There could be very good cooperation between those who like or need to give immediate practical application and can make statistics, and the psychologists who have the leisure and the duty to do laboratory, systematic laboratory work. There is no conflict at all.

Dr. Gerard:

Also, I feel in going along with this — at least in this country — it would be better to present some of these exercises under the heading of “learning,” which is one of the big things that everyone is hep about in academic psychology, for these are really learning experiences in many ways. That you are *learning*, increasing the span of attention, learning to hold certain geometrical forms or certain visualizations (Dr. Assagioli: Oh, yes. It comes under a much bigger heading — of efficiency!). So it can be integrated within the type of thinking that is prevalent.

Dr. Assagioli:

That is your task — to present it in the right way for the mentality of this country.

Dr. Gerard:

Personally, I have more the interest that you have, the therapeutic interest and not the academic one; but I could see how it could be used in academic circles.

Dr. Assagioli:

I just want to say that I am all for and in sympathy with the various fields; there should only be friendliness between the doctors, psychologists and educators.

Dr. Gerard:

From the point of view of research, if you take the exercise in visualization, academic psychologists may say, “Well, he can tell you that he can visualize longer, but it may not be true.” So, I think one of the exercises which you mentioned, which is amenable to confirmation, is the one where you ask



a person to look at a picture, a standard stimulus, then describe it, write it down. Then you have a document; this is concrete; it satisfies the concrete mind of the concrete psychologist or other academicians; you can indicate the span of attention; you can make beautiful “learning curves,” satisfy their feeling for concrete things; and at the same time you can introduce methods within the realm of purely academic forms. (Dr. Assagioli: I am all for it!)

Miss Miles:

We want to find a way, we want to do a research next year in what Chas calls “styles” in teaching; make pre-tests and then, later, further tests.

It will call for the help, the participation of some other teacher, or teachers, who teach in a different style. It is the idea of checking personality integration. This would be in art education, at the moment.

Dr. Assagioli:

Of course, we all have the *background* of psychosynthesis, but all these exercises are tools for the development of not sufficiently developed functions. In the integration process, one question — there are *many* questions — is, what is the way of recognizing personality integration? The ability to do any one of these tests better at the end of the year — will this be accepted as a measure of personality integration? Is this kind of thing standard? Of course, you have to be aware of the lure of efficiency, because that is quite against the psychosynthetic attitude. For instance, to over-develop definitely a single talent; let us take an example, chess playing. Freaks should not be encouraged. So all these developments should be subordinated to the psychosynthetic goal.

Miss Miles:

This is why — you have just given me the answer! — if one teaches this way (which I have been feeling towards for sometime, as you know) one does not get “results!” This raises a problem in educational circles.

Dr. Assagioli:

The point is to develop the weaker function to the normal level, not to encourage the over-development of relatively exaggerated functions. Because, of course, we cannot have too much of a good thing, but too much in comparison with the others will bring imbalance. You cannot have too much memory, but if you cultivate only memory, you have an unbalanced individual. That is the point. There is the tendency to follow the line of least resistance.

Miss Miles:

This is the point: what you people are going to do in therapy and in psychology will eventually help education, because there have got to be pressures which do not now exist, demands for students to get a really balanced program. Maybe they say they want it now, but they do not know what



balance means, I guess, for they are not thinking about the emotional life of the child, and they are not thinking about imagination and creativity.

The Imagination

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, the whole attitude in the West is so grossly materialistic; we do not realize how gross it is. The chief example, a shocking example, is mothers' love for children. The comparative amount of care they give to their physical well-being and to attending to their physical "wants" — not real needs; and the neglect of the understanding of their emotional life, of their imaginative functions and the lack of realization of their value. For instance, the life of the child is ninety percent imagination at a certain stage. Many mothers do not know anything of, have no interest in, nor understanding of, the imagination; and that can create the basis of a serious neurosis in the child. I think that very much of the education lies first in the family; the school cannot do much if the same thing is not adopted in the family too, because education in the family exists *before* the school, *during* the school and *after* the school.

Dr. Gerard:

So there may be a need to describe — in simple terms that people will understand and which will eventually appear in general public magazines — certain exercises which could be done in conjunction, between the parents and their children. (Dr. Assagioli: Quite!) Simple exercises of imagination.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, they should appeal to the humanitarian aspect of the problem, the preventative — to prevent neuroses; that is needed. Mothers should have some realization of the psychological life of their children, their needs and the possibilities of training.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

This particular function has been neglected in the educational field, but I want to make a point concerning imagination. It seems to me that when imagination is taken as a *fact* it does not help the individual very much, but if it is taken as a *hypothesis*, then he goes along.

Dr. Assagioli:

But imagination is *a function*, is an existing undeniable function of the normal human, psychological machinery. It exists. I do not understand.....

Dr. Gerard:

What Triant is trying to say is that with certain patients we have to beware that they do not confound their imagination, which to a great extent is based on wishes and desires, with the reality of the situation. That is quite



different from the type of purposeful imagination, for a certain purpose, that we are using here.

Dr. Assagioli:

So you see the solution lies always in the same two ways: first, to develop the balancing qualities of realism, of physical efficiency, of mental efficiency, side by side with the imagination; and the other is to control, and not suppress, the imagination. That is one of the central therapeutic points. Psychoanalysis has taught us very well not to suppress, not to condemn. And that is its very valuable contribution — never suppress, never condemn, but *we must add a control and must utilize*. You see, no suppression, but control and utilization, planned utilization. So, imagination can be, let us say, separated in a child or in an imaginative temperament, but you cannot suppress it. You have to make the subject aware of it and teach him to become master of it. But we master a function by *using* it, and in a controlled way.

One more very clear example or analogy is that of water and inundation — periodical inundation by uncontrolled torrents, floods and so on. You cannot suppress water; it is not efficient; the best thing is utilization of the waters: first make reservoirs so as to be able to regulate the outflow; then utilization for irrigation, for cultivation purposes and power plants. So you see, you do not condemn water, you do not suppress water, but you control and utilize it.

So with all these streams of emotion and imagination the same thing has to be done — not to suppress them, not to eliminate them, but to control them, canalize and utilize them.

Dr. Gerard:

So actually, you are making a distinction on one hand between an uncontrolled, wishful imagination, and a controlled, purposeful imagination which enables you actually to carry out tasks (Dr. Assagioli: Exactly!), and also to integrate.

Dr. Assagioli:

Exactly! And then the cooperation between reason, imagination and action.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Then all these things lead to self-realization, all together.

Dr. Assagioli:

To psychosynthesis; the idea of psychosynthesis is the harmonious organization of the different psychological functions; and it is as unrealistic to condemn, just as in the great analogy of the human organism — the muscular system, the nervous system, the bone system — all naturally cooperate with each other. The whole digestive process is a wonderful biosynthesis. A living human organism, a healthy human body, is an example of



biosynthesis, of dynamic and static biosynthesis — that is, homeostasis of the [person], but a dynamic homeostasis and growth and development. So if you translate the analogy into the ideal psychological organism, many of the official problems fall away. We can say that the ideal of psychosynthesis is the perfect psychological organism in which all the functions cooperate harmoniously, as do the bodily functions in the healthy human body. And then the integration of the two — the physical and the psychological, the bio-psychosynthesis.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Then it seems to me that when we speak of self-realization, it is almost the same as when we say the “will to become?”

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes. I think that there is a spontaneous tendency to growth and to self-realization as there is a spontaneous, wonderful trend towards health in the human body. Take the miracle of the healing of a wound — it is not the doctor who heals the wound; the doctor creates the most favorable conditions — bandaging and disinfecting, etc. — for the body heals itself and creates all the new skin and connections, and so on. So there is in the body the trend to health, and there is in the psychological organism a reality — a trend to health.

So psychosynthesis is nothing that is imposed from without, artificial, but is just the helping of a natural tendency to wholeness, to harmony, to health. As with the body, through active training of which we have spoken — gymnastics, sports, and so on, you can improve the efficiency of the body, so through the Active Techniques you can actively cooperate with the spontaneous tendency towards self-realization.

Dr. Price:

Although there is no doubt that every child has imagination and can be helped to utilize his imagination to his better advantage, are not some children born with limited capacity for imagination? Possibly the gifted children, in which you and I are both interested, may have a higher capacity for imagination; but no matter how hard we try with a child who has but a limited capacity for imagination, we can help him utilize it better but we cannot make him like some other children who have further capacities.

Dr. Assagioli:

Right; there are individual differences, very great individual differences. Only here we are speaking in general terms.

Dr. Price:

Some people, to hear them talk, would accomplish miracles with all children, and that is not right.



Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, of course. But, you see, in a sense if you try to suppress the imagination the child will have his own private life of wild imagination. Children create imaginary companions, and they have a whole life of which the adult knows nothing — the secret life of a child.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

I do not know if you are familiar with the curricula which we have in our schools nowadays, but do you think there is a subject that can be included in curricula which will stimulate the imagination of the children in the elementary schools or high schools?

Dr. Assagioli:

We should re-cognize imagination as a normal function of the human being, and especially of the child; that is the point.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Yes, but I am speaking about *methods* to stimulate the imagination.

Dr. Assagioli:

No, not methods, but of *re-cognizing*, utilizing, as I said, controlling and utilizing, not ignoring, not condemning. That is a general principle of treatment in education — never condemn, never try to suppress, recognize existing functions and then make the best of them — to put it colloquially.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Well, I put the situation within the classroom.

Dr. Assagioli:

Within the classroom? Well, a pupil of mine used all these exercises with great success. The child liked them; but of course, she gave only a few minutes to them and the rest of the curriculum was normal. Children did other things better when they had been given the ten minutes of imaginative exercise.

Miss Miles:

I wonder if the point of his question is, “Is there going to be a task suggested here?” The question is whether the subject matter of the average school curriculum now lends itself to this kind of treatment? Take high school; most of the school day is spent in things like mathematics, language, history, English — and when you think how many of the subjects can have imagination brought in! Of course, the teacher must realize that it can be done.

Dr. Assagioli:

It is very helpful for memorizing mathematical formulae to visualize. Historical facts can be visualized. Imagination can be put into every subject.



Mr. Hilton:

Does that cover the point you were trying to make, Triant?

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Not exactly.

Mrs.de Bie:

I have a son at ----, and I am wondering when they will cut something out of the curriculum and just stop for ten minutes to visualize!

Miss Miles:

You see, the point is the teacher *could* do it, but doesn't; and it is not generally done.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, shall we take that up tomorrow, when we discuss educational questions?

Dr. Gerard:

You mentioned olfactory, gustatory, tactile exercises; could you tell us a little more about these?

Dr. Assagioli:

Let us just make a few — we ourselves. The tactile first.

Let us imagine that we pass our hand over a sheet of glass, frosted, rough-surfaced glass. Let us imagine that we pass our hand very slowly and feel at the same time, with the tips of our fingers, the cold temperature and the rough surface of the glass — slowly, from above downwards. There we have two tactile sensations: temperature, the cold, and the surface, the feel of the surface.

Now let us shift rapidly to another exercise. Let us imagine that we have a cat on our lap, and that we caress the cat's fur from the head to the tail and we have the sense of the warmth and the yielding tactile sensation of the fur, and the smoothness of the fur; so, warmth, yielding quality — flexible and smooth. Let us imagine that we are doing that, and feel at the same time warmth, the yielding sensation of the fur and the smoothness.

Mr. H. Richard Mades:

Are these exercises, when you give them to another person, something which they must have actually experienced before?

Dr. Assagioli:

You have raised a very interesting point, an apparent paradox. It is much easier to visualize, let us say, a more complicated image which we have seen, that is familiar to us, than to imagine a simple thing which we have to create. For instance, if you take a building or a church you can visualize it easily in many details. Instead, if you do an exercise with geometric forms,



if you make an exercise with form and color — for instance, visualize a blue disc which is a very simple thing — it is much more difficult than to visualize a building known to us. So, that answers your question.

Mr. Mades:

No, the point I was trying to make is that I analyzed my processes, the processes I went through when I attempted to visualize the glass. The first thing I did was to visualize a piece of glass; and the second was to recall the sensation when my fingers ran over frosted glass once (in the past) and the third thing I did was to recall the cold, the coldness of the glass; and when I recalled all of these elements then I could imagine my hand running over a piece of frosted glass and get the thing pretty well. But if you ask me to visualize riding on an elephant's back, for instance, I have never done that, so I would not know how to do it.

Dr. Assagioli:

It is much more difficult. You come to what I was saying, that in these exercises we spontaneously try to get the help of memory tracks, memory of previous experience of the same or a similar kind; and if we do not find them we have to use the creative imagination — to put it technically, the *reproductive* imagination is much easier than the *creative* imagination.

Dr. Gerard:

I am interested in what you just said about exercises, geometric forms, because this is something that I have tried myself fairly extensively, but I could like very much to know what you have found in practice.

Dr. Assagioli:

One of the things is that they (the forms) are most rebellious! Well, I do not know exactly...

Dr. Price:

Because you did not like geometry! (Laughter)

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, I do not particularly like geometry; but also in patients and pupils the color tends to become the complementary color, or another color, and the shapes to get out of shape very perversely.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

As you mentioned before, the will plays a role in these exercises. Do you think that association comes into the situation — that the person associates these pictures with past experience? Because when we were doing the one before (the bell exercise), I immediately transferred myself to Athens, someone else to Switzerland, and another one thought of England.



Dr. Assagioli:

Of course the process of association — which all the psychologists have greatly exaggerated — exists; all the time there is this spontaneous trend towards association, and that is the enemy of concentration. Association has a very useful function, but we have to be able to control it when our purpose is different and that function would not serve us for the moment. Again, it is a question of control; association has not to be condemned, nor to be suppressed, but re-utilized and controlled, and used or not *at will*, as with all functions.

When we reason we have to control imagination; when we give free play to the imagination we have to control reason and analysis; always the self, through the will, reaches, utilizes, plays with, controls, activates or puts into cold storage a definite function according to his purpose. That is psychosynthesis: the attitude that there is a *willing* self which can control all the dynamic, the spontaneous dynamic of the psychological functions and energies. That is it in a nutshell. But to do that you have first to realize that you are a *self*, and that you have a *will*. Take careful note of this: *you are a self and you have a will*, or you are a self which has a will, which is capable of willing. And from that vantage point you proceed to the wise utilization and coordination of the various functions. This is another tabloid of psychosynthesis.

Mr. Dawson:

It is a matter of realization — you are a self, you have a self. Would not that be particularly important in dealing with adolescents?

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, at the adolescent stage the crisis and need provide an opportunity to make them realize that they are a self and that they have a will, and that they can control the crisis. I quite agree; that is the moment, because there is an actual need which can be fulfilled — and can be mixed up too!

Dr. Gerard:

Have you used certain geometrical forms rather than others for special purposes, different colors for different purposes?

Dr. Assagioli:

I have not specialized in that; I have only used the standard geometrical forms and standard colors, because my purpose was not to make research in that particular field, but just to use them for psychosynthetic purposes.

Mr. Dawson:

You have not used, either, the *symbolic* quality of either card or form?

Dr. Assagioli:

Not in the geometrical. I use the *living* symbol, such as the wheat or something which is more organically meaningful. For practical purposes, it is



better to use those meaningful symbols. Well, tomorrow I will inflict upon you the subject of symbolism, and the different categories of symbols and so on, and then we will develop this point.

Miss Miles:

Then for children and adolescents you prefer the living symbols? (Dr. Assagioli: Yes.)

Dr. Gerard:

I think that these two types of symbols tap different levels and I would not, from a psychosynthetic point of view, leave this conference with a feeling that one should use only living symbols. (Dr. Assagioli: I quite agree.) We have to use both — the living symbols and certain geometrical forms which tap and release the abstract mental levels.

Dr. Assagioli:

That will be our subject tomorrow. The different types of symbol from the most concrete to the most abstract; and the different functions of each kind of symbol: first, the different levels and the application and purposes; and then individualization, with symbols that are meaningful for that particular individual.

Miss Miles:

I have just had a thought. I do not know if it is particularly significant, but take the question, “Could you visualize a thing which you have not experienced?” I was trying to think of something I have never experienced and how I would go about trying to visualize it. I thought that I would do it by analogy.

Dr. Assagioli:

The imagination does not work in a vacuum. Creative imagination is a putting together, the creating of new combinations from existing elements, so your past experiences are analogous and can be put in new combinations.



PSYCHOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

TRANSCRIPT OF CONFERENCE
May 23rd – 25th, 1958

Part II

Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, Inc.
"Valmy" — P.O. Box 3895
Greenville, Delaware



CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPT

Saturday morning, May 24, 1958, 9:30 A.M. — Noon.

Dr. Assagioli:

I will begin with what may appear to be a side issue, but which is really a very important one. In gathering the material for this session, I re-read Prof. Ruggs' statements about the "quiet mind" and the creative imagination, and I was again greatly impressed by it. I think it is one of the most advanced and important statements in the field of education.

His statement from "The Way of the Quiet Mind" on intuitive contemplation is, I think, the one thing needed for all in the Western world, in general, and for education in particular. And this links up with the exercise on silence which was, I think, one of the highlights of the Montessori way of education. I will read a statement by a writer, Herman in the book, "Creative Prayer — the Ministry of Silence:"

"A state of poise and harmony which should have been obtained by means of a natural progressive discipline dating from early childhood. We have yet to accent and act upon the axiom that the cultivation of a habit of silence is an integral part of all true education, and that children, so far from looking upon a demand for silence as an unnatural and intolerable imposition, have an inborn aptitude to quietness. To actually realize the truth of this one only needs to witness the silent time in a Montessori school. The blinds are drawn, the signal is given and each head is bowed as a stillness, free from any morbid taint, descends upon the children. It is a real silence, not lazy or half dozy. No attempt is made to suggest a theme for meditation, yet something akin to true meditation takes place, for when the teacher's voice calls the children by name one by one into the light of the adjoining room, they come as those who have learned a wonderful and happy secret. There is a hint of depth in the merry eyes, a suggestion of more than physical health and peace in their whole bearing; a strange beauty, an elusive freshness as a morning dew seems to have been super-added to the natural childish vitality and charm. Whatever one may think of the Montessori system, few will question the wisdom of that spell of quietude in the middle of the morning's play."

I think that our reaction to this should be to have a silence immediately together — just to practice it.



(Following the silence, little of the recording decipherable for a period of 15 to 20 minutes. The following is a collation of notes taken by various participants.)

A forgotten neglected principle: the education of the educator. You can't bring water higher than its original source. You can't educate a child to something that you haven't achieved and are not usually expressing. Psychoanalysis considers the superego as the introjection of the image of the parents. There is a great truth in this. It is the living example which has the greatest creative evocative influence. Imitation, suggestion, subtle radiation. Emerson said, "What you are speaks so loud that I can't hear what you are saying." We need self-education and constant self-control in all our relationships with our children and pupils. Our motivation should be our love for our children and pupils. The true way of demonstrating true altruistic love is to refuse to do harm, and to be a living example. A psycho-spiritual catalytic action! Our first and foremost duty and task!

Adults do a great deal of harm to children. The merit of psychoanalysis is to have exposed this. Children often are the scapegoats of our complexes, drives and emotions. For example, the domineering drive. The best preventative of future neurosis is to avoid this. On the positive side, everything we are and achieve radiates around ourselves, and our pupils benefit thereby. If we want children to have something, we must achieve it ourselves. Sometimes we can do it together with the child and pupil, which creates communion, relationship, communication.

Points on which psychosynthetic education puts emphasis

Both for general education and for gifted children, consider every normal child as a potentially gifted child. If we educate normal children as if they were talented, their latent potentialities would begin to express. Evoke latent possibilities. Pay special attention to the unknown, ignored functions. Put emphasis on neglected areas: education of the emotions, of imagination, of higher feelings, of higher functions (creativity); education of the self.

Physical education

In whole-functioning, synthetic education, physical education has its proper place. One should always consider that psychosynthesis is really bio-psychosynthesis, and that we dropped the "bio" simply to simplify, not to exclude the physical. Two inner attitudes: 1) ordinary attitude over-emphasizes body achievements, and brings overidentification with the body, which limits consciousness; 2) psychosynthetic attitude: if we consider the



body as a precious valuable instrument of expression of our inner beings, we can love it, develop it, take care of it, just like an Arab loves his horse, and an American loves his car, as an extension of the self, but not as the true Self. I am not the car. I am not my body. The detached self is like the driver of the automobile. So physical education has (1) an efficiency value, and (2) a value of constant self-realization. You say, "my body," as something external, objective, as the tool of the true being.

Education of gifted children

Two attitudes: (1) dangerous attitude: to look for children with a specified talent, such as high I.Q., special technical skills, and to exploit this talent. That is not education, but exploitation, which leads to overspecialization; (2) psychosynthesis conception: ideal of all-around development. The more a child has a specialized talent, the more he needs to develop other functions. Often there is unbalance. So apply the principle of psychosynthesis, of harmonious integration, and make him a full-functioning, whole being.

(Resumption of transcript from tape; Dr. Assagioli speaking.)

Coming more specifically to the gifted child, there is a growing interest in and consciousness of gifted children. But also here there are two attitudes, and one — unhappily the most widespread — I consider distinctly dangerous; that is, to look for children with a specified talent — high intelligence quotient or special aptitudes for technical skills, mathematics and so on — and to pick them out and exploit this talent for industrial reasons, for technical advance and so on. That is not education but exploitation; it is done in the ill-conceived interests of the child — that he may be successful in life and make very much money with his highly specialized talent.

So I think we should take a very clear stand on this matter. Our conception of the gifted child is completely different, in a sense opposite. It is the ideal of *all-around* development; and the more a child has a specialized talent, the more he needs to balance it with the all-around development of the other functions; and sometimes some of the latter are particularly deficient. There is imbalance; so here the principle of psychosynthesis, of whole functioning, of harmonious integration has a special value. So that is our conception of the individual, gifted child: to make him a full functioning man or woman; then, if he has special talent, he will be blessed and can make constructive use of himself and for society — but only if he becomes a mature, well-rounded individual.

Then, there are gifted children who have no special talent but are more gifted and mature all around; and that, too, is neglected. One looks for a special mark of superiority and one forgets that some do not have any special mark of superiority, but are highly gifted all around.



If I may give a personal example, that was the case with my son. He was — it is not my evaluation, but a general evaluation of all who knew him — a gifted, highly gifted child and young man, but not with a special talent; he was all around gifted and spontaneously harmonious in the development of his various functions. I have seldom met a man who presented so few educational problems. He needed so little education from outside and he needed just “hands off,” and I and my wife tried our best to do that and it worked very well. So I have had a personal experience of a gifted child in an all-around way. He was not a genius in any way, but he wrote good poetry, had mechanical skills, very practical in business, quite good in mathematics — very gifted in many ways, but not outstanding in any. And I think there are many like him; and that is especially the case with normal children who can be lifted to a higher degree of self-expression, but not in a specialized way. All this is subordinate to and according to their psychological types.

So that is another point that is not generally brought to the surface. I limit myself to the time limits and to these points which are more neglected, and leave those which are more generally accepted.

Now we come to the point of spiritual education. I am not shy of using the word “spiritual,” because it is very difficult to use another one without awkward circumlocution. As I have said previously, this word should be rightly understood; that is, not equated “religious.”

Religious experience is only one of the many forms of spiritual experience in life. Perhaps we may, in our work, call it “superconscious,” which is a more neutral and acceptable term, and I quite agree to use that. But it is something that is a *fact*; it exists. Gifted children often show an interest in that aspect of reality and of human nature; it develops and manifests itself spontaneously very early — so-called metaphysical and philosophical questions, questions about reality, about the meaning of life, about the purpose or the nature of the universe, come up spontaneously.

This is also found in many normal children, but particularly early in gifted children; and this is a particularly delicate moment; it is a turning point in education. If these questions are adequately answered, it makes all the difference. If they are dismissed or pooh-poohed, then that can be a real traumatic experience. We do not realize how these spontaneous yearnings towards illumination, orientation to the universe, are important for the child; and when they are thwarted or suppressed or ridiculed, as is unfortunately too often the case, they can create a real psychological wound or bitterness, and often a decision to close oneself to the non-understanding adult. It can be the beginning of a deep cleavage.

So I earnestly call the attention of parents and educators to this point. I do not advise any spiritual meditation as a program to be given from outside, *but* we must take advantage of every *spontaneous* manifestation in that



direction to give adequate satisfaction and encouragement, and a starting point for action on the part of the adult. To meet needs understandingly is a general principle, but this is particularly important in this subject.

In a sense the same can be said about the imaginative life of the child, and especially of those kind of children who have a very vivid, overdeveloped imagination, as many have. There are aspects which seem to the normal Westerner as strange and disturbing; children are naturally animists, for to them everything is animated. Their philosophy unconsciously is animism, and they speak to flowers, butterflies, trees, and sometimes they have imaginary companions to whom they speak in their play. This is *not* pathological; this is not schizophrenia at all, as over-anxious and over-pathologically minded people think. That is quite normal, more or less, for all children, but particularly for the imaginative child; and here, too, ridicule or condemnation or other anxiety of that type can create a psychological wound and the “closing” of the child, with the result that the child’s imagination remains uncontrolled or can even become pathological or over-developed. It is not suppression which is ever the answer, nor condemnation, but regulation, utilization, outlets and balancing.

With the over-imaginative child, we have not to condemn the imagination but to help him to develop the other functions — balancing, not suppressing.

The problem in the education of the gifted children is that of not creating in them a complex of superiority. Once, when I presented a scheme for a school for gifted children, the immediate objection was, “You will make a kind of elite, an aristocracy above the others, and the ego will get inflated!” I think the reverse is just the case; the gifted child is much more apt to become inflated when he has a constant comparison with less developed children, than when he is with equally highly developed children. The psychosynthetic principle immediately gives us the right application: to show to the gifted child that if he is superior in some ways he may be normal or even inferior in others; so that deflates him.

You can say to him, “Well, you write a fine poem, but you are inferior in physical culture.” Or, “Your mathematics is wonderful, but you write badly,” and so on. With these two points — put him amongst equals and show him objectively, realistically, his shortcomings side by side with his gifts — you dispose with the objection of creating ego inflation.

Here again I come to the starting point; the problem is not so much with gifted children as with gifted educators. Gifted children require gifted educators; and many have found that with the gifted educator everything is done and the relationships take care of themselves. So, in my opinion, the problem of gifted children is first, to gather the gifted educators and then let them loose. Then create the schools. First, the educators; then the



schools; and then the gifted children — just the opposite of the ordinary procedure.

The gifted child has a very keen sense of any inferiority in the educator, and this is disastrous. *That* inflates his ego — when he feels rightly superior to the educator; that is the great danger and the great difficulty.

The gifted child is very easy to educate; easier than a normal child. The trouble is with the gifted educator, and our practical purpose will be that of gathering gifted educators — of course, not calling them that. (laughter.)

Dr. Price:

Let's call them "understanding" educators!

Dr. Assagioli:

I think a natural, spontaneous, unadvertised, selective process will happen through educators' interest, or non-interest, in psychosynthetic education, in whole functioning. This type of whole, higher and wider education, appeals only to the gifted educator. So the selection is natural. If we work in this kind of way the selective process happens, and there will form, after some time, a first nucleus of a team of gifted educators. *After that* we can think about the gifted children; so that is the program I suggest.

Now I will interrupt my theme, and ask Dr. Price and others to give their observations.

Dr. Price:

All these things that you have said this morning are tremendously important; and I was wondering, from a practical standpoint in a school, suppose we had a school right here for gifted children, from what you have said yesterday and today, I would judge that you would use both group and individual psychosynthetic methods. (Dr. Assagioli: Quite.) Each child would require something different, but then the group would want something in common. Right?

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, yes. I have not time to speak of it, but I have an item in my notes: "Right Relations with Others of the Same Age; Right Social and Collective Relations." Then there is environment; I give full importance to that.

Dr. Price:

One other thing I would like to ask. You know those organizations for gifted children in New York; they work mainly with younger children, but from your article I thought that maybe the most important group might be adolescents, children who are old enough to be away from their parents. Is that true? Very little has been done, at least in this country; and in New York, they are working on younger children...



Dr. Assagioli:

Nowhere are they doing it, and I thank you for bringing that important point to our attention. I think the problem of the gifted individuals has to be differentiated: (1) the gifted small child, (2) the gifted adolescent, and (3) the gifted adult.

There is not really a separate problem of the gifted little child; first because, as I said, the gifted child requires a gifted educator, a gifted adult. And then, in adolescence, the gifted adolescent has a double crisis — it is not the ordinary crisis of the adolescent; there is the basic orientation and also social usefulness.

So, and also for practical reasons, I would put the emphasis on the gifted adolescent, as Dr. Price has very wisely remarked. They are the immediate concern of the nation, of society, of humanity. In a few years they will be the leaders, the top men; so for the sake of humanity and not only for their own sake should we put the emphasis on finding them and educating them rightly.

Dr. Gerard:

Can you say something more about the double crisis in adolescents?

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, there is the general crisis of adolescence which I mentioned yesterday, where the adolescent comes to some kind of self-realization; and then the gifted adolescent has a much more, a much keener awareness of his superiority, with all the dangers and the possibilities. The adolescent can get great inflation of the ego, can develop rapidly a superiority complex and despise parents and educators. So that is a special crisis, the “crisis of the superiority complex,” we can call it, or the “inflation of the ego,” when he can become anti-social and play the part of the unrecognized genius and various other things.

Miss Miles:

Did you say that more was done for the *younger* gifted children? (question addressed to Dr. Price)

Dr. Price:

Yes — in New York, for younger children; they are not thinking of the adolescent so much.

Miss Miles:

Well, all that I know about it is what *is* being done with the adolescent, and there is a considerable current going on in the United States.

Dr. Price:

Yes, but in New York City there is more for the younger children.



(Dr. Assagioli: Yes, the Association for Gifted Children.)

Miss Miles:

But the Ford Foundation is pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into this problem. I don't know, but are there other organizations you know of? Ford *is*; I can speak about that because we receive Ford grants at Newton High School.

Dr. Lofgren:

Well, they have special programs — at least initiated — for gifted children. They now have the possibility of gifted children leaving high school for at least one period or two during the senior year and taking college courses. There are things like that, but I don't think that I consider this a program for gifted children. It is a special opportunity. The thing that troubles me about the problem of the gifted adolescents is that they need a gifted teacher, or parent who is gifted — not in some academic area, but in the process of living (Dr. Assagioli: Very good!), because the problem is not one of how to be better at maths or reading or something; he can do this by himself (Dr. Assagioli: Good, good!), but he needs someone who has worked through a philosophy of life; and I know so few adults who have made any attempt in their basic beliefs...

Dr. Assagioli:

Evaluation! What you said in your paper about right evaluation!

Dr. Lofgren:

Yes, and a child you test will give you a crazy philosophy to test *you*, and if you don't react to it right — if you say, 'Why, that's foolish!' or give them some check — they have no respect for you. I have teachers in my graduate class (who come back for general science) who bring me their tragedies of their daytime teaching, where children have asked questions, and the questions have been of a comparison of value systems between the parent and the teacher, and the teacher has not even recognized that is what the child has been doing — that he is comparing the teacher against his father's ethics.

In one case, the father made a fortune publishing pornographic literature and horrible pulp magazines — he could not read or write, but he was very wealthy — and the boy was trying to find a new set of values for himself. And he said, why do you teach, you get almost nothing for the job; why do you bother with a job like this?" This teacher came to me in my evening class and asked, "What do you say to a boy like this?" And I said, "First you have to hear his question. What was he asking you? I think he was asking, 'What is it that makes it really worthwhile — obviously not the money?'" That college graduate, who was *teaching* social sciences, did not know anything about the richness of living that comes through education; he did not



know anything at the conscious level — where it communicated — of the things which would help him meet this kind of situation.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, and that brings in another point which is essential: cooperation between teachers and parents. One of the most destructive things in education is the clash, or the lack of cooperation, between teachers and parents.

Miss Miles:

But we think, in the United States, that we *have* a program. I mean, Newton High School thinks that it has a program; the Ford Foundation thinks it has a program.

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, I did not say anything new — theoretically!

Dr. Price:

Do you have institutes or schools for gifted children?

Miss Miles:

But in a city like Newton, with a population of 35,000, we do not have a separate school; but from — I think it begins — 9th or 10th year, there is a special setup within the school system.

Dr. Assagioli:

That, too; pool information of what is already being done in this respect. That is one of the purposes, one of the activities of our Foundation. We do not pretend to give anything completely new, anything special, but to encourage anything that is done in the direction which we think right, and to cooperate whenever possible, and add our contribution. But that would be purely a question of pooling information.

Dr. Gerard:

And there is one thing which I think is very important to realize: in many of the high schools they will take a gifted child and put him in an advanced class only for that subject in which the gifted child has a special talent. Therefore, they will do the very thing which I have mentioned as being wrong. So what you need to establish are separate classes where gifted children are together from the morning until the evening, where they can compare the fact that they are not so gifted in other things because they have other fellows there who are very much better in other areas.

Miss Miles:

The *definition* of the gifted child is where we have a tremendous contribution to make, because the point I want to make and the reason I brought this up is that what we think is a program in the U.S. does not start with



this definition of the gifted child; and this includes what Ruth (Dr. Lofgren) is saying. So this is the status; the field is absolutely green.

Dr. Assagioli:

So you see there *is* scope for a program.

Mr. Hilton:

Dr. Price, you know more about the American Association for Advancement of Gifted Children than I do. Is their work primarily gathering information about techniques?

Dr. Price:

Yes, I think so — so far as I know.

Mr. Hilton:

Then it does not propagate any program or basic approach — it merely gathers? (Dr. Price: No, it has no special program.)

Dr. Assagioli:

Excuse me, there is another problem; there is the problem of the *super*-gifted children, or what is generally called “genius.” This is a distinctly different problem, and this brings in the techniques for the right handling of the highest gift of genius. If we read biographies, we know that genius has always had a very hard time. They have always been — let us call them — the “higher unbalanced.” It is very difficult for a genius to have all-around development. They are the higher neurotics, the higher unbalanced.

There is that moving poem by Baudelaire, “L’Albatros,” which I quote in my French edition of my paper. He puts this very beautifully; and yet the geniuses are the great pioneers of humanity in all fields. So, they should be spotted and given a special sympathetic understanding and help by society and by humanity. The biographies are full of this non-recognition of genius; the last outstanding example was Einstein — he was considered a bad pupil.

Miss Miles:

How do we spot them? That is the question.

Dr. Assagioli:

It is not so difficult. But I cannot even outline today the education of geniuses, of the highest highly gifted children, but it is a very important question. The answer is easy — only the highly gifted *educator* can cope with the genius. In this case, happily, he (the educator) does not need to be a genius himself, but he must be highly gifted. So one of the tasks of the highly gifted educators is to spot budding geniuses.

Dr. Lofgren:

And does he not need the skill you demonstrated with your own son — that of being able to keep hands off? I think that when you find that you have



a student who is far superior to you, it is so very important to keep your hands off and not try to do so much moulding.

Dr. Assagioli:

Not moulding, but to help his inferior functions. I would say that the genius, the very highly gifted child or adolescent, needs more active help because there is a higher degree of unbalance and often neurotic symptoms and a need of compensation and so on. So, hands off from his genius, but active help to the other side of his personality, which has difficulty in coping with that overpowering side.

Dr. Price:

From the practical standpoint, as Mrs. de Bie indicated yesterday, it would be impossible to have your methods used in many of the public or private schools. The headmaster would throw up his hands at the suggestion of any of these methods being used.

Dr. Assagioli:

There should be quite an independent and new school; it cannot be attached — in a patchwork — to any existing school. It was for that reason I proposed, from the beginning, a special school (Dr. Price: That's the thing!). It is something which cannot be combined with existing schools; it is quite too advanced and different, and it should be a pilot project — a small school which, we hope, would be an example, and propagate. But these schools should always remain small, comparatively, because the atmosphere and the special education needs limitation of numbers.

Dr. Price:

Would this not be the location for it — right here?

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, yes. I always thought so. My dream is that there would be various ones in different countries with an interchange of teachers and students — to give an international and wide experience and so on. And I would like to say — that there are some beginnings — especially one — a very interesting one which is already being practically planned, with considerable funds, in Germany, promoted by Mrs. Hainisch-Marchet and by an engineer of the Siemens Industries, who is very interested in it. (Dr. Price: Where is it located; what city?) They have not quite decided; they have a choice of various spots and Mrs. Hainisch-Marchet is a very remarkable woman, the daughter-in-law of the first President of the Austrian Republic since the war, and the daughter of the Minister of Education. They are in communication with me, and they are all for this plan.

There is also hope in Italy, too, with something of that kind. So if there were two or three schools we could have this inter-communication — I consider it very important, both for teachers and for students. Of course,



they should know two or three languages, but that is no problem for gifted children.

**(End of first hour session Saturday, half hour
break before resumption at 11 A.M.)**

Session - 11 A.M. to noon (First twenty minutes of the tape recording only partly decipherable — the following was built up from notes made by delegates.)

The session re-opened with a period of silence, preceded by brief comments by Dr. Assagioli: Silence is not only refraining from speech, but also refraining from inner mental activity. Procedure — relax the body with two or three deep breaths, eliminate tension, achieve emotional quiet. Re the “silence of the mind,” don’t fight wandering thoughts; the trick is not to pay attention to wandering thoughts, but to keep them on the margin of consciousness. Our attention is on the center.

Dr. Assagioli then asked whether we should start immediately discussing education, or go on with the Techniques. Dr. Gerard remarked that since the Techniques are fundamental, not only to psychotherapy but also to education, it would be better to go on with the Techniques.

Dr. Assagioli pointed out that goals, aims and purpose are set; but the program is plastic, for life — in its working out — is improvisation. We should therefore be very pliable and plastic.

Symbols

Turning to the question of symbols and their use both for education and for psychotherapy, Dr. Assagioli referred to three ways in which symbols can be used:

1. Fostering spontaneous symbols (C. G. Jung’s method),
2. Offering or presenting symbols,
3. An intermediate way, “*rêve éveillé*” (Desoille in France). Desoille first suggests a symbol, mainly ascending or descending, and then lets the patient develop his own subsidiary symbols.

These three ways are not mutually exclusive. The skilled psychosynthesist will use all three, and will do research to see which is more fruitful.

Six chief groups of symbols:

1. Natural symbols. Given by nature: heaven, air, earth, water, fire.
The mountain is the chief natural symbol with which are correlated



techniques, such as ascension, sea, wind, cloud, tree, flames, seed, wheat, jewel, path, bridge, reservoir, channel, beacon.

2. Human symbols. Father, mother, son, old wise man, magician, knight, teacher. Birth, growth, death and resurrection.
3. Mythological symbols. These are partly a transfiguration of human symbols.
4. Imaginative-creative symbols. Two outstanding series: a) Grail legend; b) Dante's "Divine Comedy." The Grail symbols served as the basis for gratifying experience with a group. "We met each Sunday and each time took a theme of the Grail legend; sometimes music was added. I described the symbol and its significance; the group meditated on it." Then each member of the group meditated on it for a week and wrote his comments. The series was as follows:

- a. Titurel's ascent from the plains to the top of the mountain.
- b. Titurel spends the night praying, kneeling under the sky (Titurel's invocation).
- c. Response to Titurel's invocation: the angel brings the cup (symbol of love) and the spear (symbol of will and power). We played Lohengrin's music which is related to this theme.
- d. The building of the Temple, as the shrine for the spear and the cup; the building of the Grail, the castle.
- e. The gathering of the Grail Knights.
- f. Individually the knights go down to the plains to serve humanity.
- g. The yearly meeting of all Grail Knights. A dove comes from above and recharges the cup and spear. Communion of the Grail Knights as a group — individually charged for the future year of service.

This group meditation brought an inner awakening to the members of the group — "You are Titurel, become Titurel and go through all this." This exercise combined several techniques, such as visualization, identification, etc.

5. Abstract symbols. a) numbers: in the Pythagorean sense of psychological significance — the 1 (unity), the 2 (polarity), the 3 (interplay); b) geometrical shapes; these have qualitative value, not merely geometrical proportions.
6. Modern or technical symbols. Needed to appeal to modern youth, to whom previous symbols may not appeal. If symbols are not significant for them, don't force them. Technical symbols may appeal to youth and can become deeply significant. For example, the mountain climber (with reference to the subject who climbs), the explorer, the pioneer, the chemist investigator, the colonizer, the automobile driver, the aviator, the radio technician. Example: autodriver. While the techniques of the will can be illustrated by the relationship between the driver and the machine, and the gasoline can represent dynamics, we should also consider the need for lubrication. The



patient should introject the automobile and the driver. Every means is good if it leads to the end.

There is a need for extensive research on different symbols and different types, for certain symbols may be of particular value to certain psychological types. Some patients, later, present their own symbols. A series of symbols may be used, such as the cycle of wheat, of bread, of coffee. Certain symbols of the Self are important in spiritual psychosynthesis; for example, the jewel or the star, or the wise old man that Jung emphasized. Some people prefer the jewel as the symbol, others the wise old man.

In this connection, the technique of "*the inner dialogue*" may be used. One can start with the symbol of the Self, the wise old man, and imagine the dialogue between the little self and the big Self. The little self can speak to the "wise old man," put himself in a receptive attitude and wait for an answer which can come immediately, during the next exercise, or at odd moments.

This technique is an important help to pass from the outer synthesizer to the inner synthesizer. The therapist can say, "You have a synthesizer within yourself ever ready, so you won't need me eventually." Often patients know the answers, but resistances may prevent an immediate realization. The goal of this technique is a dialogue with the Self.

* * * * *

Relationship between the conscious personality and the superconscious

There are two groups of techniques, not mutually exclusive, but different:

1. *The technique of inspiration.* In this technique the level of the little self remains the same. It is inspired from a higher level, from the superconscious. Each function can function at the superconscious level; for example, low imagination, middle imagination and higher imagination. These contents make an eruption in the conscious; this often occurs in artists, poets and writers. The appeal of the poet to the Muse is an appeal to the superconscious. The poet is a channel. This is an inner mediumship, so that the poet is at the mercy of the superconscious. Sometimes the means of reaching the superconscious are of a lower order; such as, alcohol, stimulants, etc. Often the conscious self does not understand the meaning of the inspired conception.
2. *Technique of active meditation.* This technique involves an ascent of the conscious. The conscious "I" through techniques of meditation,



actively tries — and succeeds — to rise to the superconscious level and perceives what is there and appropriates it. This is an active, conscious, deliberate willed ascent of the conscious toward the superconscious. The result may be an intuition. There can be intermediate procedures; for example, Angelico, who prayed before painting.

The direct interplay and dialogue between the self and the Self

This is a region completely unexplored by scientific psychology, yet there are masses of documents by mystics and artists, but no scientific research.

One should make active experiment with oneself and others. Several authors have described some of these experiences. For example, Maslow in his discussion of peak experiences, in his book on *Motivation and Personality*. William James, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*; Bucke, in his book, *Cosmic Consciousness*; Ouspensky, in the book, *Tertium Organum*; Eduard Carpenter, Winslow Hall, who, as an English medical doctor, wrote three books published by Daniels in London. The titles are as follows: *Observed Illuminates*; the second book was, *Illuminanda*; and the third book, *Hebrew Illumination*; but these were not scientific investigations. One needs to introduce, to recognize, scientific research and study of the superconscious. In order to avoid arousing unnecessary resistance, one should use the word “superconscious,” not “spiritual.” One should use the word “Self,” not the word “soul.”

Techniques of active meditation for the ascent of the conscious self toward the superconscious, the Self

There are two techniques; one can first eliminate the ballast — the little self is held down by its identification with the contents of the field of consciousness, so the aim is to empty consciousness, to disconnect all concern with the contents. This can be done through an exercise of dis-identification: “I have a body, but I am not the body; I have emotions, but I am not the emotions; I have a mind, but I am not the mind; I am the self, the point of bare self-identity.

Then you affirm your identification with the Self, “I am a permanent, self-existing being, a living reality.”

(At this point, Dr. Assagioli pointed to the diagram showing that the Self is partly within and partly out of the psyche. See p.3, Part I of the Transcript.)



Dr. Assagioli:

The experience of the Self presents a dual aspect; first an enhanced sense of self-identity; second, at the same time, a sense of universality. This Self is part of the universal reality. A criterion of genuine experience of the Self is that it should have these two subjective experiences. They are co-existent. In the book, *The Self*, edited by Moustakas, the Hindu contributor points out this double aspect of the genuine experience of the Self.

Dr. Gerard:

Do you know anything else in addition to the exercise of dis-identification which would help the process of the realization of the Self?

Dr. Assagioli:

There are several methods, but I did not speak of them; some of them are well known and described in some Hindu books, but the point is to present this in a neutral terminology not connected with any theosophy or any theology.

Dr. Gerard:

I was wondering if any visualization, either preceding or following the exercise on dis-identification or at the same time, would not help. For instance, visualizing the higher Self as a point of light, or something of that nature.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, a symbol can help provided that it is considered only as a symbol. A symbol can reveal or veil, and there is always the danger of being too interested in the symbols. The symbol of light, of the jewel, of the wise man, can help but should be recognized as a means, as a symbol, and not as the reality. The true experience is formless.

(There followed a discussion between Dr. Assagioli and Dr. Gerard which was not recorded in detail in notes. The salient points were: one should recognize that on the way to the experience of the Self there are many intermediate steps. Deep understanding, participation, sympathy, pre-suppose a similarity of nature. It is this common Self, this common element, which makes possible communication. The existentialist experience of solitude is a negation of the function of the Self; however, this experience of loneliness, isolation, has its value. Moral servers sooner or later may have to pass through it. Loneliness and isolation, and isolation as an experience, may occur when the small self is dis-identified with the contents of consciousness but has not yet achieved direct experience with the higher Self. These concepts should be presented in a scientific framework.)

(Resumption of verbatim transcription)



Mr. Hilton:

What do you see as the implications of this discussion on symbols? I am asking this of the educators here.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

It just came to my mind that we could use these symbols if we start from a good theoretical framework. Such as symbols for the testing of self-realization in our schools.

Dr. Assagioli:

Very Good. Yes, you see that these means can be a test, a training and a communication.

Dr. Gerard:

Could you expand a little on that?

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Well, I worked on this for my thesis; and instead of using the kind of verbal tests which exist these days, I was trying to eliminate these verbal tests and trying to use a culture-free test (Dr. Assagioli: Good!) which means it can be used in any country in the world. So, in testing the processes of thinking, in my experiment I used symbols for testing perception, concept formation, judgment and vision. These symbols were used in Germany by Gottschalk only for testing perception, so I took these symbols and modified them according to my definitions of perception, concept and processes of thinking. I found a very good co-relation between all these results, so my point is: these symbols can be arranged in such a way we can tell the degree of self-realization of a pupil. I do not know, though, if we can start that from the elementary level, in the elementary schools.

Dr. Gerard:

It is certain that in certain Rorschach ink-blot tests with some people who are to some extent self-realized — I said to *some* extent, not fully — to them some of these symbols appear spontaneously, even though the people have not read material connected with it (i.e., the Self). I have some of such records which show the level of realization and contact with such universal symbols.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, of course; with Jung's method, archetypes, universal symbols, come in.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Do you think that on that basis we can standardize the level, the different levels of self-realization? (Dr. Assagioli: No.)

Dr. Gerard:

It is not that easy. Before you standardize, you have to be able, you have to decide *how* to interpret such eruptions.



Dr. Assagioli:

May I add something which for me has great importance? Maslow has emphasized the most normal aspects of Self-realization, but I think we must add in many cases that there are neurotic geniuses, unbalanced people who have much higher, temporary Self-realization than so-called normal people, persons who more or less live within the personality. You have to take into account all that — the oscillations of realization. Self-realization is nothing static. And all the mystics speak of intense illumination combined with depression, and they have been likened to the cyclic manic-depressive. They are *not* the same thing, but there are similarities. So one cannot really gauge a person. Then there are the romantic people and unbalanced people. Here in the Psychosynthesis Foundation, we must never forget that there exists this category of people; they have great usefulness and yet they are not synthesized at all. A typical type is the inspired poet, but there are many others who tap the superconscious, who may have a revelation of the Self and become unbalanced — never forget that! I will give you an extreme case. In my paper, “Spiritual Development and Nervous Diseases”.....

Dr. Gerard:

By the way, in this connection, when we produce a paper, when it has already been published, it is very important to give that reference. To the scientific world, if a paper distributed by the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation had also been published within the normal journals, it would have an added value.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, my paper Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis was first published in the Hibbert Journal which is not a scientific, but a very sober, highly respected British periodical.

Dr. Gerard:

One of your articles has been published in the Journal, “Personality,” I think. I saw one in the October issue.

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, I know — “The Journal of Psychotherapy as a Religious Process.” (Dr. Gerard: Is that the Rankian?) Yes, it was published by the Rankian group, and the same article was also published in a German scientific journal.

Dr. Gerard:

And I think that when an article has been published we should give these references; it is very useful.

Dr. Assagioli:

To go back to my example, at the end of the first World War, I was the director of a Neurological Center in Ancona, connected with the psychiatric hospital there; and I found an inmate who was a very lovable individual, but



who thought he was God. He said he was God and in contact with angelic hosts, and so on, but in every other respect he was normal, so normal that he had been entrusted with the keys of the pharmacy. He never failed in any way and nothing happened except the stealing of a little sugar for some of the other inmates — a harmless thing. He had been a professional photographer, but one day he had said he was God; and, of course, it got him into trouble. Other psychiatrists said, “Well, that is paranoia!”

However, I think this idea of God is the vulgarization of the idea of the Self, a realization coming to an immature and completely unprepared mind; metaphysically, of course, he is God, but he took it at its face value and thought that the potential was the actual. That is a most extreme example, but there are intermediate stages of the inflation of the ego in the inner revelation of sublimity and so on.

Dr. Triantafyllou (or Mr. Dawson):

I have just been considering this problem; and from the viewpoint of psychotherapy and psychology, how do we distinguish between the pathological insight and the creative insight, psychological inspiration and creative inspiration?

Dr. Assagioli:

Let us say that the average paranoid is completely self-centered, egotistic, aggressive, antisocial; he says that he is right and the whole world is wrong. The distinction in the case I gave was quite the opposite — humanitarian, loving, a spirit of service; he did not pretend that everyone else should recognize that he was God; so, in this case it is obvious that he does not correspond to the empirical paranoid and has none of the other characteristics we mentioned.

Dr. Gerard:

I have a similar question: When you have minor cases like neurotic disturbances and not psychotic disturbances, how do you recognize that this is really a progressive imbalance on the way to Self-realization, or a regressive symptom?

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, again the majority are mixed cases. Let us suppose that, using the diagram, this line⁵ of limitation is weakened, is injured, as if there were many holes in it. Then the contents from all sides of the unconscious pour in creating confusion, a mixture of the higher and lower elements. This we have seen very clearly in the biography of Baudelaire. So that these cases are, in some respects, immature, infantile, attacked with the mother complex and so on, while on the other side we have intuition. So the majority are mixed cases and can be described as a weakening of the link of conscious area;

⁵ See Diagram at Part I, p.3., the line enclosing #4 – the field of consciousness.



into the area of the conscious comes an admixture of the unconscious — from the higher and the lower levels.

Mr. Dawson:

Do you want to write a new ego-psychology, Bob; to write a paper on the ego-psychology of inspiration? (Dr. Assagioli: Good!)

Dr. Assagioli:

As an analogy we may compare this area of the self to a cell with a semi-permeable membrane. What we call osmosis. If the membrane is too thick, the cell dies; if the membrane is too permeable, the cell dissolves. The condition of semi-permeability has to be just right. Some individuals are permeable only to the higher and others only to the lower unconscious.

Mr. Hilton:

I was just thinking — if we have this variation in self-realization, this periodical or spasmodic self-realization — or, as you pictured it, you have many holes in the membrane of consciousness, what is the value of any tests, of any psychological tests, and over what period are they valid?

Dr. Assagioli:

I do not believe very much in standard psychological tests. I believe in the total valuation of the personality with the *aid* of tests; but that is quite a different matter. Practically, everything can help, but no isolated test is right. All these are aids to the evaluation through understanding.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

And also you have to realize that this only represents a point in time and of development. It is fascinating to take Rorschach's or whole batteries — now we take whole batteries-of tests! We may take the point of view of Roberto, one single test is no good by itself.

Dr. Gerard:

Plus the life history, plus the observation, plus the interviewing, plus everything — right? Then you see the development, the gradual development, over a period of one year, two years or three years.

Mr. Hilton:

Then a test never indicates, as far as I can see, when the breakthrough of the Self will take place.

Dr. Gerard:

Well, you can begin to see inklings of things brewing, particularly in tests which tap the imaginative aspects of the personality, like the Rorschach test; so that there are certain archetypal elements which you begin to see erupting, so that you know that something is brewing. I have had some very interesting cases with Dr. Klopfer, who is a very well-known Rorschach expert. He had a paranoic schizophrenic, a doctor, an M.D., who went into



paranoid schizophrenia at the hospital. For all practical purposes, he was regarded as a schizophrenic; he had all kinds of delusions and so on. But Dr. Klopfer, showing me his tests, said that this psychotic break was a way to Self-realization in this particular man; and you will find that in two or three weeks he will change – you will not have to treat him; he will have a realization that he did not have before, because you have this already evident in the tests. And sure enough, four weeks later, this man had a miraculous self-remission, a spontaneous remission; the psychosis was a way of breaking the old pattern, and the energies were so powerful that they broke the old pattern, leading to a reconstitution of the positive and more constructive aspects. So there are wonderful possibilities.

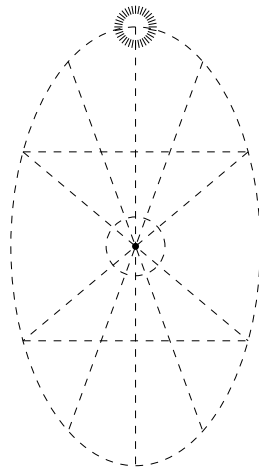
(End of morning session)



SATURDAY AFTERNOON — 4:30 to 5:30 P.M.

This session began with a short silence, following this procedure: physical relaxation, emotional quiet, mental silence; then realization of group unity — of the present group.

Dr. Assagioli explained that we would discuss (1) inter-individual psychosynthesis, (2) individual differential psychosynthesis, applied to different psychological types. He then presented the following chart representing an ideal complete psychosynthesis, the lines of connection between the self and all aspects of the human being illustrating how information and impressions come in, and also representing lines of control in action.



Dr. Assagioli:

One technique that must be mentioned, although I do not want to develop it here at this stage of our discussions, is transmutation and sublimation. I think there is a whole and large chapter of psychodynamics which will in the future deal with the problems of transmutation (of which sublimation is one of the aspects) in psychology. In the physical sciences, we see how power is transformed into movement, how water power generates electricity, electricity is turned into heat and can, in turn, be transformed back into electricity, and so on.

So, as natural forces can be transmuted, transformed through adequate techniques from one to the other, so the same applies to ourselves. One psychological energy can be transmuted into another; but here I will mention only two: the transmutation of sexual energies and the transmutation of combative energies. These are two of the most fundamental drives and problems of the individual and of society. While I do not want to enter here



into the nature of transmutation and sublimation, I want to emphasize the fact that fortunately we need not know everything about an energy in order to utilize it. This has been done by technicians who use electricity without knowing its intimate nature; just as one can utilize water without knowing it is H₂O. Therefore, we can put aside the theoretical problem for the time being and concentrate on the practical application. The self has the power not only to direct and control and utilize psychological energies, but also to transmute them. The key to the sexual problem and the war problem lies in the transmutation of these drives.

I have two articles⁶, one on sexual and one on combative energies, and I would like to circulate them as drafts to you. These we can say are “semi-private” presentations of psychosynthesis, regarded as a means of communication between the co-workers. These will lead to a finished article, perhaps as a pamphlet, and later as part of a book. You will have these two papers soon.

Mr. Hilton:

We can send two copies so that each of you can return one copy with corrections. (Dr. Assagioli: Splendid! A most practical idea.)

(Dr. Gerard: Yes, and let us have wide margins for comments.)

Dr. Assagioli:

We now come to individual or differential psychology. We cannot deal with the whole question, but I will show you some diagrams which illustrate typology which I have found useful in practice. Here is one — it is a combination of Jung’s classification with elements of passive and active manifestations of given functions, and with the lower and higher aspects of each. The diagrams do not show the process of development because here it is not necessary; we put the accent on extroversion and introversion.

(Reproductions of the charts used are given on the next page. Some of the transcription was lost owing to the noise from handling the parchment charts drowning out the voices. The numbers and letters in parenthesis in the following portions of the transcription refer to the numbers allotted to the diagrams. Mimeographed copies of a draft article, “Four Fundamental Types, & Extroverts and Introverts”⁷ are being prepared and will cover any gaps there may be in the transcription of the following twenty minutes of the session.)

⁶ Read one of the articles here: *Transmutation and Sublimation of Sexual Energies*: <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/transmutation-and-sublimation-of-sexual-energies/>.

⁷ Read the article here: *The Four Basic Types And Their Sub-Types*: <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/the-four-basic-types-and-their-sub-types/> and this article *The Four Psychological Types – Extroversion, Introversion, subversion and Supraverion*: <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/the-four-psychological-types-extroversion-introversion-subversion-and-supraverion/> (note to designer. Embed links in titles)



	A	B	C	D	E
Intuitive			Intro. +		Ambivert + -
Mental		Intro. +	Intro. +	Intro. +	
Emotional	Extrav. —				
Physical (Sensation)	Extrav. +		Extrav. -	Intro. —	Extrav. +

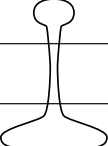
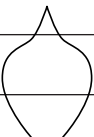
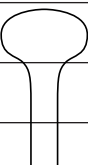
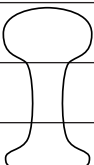
Man in love
(Practical &
dominating in
business but
dominated
by woman he
loves

Pure introvert
(mental Type,
e.g., Kant.)

Intuitive
(Mental,
sensitive to
physic-al
environment,
e.g., Amiel.)

Introvert;
Passive to
Physical
Conditions—
hypochon-
driac (e.g.
Schopenhauer.)

Ambivert on
intuitive
levels,
extravert in
everyday
affairs.
(e.g. Ste.
Catherine of
Sienna)

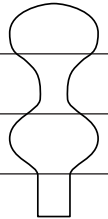
	1	2	3	4
Intuitive				
Mental				
Emotional				
Physical (Sensation)				

Physical
(Sensation
Type)

Primitive
Emotional
Type

Mental
Type

Practical
Mental Type

	5	6	7
Intuitive			
Mental			
Emotional			
Physical (Sensation)			

Intuitive
Emotional
Type

Developed
Intuitive
Type

Theoretical
Perfect Man

(These diagrams are, of course, approximations, useful illustrations of types.)



Dr. Assagioli:

Here (A) we have a practical man in love, only the sensation level is extravert and positive and on the emotional level he is *passive* extrovert; that is, he is under the dominance of a woman with whom he is in love. She dominates him on the emotional level, while he dominates on the practical physical level. In his business he is the boss, dominant, outgoing; on the emotional level he is passive, extrovert, open but passive.

That shows how one can be active on one level and passive on another level. A “pure introvert” (B) is the description, psychologically, of Emmanuel Kant, the great philosopher. His life was concentrated on the mental level; of course, he had a physical plane life and some motion, but basically he was a thinking apparatus, a wonderful thinker, and positive and outgoing.

An example of the intuitive type (C) was the Swiss writer and poet, Amiel, who was passive extravert on the sensation level; i.e., he was extremely sensitive to physical influences — to climate and to nature. His writings so well describe the climate of southern and northern countries. However, on the mental level he was introvert — positive; he was a thinker with an active mental life, but introvert — his thinking was always of the psychological, philosophical type. He was very intuitive — one of the most intuitive men — and his intuitions were always directed to the inner life of himself and others. So on intuitive levels he was introvert but positive; he was actively interested in those levels and described them well.

Another example (D) is Schopenhauer, who was introvert-sensation-negative. He always attached so much importance to the physical, worrying about his physical condition (Dr. Lofgren: Hypochondriac!). Exactly! So on the sensation level, on the physical, he was introvert, hypochondriac, and of course passive — passive in a sense to his physical condition. But on the mental level he was a very active thinker, an introvert. Also, his philosophies looked inward, but actively.

Such psychological profiles, as a first approximation, are useful, for they give us an idea of the types encountered in practice.

As another example, take Ste. Catherine of Sienna (E). She was a rather rare combination, a great mystic and at the same time a woman of action, filling a very important political role (she decided on the election of the Pope and helped make peace between warring states). So she was an extravert, positive on the physical plane and an introvert on the intuitional. She was a mystic, but both a negative and a positive introvert. She was an ambivert on the intuitive level because she channeled her inner being, her contact with God; she analyzed and wrote about her inner life.

Mr. Dawson:

Would the analyzing of her life be a thinking, intellectual activity?



Dr. Assagioli:

No, it was not mental reasoning, but a reporting of her inner life. A vital point to remember is the so-called higher and lower aspect of each type. We speak in a very general sense, for instance, of emotional functions, but the emotional function can go from the destructive drives, such as anger, rage and lust, to the higher, such as altruistic love. So we have to distinguish the quality.

Here we come to a question of prime importance, that of the discriminating aspect, the choice which follows on a system of values. And here I refer to Prof. Maslow, who very clearly and courageously speaks of values in psychology; I think he said that we should establish a system of values. Perhaps you would agree if I said that the values are already there; we do not have to establish them ourselves; we have to *recognize* them. They are already intrinsic; we need to discover them, recognize them — and by purely pragmatic tests. Take the two clear examples — Hitler and Dr. Schweitzer. Both were moved by feeling, but one by violent and destructive emotion, Schweitzer by altruistic love.

We need to discuss “What is a value?” Each value is relative — all of these are intellectual questions, but also of practical interest and value in psychology; to distinguish between the criminal and a Schweitzer. That is something we can do in this Foundation. These values apply not only on the emotional feeling level, for on all levels there is that appreciation and valuation of the quality of the constructiveness or destructiveness of each function — whatever it is.

Let us take introversion. The lowest type of introvert is the hypochondriac; the highest type is the intuitive, the realizer of the Self.

In extraversion, a primitive type of extravert is the man who actively drives forward for egotistical and selfish purposes towards practical achievement. In the higher type of extravert, we find the worker in philanthropic activity — and he can be just as busy, just as active, just as practical, but he is a higher extrovert, whereas the other is the lower extrovert.

Therefore, in each type, each function, each direction of the vital energy — whether active or passive modality — we have higher and lower types, primitive and immature, or refined and mature.

So that is another of the points of reference which we have to utilize in assessing a personality. On what levels does he function? Which has the main direction of his vital interest? Is he more of a passive or active modality? What is the quality, the value of his manifestation? Is he primitive and selfish, or mature, refined, outgoing and unselfish?

Here we have a pair of coordinates, concerning which we can not only make a definition, but also a valuation, partial but not complete; there are many



other angles but these have proved of practical value in my work. I think we could show the coordinates in terms of a “mathematical self.”

Dr. Gerard:

We have already begun to do that; because the refinement that you talk about is connected with the speed of frequency — the higher the frequency, the more the possibility of refinement.

Dr. Assagioli:

Will you work out a nice diagram with coordinates and all the things that we have to take into consideration? There are four factors, I think; level of a function, direction, active and passive modality, and quality. I think we could do that; but anyhow, you can “label” it.

Dr. Gerard:

The ingoing and the outgoing movement of the energies is also something we can determine, and particularly in connection with the ingoing and the outgoing of the will — not the will in the higher sense, but the lower personal type of will.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, all these are questions of levels and frequency, not prevalency. If we could measure such things it would be a question of percentage; but — and this is a very important point in practice — we must not make mistakes because of temporary conditions. The fundamental type can be changed and partly reversed by momentary situations. I give you a simple example: the practical man in love. While he is in love, he is a passive extravert on the emotional level, but under particular conditions that disappears and he can become outgoing and active on the emotional level, say as in anger or in a domineering mood.

So, you see, when we deal with a patient or pupil we must distinguish what is his *fundamental* type and what he shows in the present, particular situation. For instance, some pupils can be apparently weak and submissive and passive in front of the teacher, and yet be active little devils outside. Also, changes can be fleeting and momentary or they may be cyclic, for a passion can last for months or more, yet be only temporary in view of the whole span of life.

Dr. Gerard:

Could there be psychological instruments, not just on a mechanical level, but also on the usual psychological level?

Dr. Assagioli:

Another point — ages! This is also an important point. In a general way, apart from individual differences, each age has its relative prevalence. Of course, in regard to the functions, it is very clear that the infant is the extrovert sensation type, pure sensation type. The next development is the



emotional life; the third, the great development, is the mental. The intuitive is not so clear, because the child can also have flashes of intuition, but, generally speaking, the intuition comes rather late. Also, in adolescents there are temporary intuitive experiences, but the real and full functioning of the intuition comes after the experience of the sensation, emotional and mental activities. Some skip the mental activity stage and jump from the emotional to the intuitive, but not generally.

With introversion and extraversion, there is a very clear alternation; i.e., at birth, the child is a sensation introvert; he is wholly taken with his physical sensations — heat, cold, hunger, satisfaction after feeding. Then, very slowly and gradually, he begins to develop relationships with others and the world. At first it is more passive extraversion, sensation with the outer world; then he begins slowly to develop the organs of action and the extraversion begins to have a greater percentage of activity. Then the boy distinctly is an active extravert — a little devil! He is a very clear case of active extraversion. Then comes the crisis of adolescence where there is a brusque reversion to introversion, chiefly emotional introversion with some mental brooding and introversion with occasional flashes of intuition — all of the introvert type; and often with the presence of negative modality.

After the crisis of adolescence, again extraversion predominates; the youth is outgoing; he starts to conquer the world and he is interested in the outer world and especially when he falls in love he is extraverted. His vital interest is directed towards another human being or other human beings in the world; and this extraversion goes on through the adult stage. Then this interest in the outer world slowly diminishes, decreases and the elderly man again becomes more introverted, reflective, less interested in outer happenings. If he is of the average type, he is nostalgically brooding most of the time; if he is of the more developed type, he is interested in the philosophical and religious problems. So the introversion gradually increases. Of course, this is the normal vacillation of extraversion and introversion. We have to keep this in mind because, if not, we can ascribe to an individual a characteristic which is, instead, largely the result of his age. So that is another element, a type element, a fixed coordinate.

So, you see, from very broad generalizations of functions or direction of vital interest, we come to even more precise connotations of the unique individual at the unique moment in his life. For the next few minutes I would like to hear your comments.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

You described the changes in the sane individual at different ages; does that mean that when we have a type and classify him as an extrovert or introvert he is not supposed to stay in the same psychological type when he grows from the adolescent to the adult? My point is this, is there any dominating psychological factor throughout all his life?



Dr. Assagioli:

Here there is a sixth coordinate. There are people who are very one-sided, let us call them the extreme types, in which their fundamental type is prevalent and shows always. Let us take the simple case of a very practical extraverted type; he remains prevalent even throughout adolescence — the events of adolescence are of little importance to him — and he is always interested in his business and outer world. You have in America, especially, people who are very active, who take pride in their interests and do not want to leave command of their concerns. So in those extreme cases, the fundamental type is so prevalent it submerges the other vacillations; the percentage of the dominant function and the dominant direction of life of the vital interest is so high that it submerges the others.

In contrast, there are the fluid types, the oscillating types; the first we call the extreme rigid type and the other the plastic fluid type, in which the percentages are often around fifty. The difference may oscillate between forty and sixty — symbolically speaking, because one cannot really measure. And in those, the various oscillations, due to outer situations or age, have the prevalence over the small percentage of their individual type. They are mostly ambiverts who oscillate easily from extraversion to introversion in the same day; they are more or less evenly developed types who can pass, in the same day, from a practical activity to reading a philosophical book to listening with feeling to music, to having an intuitive experience. So they have a kind of diffused, plastic, many-sided kind of structure. That is another coordinate which is very important because in education, in therapy, you have to deal very differently with the extreme fixed type and the diffusive type. With one you have to try to make him become less extreme; and with the other, to take more shape; so the educational and therapeutic tasks are opposite.

Dr. Triantafyllou:

Are the extreme rigid types what we call in psychological language stereotypes?

Dr. Assagioli:

No, but they could be called stereotypes — philologically. And here a question of values comes in. The difference between an Edison who has been an inventor all his life, extrovert, practical and mental all his life, a very definite fixed type but of high value; or instead, a selfish businessman or military man who all his life has been bent on external success. Are there any other questions?

Miss Miles:

It will make a difference in education when we admit this, won't it?



Dr. Assagioli:

Yes. You see it is a question of terminology; this individual psychology — that is, the psychology of individual differences and types — has been called in various ways. William Stern was one of the first; he called it “differential psychology,” and I rather like this term, but it has not been generally widely adopted.

Mr. Dawson:

That is one of the *standard* courses! Differential psychology.

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, I am glad. (Mr. Dawson: There is a book entitled “Differential Psychology.”)

Dr. Assagioli:

Then some people call it “individual psychology,” the psychology of the individual. This leads to confusion and we immediately think of the psychology of Adler, so it is not so good a term. Others call it “personology” or “typology.” Typology insists on types, personology more on the unique individual, but I am glad of what you tell me; for myself — *differential* psychology.

Dr. Gerard:

Anastasi has a textbook called *Differential Psychology*. She is a woman psychologist; here is a basic textbook. There is nothing new inside...

Mr. Dawson:

This is the kind of research that would go into that book.

Dr. Assagioli:

So “differential” comes in very well; so let us adopt that — “differential psychosynthesis,” according to the functional psychology. Good! We should remember that psychosynthesis is really bio-psychosynthesis. Bio-psychosynthesis is the goal of evolution.

(End of first hour’s session)

Session – 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Referring to the short period of silence with which this session opened, Dr. Assagioli explained it was really an exercise in ambiversion.

Dr. Assagioli:

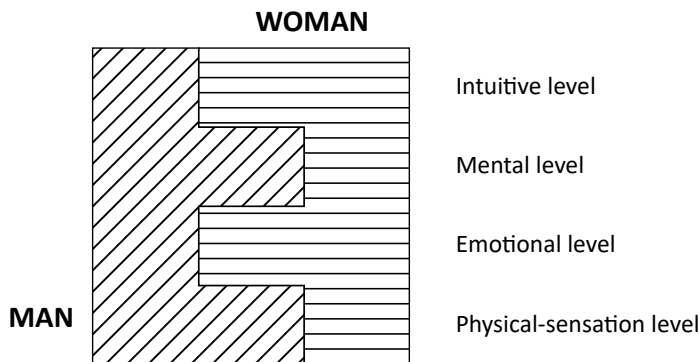
...by acts of will, to pass rapidly from extraversion to introversion and from introversion to extraversion; that is the conscious, controlled ambiversion. And passing also from the lower to the higher introversion at will. So in this three-minute exercise, what we are doing is that we pass from active extraversion to active introversion, and from introversion at the personal level to as much as possible introversion at a higher level; and finally we



realize the group connection, with psychological unity; we have a higher extraversion at that level. In this conference there is an inner and outer, a lower and higher.

This is a dynamic subject, for our psychological life should always be consciously directed by the will of the self; I, a self, *will* to introvert, will to raise to a higher level of consciousness, then come back and extravert again. You see how it is a constant, living process? But we have to become aware that each one of us is a self who wills to control these processes as a technician controls complicated machinery. So you see how much there is in just ten minutes of silence. It is not just a ritual, but something consciously willed and realized. This has been synthetically expressed by Herman Keyserling: "The Self, the Wise, is the Master of the Polarities." There it is in a nutshell: "The wise is the master of the polarities."

Let us start with the fundamental polarities of man and woman. You see how everything is connected (laughter). There is a fundamental, typological difference between man and woman. There are all possible differentiations and differences, type percentages and so on. I have illustrated this in a diagram.



In the average, normal man of the active, sensation type, man is more actively functioning on the physical plane. He is the doer, he is extravert and active and predominantly functioning on the physical plane. Woman is less so; she also functions on the physical plane, of course, but is more passive, receptive, elaborating. Man is more impulsive biologically and intends to conquer the outer world; woman, to preserve life. On the emotional and feeling level her functions are much more developed and often refined; man is less developed and often a crude individual on the emotional plane. On the mental level, the thinking function is more developed in man; and on the intuitional level woman, as a percentage, is more developed both actively and passively than man.

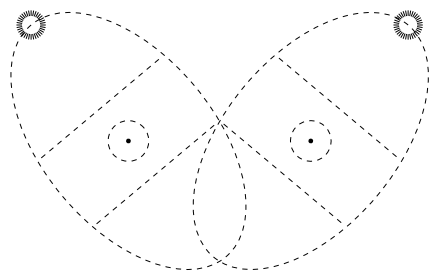


This well-known fact we have to keep well in mind for the Psychosynthesis of the couple. In reality, matters are not simple, because all the reactions and other compensations — for instance, the feminist movement has been a reaction and over-compensation to these excessive differentiations. Woman has felt rightly the need to enter more actively into the physical world and to develop her mental apparatus, and that for her is right and good. Only, as all revolutions and reactions, often they go to extremes. So, this balance between man and woman is the most intimate and personal problem and one of the widest social problems at the same time.

And I think there is a particularly acute situation just now in America. It is a subject which is very much discussed from different angles — Margaret Mead, Pearl Buck — so into that question just now I will not dare to enter. I would most likely be cut to pieces: (laughter) (Dr. Gerard: We would split the group) I merely mention that larger problem, so now let us come to the simpler problem of the couple. (laughter)

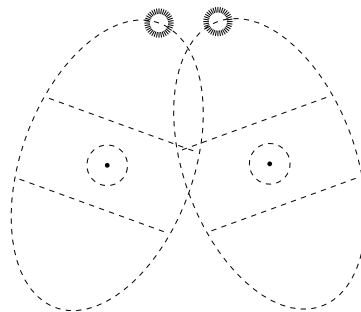
There are some pre-requisites in the psychosynthesis of the couple and the first is, I think, the acceptance of their respective roles, and the mutual respect and appreciation of those respective roles which go hand in hand — easily said, but very difficult to accomplish; but it is a pre-requisite for the psychosynthesis of the couple. Here, in this diagram, I have indicated the possible situations in the man-woman relationship.

1.



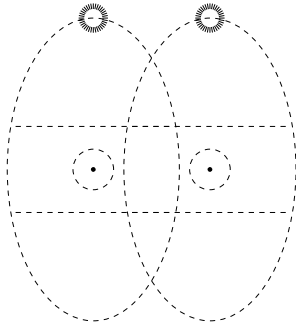
Relation at lower level
(e.g. sexual attraction)

2.



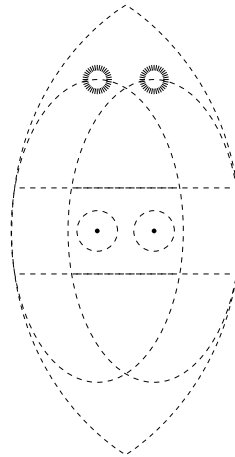
“Beatrice” relationship — platonic,
unreal — on higher level only

3.



Satisfactory, normal synthesis of the couple

4.



Developed psychosynthesis of the couple

Here(#1) we have the unfortunately frequent situation in which there is a very partial synthesis — it does not really deserve the name of synthesis, but is really a relationship and passion blending on a lower level. That is a typical case of purely sexual attraction which attracts the lower part of both with no participation of the self, just the physical relationships, fleeting or more or less lasting.

The second diagram shows the opposite. It could be called “platonic” love, in which there is a relationship on the higher level; but it is a false relationship, with suppression of the other relationships on other levels and with no real human participation, only a mutual aspiring to the higher which cannot last because it is not natural in the good sense of the word.

Here(#3) we have the diagram of the satisfactory, normal synthesis of the couple — not complete, but fairly advanced. Here there is the participation of each self partially in the life of the other. There is an amount of physical blending, a great amount of emotional and mental blending, a certain amount of higher — let us call it spiritual — blending. So here we have a good example of psychosynthesis of the couple with partial blending; each is not lost in the other, each retains his and her individuality but participates consciously in the life of the other.

And in #4, we have a much more developed psychosynthesis of the couple — harmonious on all levels, more or less equal on all levels, but it goes *beyond* the couple. The relationships are the same as in the first diagram, but here the prolongation goes below — below in the good sense — and



above with a common public task in the education of children. In the life of the couple there is a *common* life in the world, and beyond the personal relationship there is a common spiritual life activity which can be religious, humanitarian or of that kind. So that is *beyond* the couple; the couple is not lost in itself, but is in contact with other human beings and all their activities. This marks a step from the first psychosynthesis of the couple to the synthesis of groups.

The next type of problem is what we call the psychosynthesis of the family group — in the simplest way, that of parents and children. This brings in the question of education in the family, education by the parents. We know that most neuroses, psychoneuroses, nervous troubles, come from the clash between the parents in the presence of the children — often in the physical presence of the children. In this “stone age” there are so many husbands and wives who quarrel in the presence of their children without any realization of what they do. They pretend and believe that they love their children, yet they inflict on them actual psychological wounds just as if they made them with a knife. Even cultured, intelligent people of the so-called higher classes do just that. If only we were not so grossly anti-social and anti-human! Also, latent strife can be just as bad as open conflict, especially the kind where the parent tries to attract the child onto his or her side. This is often more or less subconscious, but it is disastrous. This kind of rivalry of parents often leads to over-indulgence of the child so as to win it to one side; and that is another blasphemy of love — they say they love the child so much; really, they want to *possess* it, not love it. Well, these are very gross things, but they are very, very common; so that the first thing in the psychosynthesis of the family is to eliminate this most obvious of educational sins.

Then comes the positive side of education — the right relation between parents and children. The first is the united front of the parents to the children. It seems an obvious concept, but it is very, very seldom practiced, but that is a prerequisite of constructive education. Then, as I mentioned, the elimination of the personal complexes of both father and mother, and not their projection onto the children.

Then the positive side of recognizing the child as a budding, human personality with its own rights. Any conscious or unconscious possession — “My child,” “My son” — is wrong. They are not *ours*. They are in our care... They are the future adults, the future human beings. The real sublimation of motherly love should start with the renunciation of possessive love. So an attitude of respect and wonder towards the child is what needs to be developed. But what seems theoretically obvious is a difficult thing to practice and is least often practiced. To say that it is “old and banal” is only an escape mechanism for not practicing it.



Then comes psychology: every parent — every cultured parent — not in an academic sense, but in the sense of a cultured society — has the duty of studying psychology — general psychology and child psychology. Psychology is not one of the various sciences; it is the science of human nature and, as we are all more or less human, psychology is as necessary as writing, spelling and arithmetic. It is not *one* of the sciences, but *the fundamental science* of human nature. And in psychology we are at the stage about equal to the pre-physical hygiene period — when microbes were not known and infection was unknown and a great number of children and mothers died of puerperal infection and so on. In psychology we are at that “stone age” period — uncivilized.

So psychology should be entering the curriculum of every secondary school, and the preparation for parenthood should be the chief subject, or one of the chief subjects. Then, in adolescence, the child should be prepared for the essential elements of the science of human nature; and I think that in the coming civilization it will not only be recognized theoretically, but put into practice. So here we have a revolution in education — to give the central place to psychology, which it deserves. And here is *love*. If we love our children we have to take the trouble to study human nature, and child psychology and the stages of child development, in order not to make the gross mistakes which we do now.

Mr. Dawson:

Why begin with secondary schools?

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, I do not know; we call “secondary schools” any of those following after the elementary schools, covering children from eleven to eighteen. That is, of course, in Europe. That is a blanket expression covering the period from the elementary schools to the universities, but over here there are differences, so let us say “at the adolescent stage” they should study psychology.

Mr. Dawson:

Why not begin prior to the adolescent stage?

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for it.

Mr. Dawson:

Good. It is all in the record now that you are all for it.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for it, but I believe as a first step I would be satisfied if it began at the adolescent stage. Also, because then there is a spontaneous interest. Dewey, the ghost of Dewey, would be satisfied, because the adolescent with his own troubles has an acute realization of the need for psychology.



So that the moment to give it to him or to her corresponds with a vital need; and if we can be true to that, why not.

So the parents would be psychologists up to a certain point, of practical need in the education of their children. Then comes what I have already hinted at: the psychological *inter*-communication between children and parents, their confidence, their appreciation of their inner life, that communion which is the requisite of a real psychosynthesis between parents and children. It could be called, in a sense, a special kind of friendship; it has some characteristics of “friendship.” In my own case, I consciously put it on that basis with my son and it worked very well. And I do not think it is difficult, because it is a natural condition; but that does not mean equality — let us remember that. It is not a becoming childish on the part of parents, which is a mistaken conception of intimacy. The child does not want that.

A principle of education is what we could call cross-relationships. The child has two vital needs: the horizontal relationship with children of approximately his or her age, and the vertical relationship with adults. Both are vitally needed in his growth and his development. He needs the interplay with children of his own age, and this is the problem — the tragedy — of the only son with an over-possessive mother. How many of my patients are the only sons or daughters of possessive mothers!

We do not realize this vital need, we do not realize the artificial, the cruel situation of a child [who is] always with adults. An analogy will give us an idea. Let us take an adult of, say, thirty years or forty years who would be obliged to live alone with nonagenarians, with very, very old people. It would be oppressive and unbearable; but the difference is much greater between a child and a young adult than between an adult and a nonagenarian. So this is really the beginning of a neurosis, to keep a child only with adults. But the opposite, to be all the time only with equals, with children, it is just as bad — not just as bad, but pretty bad. The child needs the adult as the “ideal model,” to be gradually introjected. The child needs the living example of adult, mature behavior — that is, if the adult behaves that way! So, he — the child — needs the two; and of that we have to be conscious as much as possible — right proportion, and companionship of equals and of parents. There are tensions in both categories, but they are necessary experiences through which the child grows and becomes adjusted. So these are the fundamental lines of the psychosynthesis of the family.

Then there is another point, the family as a group entity, as a little collectivity. And here comes the active cooperation of the child in the family life. The sentimental conception that we owe all to the child and the child owes nothing to us is also mistaken. While we are not to be possessive of the child, it is bad for the child to receive everything and to give nothing. One, I think, of the chief reasons of the present bad situation with wild children, which is so acute, is that they have been accustomed to receive



too much and are not accustomed to giving back. The normal situation is to give and to take; the child has to contribute to the family life. And, handled in the right way, children love to do it; they grow, they feel important, they feel useful, they get encouragement and praise; but they *must* contribute to the menage, to the household. And that creates the community, the small social community. There are many ways to do that; the intuition of the mother and the mind of the father, both can find all sorts of ways and adjustments. But the child has to experience in the small social community of the family what he will have to gradually experience in the larger community; i.e., that it is a give and take, a receiving and giving. These are the fundamental principles of the psychosynthesis of the couple and of the family group.

That is comparatively simple and most obvious — and not practiced! Of course, families have to belong to communities, and the critical community of the nation, which up to now has assumed an exaggerated importance — patriotism, sentimental patriotism: we owe all to the nation, we die for our nation, right or wrong. It is obviously mistaken, but there is a welling up of nationalism; there is the situation in France, and in the Arab states, etc., we see a most primitive explosion of nationalism. It is obvious that it must be superseded by something much more synthetic; the cooperation of the nations is itself intellectually accepted but very difficult to put into practice.

A more definite point in which each of us is involved, in which each of us has to take a stand, is the growing question of the individual in society — in totalitarian regimes, in democratic regimes; the question of the right proportion, the right relationship between the individual and society. This, even theoretically, is not simple, and certainly difficult to practice. I only mention the problem, but in the book we hope to produce one of the important chapters will be that of Inter-Individual Psychosynthesis — the right relationship.....of give and take, between the individual and society, of integration into humanity and the integration of humanity into the whole planetary life, the cosmic life.

Then there are the temporary group entities — the mobs, teams, classes; and here is where education comes in and the right relationship between the teacher and the class; between the parents and children; how much the teacher should be on equal terms and how much the teacher should represent a function, a practical function. You see, this relates the family to the classroom; so this is all in education, in the problems of psychosynthetic education.

So now you have the framework, and I heartily encourage all of you — alone and in groups — to study and meet all these problems, and send in your contributions to the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation. It is primarily a gathering of documents and material...You can send excerpts, papers, pamphlets, books, or notices of books dealing with problems within this



large framework, your personal documents, and contributions. In this way the group entity of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation can begin to function, and I hope that this Conference has been a starting point of the entity of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation. And the simplest primary contribution is to send in material from outside writers or, preferably, the results of your own observation or research in *any* of these fields which I have outlined during these two days.

Each can work in his own preferred field within this large framework. In these two days I could only give the framework, and I hope that I have given you the vital information, and stimulation. As I was saying, this Conference has been contrary to my ordinary technique; normally, I give full scope to the group, but this is one of the occasions in which a temporary situation goes counter to the general technical attitude. It would not have been possible within two days to have both the whole picture as well as the active discussion of certain problems; and after consideration, I overcame my tendency and my preference, and I chose to give you the whole picture. It would have been impossible to do both; and also, psychologically, I thought that you could stand it — and I hope you will not have indigestion and trouble with assimilating it! Partly it has been the fault of my good friend, Bob, who prodded me to say more and more, so he shares the responsibility.

(Dr. Gerard: I *gladly* share that responsibility!)

I think we will close with that, and then we can put our superconscious to function ready for tomorrow morning, to make practical proposals for the implementation of the activity of the Foundation.



PSYCHOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

TRANSCRIPT OF CONFERENCE
May 23rd – 25th, 1958

Part III

Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, Inc.
"Valmy" — P.O. Box 3895
Greenville, Delaware



Sunday Morning, 9:30 A.M. — 1:00 P.M.

Dr. Assagioli:

Now you have at last a chance to talk! You have been long suffering and you have been only hearing — which I know is a strain. You have stood the test well, so now I will give you your chance. But first I will just give you an outline, the framework, and then you can have your way.

Yesterday, and the day before yesterday, we spoke of psychosynthesis, its nature, its principles, its techniques and its applications. Today, the subject will be the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation.

We can consider it subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, it is a group of men and women willing to cooperate towards the realization of Psychosynthesis, the service of psychosynthesis. And objectively, this is manifesting as an organization in the world for implementing psychosynthesis.

I will list the various aspects of the work, and then I will ask you what each of you is ready and willing to give, to contribute to psychosynthesis and to the Foundation.

Essential Nature of the Work of P.R.F.

It is an act of service primarily for humanitarian purposes, to contribute to diminishing the great amount of suffering due to psychological ignorance, to wrong methods of education; it is a work of prevention of future suffering, of nervous psychological diseases; a work of actual, active fostering of the best in humanity, from children to adults. So you see that it is an act of service, an act of love primarily, and all the mental, intellectual, scientific work needed for this should be a function of this center of humanitarian purpose.

I will just say a few words about my personal work. My physical age is seventy — the age of retiring. I could retire very well, with a minimum of professional work to meet my simple personal needs; and I could write at leisure. Instead, I am starting a cycle of renewed and intensified public activity, just urged by this call to service — and by seeing the possibilities of this service. So, let us all take this attitude of contributing, of giving, of serving. The rewards come in many ways, but they are not to be sought especially; they come incidentally — as the results of our primary dedication.



Fields of Activity

The fields of activity are: first, information and communication — and, as we have mentioned, at this first stage, primarily to psychologists, to psychiatrists, educators and social workers.

Second, the essential point is finding co-workers and training them. The Foundation will stand or fall, be successful or not, according to firstly, the quality and secondly, the number of co-workers. The training of co-workers is twofold: first, the *self-training* of co-workers — this can go a considerable way ahead — which means the application of the techniques of psychosynthesis to oneself. A psychologist has the privilege of having the laboratory within himself twenty-four hours a day, so if we consider our personality as a psychological laboratory, and consistently utilize all aspects of our personal and inner life as a field of observation, of experiment and of training, life will be transfigured. I can promise you that from personal experience. So, before looking to anything outward, that should be the attitude of each co-worker: to work twenty-four hours a day in the laboratory within himself. I say “twenty-four hours a day” because the unconscious activities during sleep *can* be directed.

Of course, *didactic* psychosynthesis is the ideal, and again I mention the paradox that, while being much more comprehensive than didactic psychoanalysis, it (psychosynthesis) can be done in much shorter time owing to the active cooperation of the subject and owing to the fact that it can be done cyclically — in installments, so to speak. The facilities for this are: in summer, at my country place, Capolona, near Arezzo, until November; and the rest of the year in Florence.

When a worker feels himself or herself sufficiently prepared, then will come the activity of research. First, the project, and then the actual work of research. There are three fields which I think should have priority because they are neglected areas, and because of their supreme importance: (1) the will, (2) the superconscious or higher unconscious (including inspiration, genius and all those aspects) and (3) the Self — the will, the superconscious and the Self.

Projects — Pooling of Efforts

But any other project, more limited, more specific, will be welcome. As the work of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation is international, and will be increasingly so, it would be very well to carry out the same projects simultaneously by various workers or groups of workers in various places and countries. There could be first, a common program. Then, cooperation during the research work; and thirdly the pooling of the results. Of



course, research never ends but, practically, it can have a termination in the offering to the public of the results. The work can also be done by isolated co-workers, or by a small group of co-workers, but whenever possible it should be done by a center — a center where there could be available the existing and forthcoming material on psychosynthesis, the building up of libraries; then the giving of lectures and courses. This is the cultural activity of a center.

Later, and according to local conditions, there could be a center for consultation — medical, educational and inter-personal — specifically preparation for marriage, psychosynthesis in marriage, and problems between parents and children. The first stage of activity of a center would be creation of schools for gifted and super-gifted children and adolescents. If the two of them could be combined, then one of the ways to train adolescents would be to ask them to cooperate in teaching the children. This is a general principle of psychosynthesis, to develop by doing, by teaching others.

Cooperation with other organizations and establishing centers

Finally, cooperation with other organizations; a center should not remain isolated, but should cooperate constructively with other organizations in the psychological, the psychiatric and educational fields. The existing or coming locations of such centers are: Valmy, which should be the center of the centers and where all pooling should be done — pooling of material and the general preparation of material; it should be the organizational center of the whole Foundation. Then there exists a center in Florence, which has been functioning actively in various ways. The legal constitution of a center in Paris is already under way, and our Greek friend intends to create, as soon as possible, a center in Athens. May I mention that Bob Gerard is preparing slowly to create a center in Los Angeles.

Publications

Publications: first, pamphlets. There are three in preparation — a general one, "Dynamic Psychology and Psychosynthesis," which is a revised version of my paper published in Hibbert's Journal in London in 1934, called "Psychoanalysis and Psychosynthesis"; and then a pamphlet on Psychosynthetic Education. Following on, or parallel to these we should try to spread as widely as possible mimeographed papers and drafts for the use of co-workers. Then we are planning a mimeographed newsletter or bulletin which would be very useful to maintain communication between isolated members, between centers; and later on we could consider the publication of books either direct or through regular publishers. In order to keep in contact and to facilitate cooperation, conventions would be useful whenever possible. They could be general or even local — national



or between continents. And if possible we could arrange seminars and forums. We have had already two of these conventions: one last year and one the previous year at Capolona, and from eight to ten days seems to be the best both for practical and psychological reasons. In ten days, with an interval of a day or two, one can absorb quite a lot, and a convention can be arranged from a weekend to the end of the following weekend.

Funds

Finally, funds. All this requires, of course, money. Funds which could be classified in four ways: for the general work, for local centers, for special purposes and for definite research projects. Of course, people can give for one or any of these purposes, general work, local work, special work or special research projects. A researcher may find people are interested in that particular project and so their contributions could be earmarked for that project. Often it is much easier to find funds for a definite, limited purpose than for general work — but of course the general work needs an increasing amount of funds for research.

At last I am finished. And I will turn to Frank, our president, to elicit response.

Mr. Hilton:

I am quite sure that there are several specific projects which individuals have in mind, and perhaps it would be just as well to go round the table, starting with Robert.

Dr. Gerard:

Active Techniques of Psychosynthesis

A tendency, which I have to check in myself, is to go into everything at once, for I like everything about the psychosynthesis concepts; they are very much in line with what I have been thinking for the past ten years, so I have to somehow limit myself to the things which could be done from a practical angle and within the next twelve months, until the next convention. Also, I felt that I had to put some kind of priority on what would be of greatest importance. I feel very strongly that one of the things we need to do — all of us together — is to help to put the Psychosynthesis techniques in writing. I do not mean in writing for the general public at this time, but in writing for the co-workers so that each one, having as much information as is humanly possible to put down on paper (which cannot cover everything) has specific and very definite methods, exercises, techniques, outlines. I will be glad, since you talk of collaboration and contribution, to help in writing this, in editing it and to contribute what I have to offer — which may not be much or may be a lot, according to what is involved.

I have a long list here from the Capolona Second International Camp, a list of techniques, which have not yet been discussed here. So what we could



do is that those of us who are here tonight, such as Frank and myself, could sit with Roberto, in front of this machine, and have a further continuation of the discussion. If this was done and transcribed we should then have additional material to work on.

This is just a beginning; I am sure that Roberto has further information to give us in addition to what he has already given here, and I would be glad to correspond with him and then to make available to everyone concerned with the Foundation whatever comes through this correspondence. It seems to me that for each technique we may, in corresponding with each other, draw up a kind of an outline. In bed last night I wrote down a few things: the description of each exercise would be the first thing — in all its details — so that we would have enough specific information to apply it in our own respective fields. Then the *purpose* of the exercise, what the exercise is supposed to accomplish. The component techniques involved in that exercise, the indications and the contra-indications of that exercise — by indications I mean, “When do you use the exercise? For what particular psychological type is this particular exercise suited? How do you present it to the individual — do you first establish a certain degree of psychological rapport? Do you do first a certain amount of psychoanalysis or do you start with it, and under what conditions do you do one thing or the other? How do you introduce it to the individual? How long is it worthwhile to keep it on? What are the signs that perhaps that particular individual, pupil, patient, as it may be, needs to transfer to a different kind of exercise? Is there a gradation of exercises from the simple to the most complex? What is perhaps the most useful way of starting? What exercise normally follows the other, and under what condition do you change the gradation? What are the contra-indications; in other words, what are not only the assets, the advantages of the particular techniques, but what are its limitations? What are the possible dangers which we have to avoid when we apply such a technique? When is the particular technique not indicated — what psychological types, what psychological conditions, require that you have to be particularly careful — and when do you have to stop it?”

Then the specific conditions of application of the technique: how, the technique should be varied to be of use among children, among adults in a normal population, what are the normal means — well, I would say a non-psychiatric definition of “normal” (laughter). Or whether this technique should be somewhat different with different psychiatric and psychological conditions. In other words, the conditions of application of the technique. And then, specific cases where the technique has been applied successfully, very successfully, with only moderate success, or unsuccessfully, in order to analyze the conditions under which a technique is successful or not so successful. (Dr. Assagioli: Will you give us this list? It is very good.)

I would like all of us, if that is possible, to think about a list such as this, and in all communications between us, when we talk about or write about



things which are specifically related to psychosynthetic techniques or anything that has something to do with psychosynthesis, I think that not only should one copy go from the one individual to another, but that at all times there should be two copies — one for the Foundation so that at least one permanent file can be established here in the Foundation of everything that goes on in the way of ideas — the original to the individual, the first copy to the Foundation and the third copy to Dr. Assagioli. Suppose I write to Ruth or she writes to me and mentions how she has applied a certain psychosynthetic technique in education — the original comes to me, one copy to the Foundation and one goes to you, Dr. Assagioli, so that you will have the complete file of what goes on and will give you the possibility to “ring the bell,” or “blow the whistle,” if you think that we are getting off the beam.

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, no. I do not want a censorship. (Dr. Gerard: No, not censorship, but checking.) (Dr. Lofgren: Yes, so you can have a good chuckle over what we are doing — “I was at that stage twenty years ago” sort of thing.) (Much laughter and general cross-talk.)

Dr. Gerard:

What I mean is, suppose Ruth says she has found something, or tried something, and writes about it, you (Dr. Assagioli) would be able to contribute something further which would make the experiment much more worthwhile. Always we would work with the concept of trying to polish, refine, and improve whatever we do.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, that would be group work, a pooling of ideas.

Manual for Co-Workers

Dr. Gerard:

That’s right. Now one thing which would be very interesting to me, would be if you write to me about whatever variations of the techniques you have used. When we do this pooling it will be all for the purpose of getting as complete as possible a mimeographed manual for co-workers — a sort of “How to do it,” “How to apply psychosynthesis.” This may take several years until the manual finally becomes a book on psychosynthesis that would be good enough to go to the general psychological and psychiatric professions, but all of us can contribute to make this a better publication.

Dr. Assagioli:

Maybe a first edition, and then every year an addition.



Dr. Gerard:

So that we can add whatever specific variations of techniques we experience in our use of the techniques in our personal life and work. All that would be appreciated very much, because Roberto told me yesterday that he would not have the time personally to do this work, for it requires a lot of energy and a great deal of extra time; and perhaps I could help him in that. I gladly told him that I would be delighted to help him to the limit of my own physical and personal constitution.

Intercommunication and Sharing of Ideas

Now, this is a type of group work, so in the same way that I appreciate the communication of all that *you* have done, I also have the obligation and responsibility to communicate what *I* am doing; and that I intend to do by the same method of always sending anything to the Foundation and to Roberto. Specifically, in my place, I will try to apply the techniques in the field of psychotherapy and to have ready by the next meeting something specific in writing. But even before then, I hope to be able to present to the editing of the group the first rough draft of some of the techniques. I would like also to do one thing: amongst the techniques there is one written in French, the Desoille "*rêve éveillé*," and I want to see if I could not, from the four or five books which I have read (written by him in French and therefore presenting a certain block to some of us here), take the gist of it and write it up as a psychosynthetic technique, which it is. Don't you think so? (Dr. Assagioli: Oh, quite!)

All right; now I have myself experimented with it and I think it is one of the methods by which the higher, inner energies can be released. It is a technique of visualizing ascent.

Now, also, I will continue color research if possible, particularly the use of colors embedded in geometrical forms; not only projected from the outside but also visualized. Perhaps I may correspond with you and suggest certain things that we could try together, using ourselves as laboratories, and then report on them. Because after all, there are almost a dozen of us and that creates a group and we should use ourselves as laboratories and report.

I will also hope to continue experiments on energy fields, but this is a twenty-five-year project, and I do not expect to arrive at anything specific or concrete within the next twelve months. But I just want to indicate that this is one of the things I hope to do, because it will be one of the ways of putting the science of psychodynamics, which is the science of psychological forces, which is the science at the basis of psychosynthesis, on a real scientific basis. In my own hospital work, with the rehabilitation of crippled children and adults, I hope to use psychosynthetic methods and



to indicate what kind of results I get and how this work can be done. In my private practice of psychotherapy, I hope to use psychosynthetic methods; also, the field of religious education is of great interest. The director of my local Methodist church is a man I am trying (and hope) to introduce to psychosynthetic methods so that they could be used in that field. Also, I hope to work with a spiritual research group within the Methodist Church in Los Angeles. I am a member of the church although I am not an orthodox Christian, but I think it is important that in the orthodox Christian church there be new ideas. The spiritual research group would be for the purpose of — in groups of five or six people — gaining some measure of contact with the Self, which is really the end result of the spiritual religious quest. Using psychosynthetic methods in that field would be of great interest, because if it were successful, it is possible that it may spread to other churches.

I will prepare the thought pattern for the formation of an affiliated institute of psychosynthesis in Los Angeles. It will be done on the inner side in thought because it will not be put into operation until later. I am looking also for contact with professionals in the fields of psychology and psychiatry who would be interested in psychosynthesis; so that if any of you, anywhere in the U.S., know of any psychologists or psychiatrists, physicists or doctors — anyone working in the fields of the science of man — who would be interested in that, I think it would be good to communicate the name to the Foundation, and if possible I would also like to get a copy so that I may contact him too; and you are free to give my name to these people. But I am looking for *professionally* trained individuals who have gone through the rigorous training of the academic profession.

I had many more ideas, but I do not want to hog the time, and the only thing I want to say, as a focus, is we need to put the psychosynthetic techniques in writing for use by co-workers — to make a manual out of it.

Manual of Techniques

Mr. Hilton:

That is an extraordinarily good thought, and I think that this idea — of getting the techniques down — is much nearer than it was two days ago. We already have a few of them on the tape; and this project of circulating the drafts — and maybe issuing them in booklet form — is excellent. It means that we will not have to wait a year or two for a completed book, but can have something in our hands in the meantime.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for this method of successive expansion. It is the natural method of growth of an organism, and to give an academic example: one of the most



successful books was the *Principles of Physiological*⁸. He was a university professor; he gave the first explanation in fifty pages; it was incomplete, but it was such a success that gradually it went through fourteen editions and became 500 pages. So that is an example that this method can be used. If we try to make a perfect product immediately, we shall never do it.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, it is a successive approximation.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, and it is group work, individuals doing group work.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, so that in time it becomes a manual *written by a group*, and not by one single individual. (Dr. Assagioli: Excellent!)

Mr. Hilton:

Helen, do you have any ideas? We have touched on the therapeutic side, but what of the educational question?

Miss Miles:

Well, I have been at work at all of this for quite a while because I was at Capolona last summer; so what I got there, which has been repeated here, has become very real in these intervening months. I would say that I have been a laboratory myself to a considerable extent, and I have had a lot of fun, so that I know how some of these things work. Also, if I might say so, I had been working along these lines in education before ever I heard of psychosynthesis, and now — thanks to you — I have been able to work closely, for the last few months, with Chuck (Charles Dawson) who has helped me more specifically to see what I have been doing. He has been able to explain it psychologically so that I have been able to pinpoint it, and focus it, into some kind of form, so that eventually I will be able to verbalize more effectively.

I have been working up to this for some years, I think, on a sort of intuitive basis, for I realized about three years ago that a great difficulty in trying to communicate ideas along this line (although I had not then heard the word “psychosynthesis”) would be to interpret these rather nebulous thoughts into language that would be acceptable to certain circles; and I realized that you had to have a different vocabulary for each group of people that you contacted. The year that I took and studied philosophy taught me this, and lately I have been reading a great deal of psychology — because *communication* is the problem.

⁸ This work by Wilhelm Wundt went through six editions and eventually totalled three volumes.



I am known in art education circles, and you have spoken of the great lack in education of the training of the emotions, discrimination. This is, of course, specifically where I fit in, because teaching in the arts involves this area of the emotions, and I think I have a wonderful vantage point for releasing the higher, the creative urge. My teaching has been rather revolutionized lately.

Mr. Hilton:

Have you seen anything that we can utilize in other schools? Let us think of the point that we shall be at in three months' time when we shall have our literature going out and replies coming in from teachers and educators.

(About one minute of the discussions missed during the changing of the tape on the recorder.)

Miss Miles:

If I can introduce these ideas, if I can manage to communicate them within the field of art education, this, I think, is a very specific thing I can do in addition to all the general things which I do not need to repeat or go into. Perhaps Chuck will say a little more about the color-form test which we have talked over with Bob, because another specific thing that I am interested in is in identifying psychological types and varying the approach in teaching. This is something that is not utilized in educational circles, and I hope to be able to do something about that. I am working on it. That is enough to say, I think.

Mr. Hilton:

Dr. Price, you have to leave at 10:30, so would you like to speak? Have you any questions?

Dr. Price:

As you all know, I have a specific local interest — the thought of having what Dr. Assagioli beautifully described in his article, a school for gifted children — the technique and the many things about it. We have here (in Valmy) the physical facilities for such a school. Then what would be required beside the eight gifted children? What would be needed is a gifted teacher who has been trained by Dr. Assagioli. And then, Dr. Grossman and I — it isn't as if we hadn't plenty of work to do in Delaware! — would be definitely interested in anything that we could contribute towards such a school, observing and helping in any way we might.

And there is just one other thing I would like to say, about Bob's thought — an excellent one — about trying to interest psychiatrists and physicians. As I have told you, I am pessimistic; the reason being that many psychiatrists and physicians are too "mature" to become interested in psychosynthesis.

Dr. Assagioli:

You mean Associations?



Dr. Price:

No, even with individuals.

Dr. Lofgren:

That is an interesting use of the word “mature” (laughter).

Dr. Gerard:

You see, I thought that at this stage, that any manual we prepare would be for co-workers only.

Dr. Price:

Yes, but you spoke of mailing lists — of psychiatrists and of physicians.

Dr. Gerard:

I would not at this stage mail a manual.

Dr. Assagioli:

Not the manual, but the printed papers. The mailing list I mentioned was one, such as that of Dr. Maslow, of people whom we know are already interested in this direction; *not* a general mailing. We have a mailing list of people who have been individually approached and who have responded favorably in a general way. That is what I meant.

Dr. Price:

Yes, but as I said to Dr. Assagioli yesterday, the question of the work with gifted children is a “child” of psychosynthesis; but I believe in working first with the children! And then, after that, in a couple of years, we can show what can be done, such as psychosynthesis and especially the therapeutic application.

Dr. Lofgren:

But a chicken has to lay an egg to get chicks!

Dr. Price:

That is the question: which comes first! (laughter)

(15 minute interval)

Mr. Hilton:

There are two main items to discuss. First, Ruth said yesterday that we can't do much with the gifted children unless we have the gifted educators, and as I know that she has been working on an idea along this line, I suggest that she talk to us for a while. We have a mimeographed outline of it which can be passed around. Then, afterwards, Chuck (Charles Dawson) can develop what Helen said, and we can discuss the main point of what we are going to do in about three months' time, when we have replies coming in from teachers and educators who have responded to our educational pamphlet. We must just imagine ourselves three months ahead; then we immediately face up to the problem which we have to decide this morning!



Dr. Lofgren:

I am particularly interested in helping the young teacher, when she first meets the real challenge of being responsible for what goes on in the classroom. She recognizes her own personal limitations; she sees that she is badly prepared academically; she has difficulty because her own depth of insight into subject matter is weak. (These are elementary school teachers that I am speaking of.) But even more than this, unless she is consciously aware of it, she has the difficulty of not being able to handle the problems that the children raise, questions that are philosophical — about the meaning of life, the nature of the universe. The children who become interested in the way of the world around us ask the most fundamental problems — those that you read of in the great philosophical books. So the impression that many people have, that all that you have to do to teach children is to be a babysitter, is ridiculous!

The hardest questions that man has to face are the questions that children ask...By the time you are in high school you have learned not to ask such foolish questions — you've been told plenty of times not to! Children ask the most impossible questions, questions that have never been answered by any human being; and it is important for teachers to know this. It isn't just *they* who do not know what life is about; it is the whole human race that does not know.

Outline of Seminar or Workshop for Teachers

Now, what I have done is to outline a six-week seminar or workshop for selected teachers, to provide them with a personal understanding of the nature of daily experience. The seminar is oriented in the direction of four of the academic areas: *art, music, language* and *science*, because, as teachers, they need specifically to be able to relate experience to academic material.

It is suggested that the teachers be selected very carefully, and this means that it must be a highly subsidized program. I think this is possible with the funding foundations now interested in teacher training — especially science training. The teachers should be selected for heterogeneity of sex, of academic background, of cultural, racial, national and economic levels — regional, everything that you can imagine that will provide different perspectives, different points of view; so that the group will have among the members a richness that they can contribute in their leisure hours; so that the attack that is made is rather uniform on the academic level, but is minimized by letting each individual “fertilize” with the others.

The group should be large enough that individual members do not stand out, so if a person goes through a very quiet, retiring period of even a day or two, this will not be noticeable to the others — unless one of them is a



friend of his and is really sensitive. He can go into the library and read or do whatever suits his mood. The group must be small enough so that the total group can participate in the discussions. We suggest a group of about thirty to thirty-five.

First Week — Orientation

The structure of the program is this: that the first week be spent in an orientation period where students will have an opportunity of reviewing not just human growth and development, but also the anthropology, the mystery of the development of human nature and culture in general, of civilization, with the idea that we might discover some parallels and some of the weaknesses in the assumptions, in the misinformation that has been taught to many of the teachers. Given a very intensive review of the creative nature of the individual, then each teacher, each participant, will be expected to take part in learning experiences in each of these academic areas. So it depends upon setting the mood during the orientation period, so that adults are not ashamed of being horrible in art, or in being “all thumbs” in the laboratory. They can be just as stupid, just as clumsy, as thick-headed as they want to be. And this is acceptable; it is important for them to be the way they are. And the reason that I am sure that this can work, is that I do it in my own classes of graduate school teachers, and they are getting a grade from me; so it is possible for people to understand the necessity of starting with our roots in the soil and letting the growth occur normally or naturally, in order to make the kind of healthy growth that is lasting.

Second Week — Art

During the four day period the large group would be broken up into small groups of anything from three to six people who would be grouped for homogeneity in the area to be discussed or to be experienced; so that if this period is art, if you have some people who are particularly gifted in art or who have had a great deal of academic training in art, these would be put together — so that the person who is horrible will not be competing in his own mind, with someone who is very good, and the other fellow will not be showing off. All the horrible ones will be working together and all the good ones will be muscling for who is going to be best (Dr. Assagioli: Very clever!). The important thing here is that instruction given should not be oriented to the history of art or the great art of the past or of the present, but art as a personal experience; (Dr. Assagioli: Hear, hear!) as if we had just come out of a cave and were starting in on the civilization of man. So that even the person who has had five years of art training comes to art with no understanding, with no way of using perspective or some of his tricks — shading, or some of the things they get very good at doing — to make a stylized, superficial, unfeeling kind of reaction.



So, during these four days, they are not expected to do anything except to pour themselves into this experience; and there should be no attempt to analyze it at all, no attempt to do anything except just what comes spontaneously at the dinner table or on walks.

Then, three days spent in rather careful, critical analysis of what has gone on, with the intention of showing the cyclic nature of learning — that you must become deeply involved — the more thoroughly involved, the more the learning. In one sense, you cannot both learn and analyze at the same time. (Dr. Assagioli: Good!) In analysis you are learning, but you cannot get new experiences in this process; so you set aside time to take stock of yourself, to see where you have gone, to recognize the limitations, the withholding you have done, the lack of commitment, all the things that have gone into this first experience.

Third Week – Music

Next, recognizing that it is not necessary to go back to art to correct your mistakes through not having given yourself fully to an experience, we will go into music. And here again, I assume that they know nothing about the scales of the Western world, any of the music symbols or systems. Let people create rhythms, harmonies, anything they want that makes sense to them in the way of expressing their feelings. Not only that, but I think there is another area that could be very useful here, since it is not so easily plagiarized, and that is the value of listening to beautiful music — or gruesome music, depending on the mood of the person — as a means of expressing feeling. So, just not the creation of music, but the empathy with it might be explored; but I put that second. I have the first thing first, so that the person cannot hide in listening; so that you must experience and create before the listening is introduced.

Then again a period of evaluation; the essential part, that I forgot to mention about the previous evaluation period, is the importance of intensive evaluation, to be as honest and as soul searching as possible, interspersed with periods of relaxation — recreation in a real sense of re-creation, meditation, times when you do not do any thinking, times when you are sort of allowing all your insights to come to equilibrium. So, more intensive evaluation, more of this complete freedom from any mental activity.

Fourth Week — Language and Symbols

The third period then will be devoted to man's skills in abstracting, in creating symbols and in using symbols. The stress here would be on language as a particular means of communicating, but recognizing language as a very refined kind of symbol. Mathematics and any other kinds of symbols are very important too — diagrams, maps and other things enter into this



area of communication, through form that is meaningless until man has projected meaning into it. Here the important thing that seems to be completely left out of our usual academic learning is that each individual creates his own symbols; for instance, when you put a diagram on the board for us, you have a set of meanings for them; you do your best to communicate some of them to us, but each of us has our own set of meanings for them. This is a terrifying revelation to a lot of people, and so they need to come to this kind of structured setting where there is supervision of discovery.

Therefore, we go into the creation of symbols so that people have the sense of the arbitrariness of them, that one set is just as good as another set, but that no two sets will do quite the same thing, and that no set will do the same thing for everybody. It is a peculiar feeling that you get when you begin to become aware of the isolation and yet the unity of human nature.

Fifth Week — Science

Then, more evaluation and relaxation before going onto the experiences in science; and this really is the subtle way of saying that I believe that science — the emphasis on science training now — is very important; and that a scientist has a tremendous contribution to make to the discipline we need in human nature. But not science as it is now interpreted, of science versus humanities. What we should see is that science is the most refined skill that man has created from his civilization. And that experiences in science should show how we combine man's imaginative, creative quality with the discipline of making the imagination fit the natural phenomena. So, you make the theory and then you go out and test it; and then you cook up something else that you think might be better, and go out and test that. It is unlike making a fairy tale where you can make water run uphill or something of that sort. If, in science, you want to make water run uphill, you will have to employ another theory that has to do with pumps; and, of course, engineers *do* make water run uphill. But you must accept the limitations of the natural phenomena, and this, to me, is the ultimate challenge; it is the wonderful challenge of science. Of course, the reason why psychology, and what will eventually be spiritual science, can be so fascinating, is because the nature of the universe is infinite. There is no limit to the depth (Dr. Assagioli: To the range of energies — the latent, and depth of, energies.). One of my pet feelings about science is that we attempt constantly a reduction of concepts, so we attempt to explain chemistry in terms of the concepts of physics, when you need all the concepts of physics *plus* chemical concepts to understand chemical phenomena. Then we attempt to explain biology in terms of chemical and physical concepts when you need *all* that chemistry and physics can offer, *plus* biological concepts. (Dr. Assagioli: Excellent!)



We have no biological concepts at this point that are uniquely biological. We explain chromosome action and gene action in terms of molecules, in terms of chemical and physical phenomena. We must discover means of discovering biological relationships, like energies, organizations, that are unique to biological systems (Dr. Assagioli: Good!) which cannot be possibly manifest in either chemical or physical phenomena; and I think that the lead to this is in negative entropy, in organization of matter.

Dr. Assagioli:

May I interrupt you, just to give some information? There is an Italian mathematician and philosopher, a great mathematician, who has developed the concept of syntropy (Dr. Lofgren: Very good!)...syntropy which integrates — not excludes — integrates entropy.⁹

Dr. Lofgren:

Yes, very good, because this is the direction in which we should go; and biologists are pitifully handicapped at this point because they are stuck with the concepts of the chemical and physical fields; and we need to free the elementary school teacher from the idea that biological systems can be explained in this way so that children will be able to use their imagination in order to create concepts of life, of organization, that go on into higher forms.

Then, the final part of this process (i.e., fifth week, science); part of this, I think, should be the development of very definite skills, so that there should be laboratory work connected with it, so that they understand the necessity of quantitative work and certain kinds of very accurate determinations.

Sixth Week — Synthesis

Then, the final week of the workshop would be spent in a few days of evaluation of science experiences; but primarily in a synthesis of the whole experience, seeing the similarity of the creative experience, and that whether you are in art, in music, in language, or in science, is less important than the fact that any field offers you an opportunity for creative experience.

Then, an essential part, an orientation to the back-home situation, the classroom situation, which they will return to. How can I take something which is now idealized, so theoretical, and put it into practice without having to run to my superintendent and say: "I have got to reorganize the whole school!"? How can I put it into the classroom situation in terms of "how different I am through my insight," and not "what different kinds of things I have to do to the rest of the school."?

⁹ Dr. Assagioli is referring to Luigi Fantappie (1901-1956)



I think this program could be effective, because I have been working for the last four and a half years with Lisle Fellowship that uses this six week sequence of events with groups of young people and has been unusually successful.¹⁰

Dr. Assagioli:

I must express my *deep* appreciation of this program, and my admiration. I have only one suggestion: could you add the final step, from biology to psychology? Because there is the same ratio — biology stands to the physical chemical realm as psychology stands to biology. (Dr. Lofgren: Yes!) In human nature there are physical chemical reactions, biological reactions *plus* — so I think that the missing step could be added in this same framework, in this same attitude and with the same technique. Consider psychology as an empirical science.

Dr. Lofgren:

Yes, I think so, but this is my feeling, that the picture the teacher needs should not necessarily add one more category of psychology. It should be an open-ended thing ...with physical sciences, chemical sciences, biology and then — who knows what we now call psychology is going to break up into since we have not even the concepts to work with in biology? I grant that, we should then see that there is something obvious in the difference between man and the lower organisms. We have got to have something that explains human nature as different from animal nature.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, but I still think that Roberto has a point in the same way that you are actively trying to have a creative experience of biological systems.

Dr. Lofgren:

No, I am not! I am having the last period of science as a discipline and in that put the whole sequence, and in that I agree with you that it should be physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and then whatever we want to call it — spiritual, all the higher intuitive elements.

Dr. Gerard:

Then may I suggest that among the experiments that you cook up, that you may include certain psychological experiments (Mr. Hilton: Some of the Active Techniques, maybe.) to show that the empirical side of science can be applied to the psychological realms? (Dr. Lofgren: Yes.)

Dr. Assagioli:

To make this wedge point — psychology is an empirical science, psychology *is* science (Dr. Lofgren: Yes, yes.). Only that, that psychology really *is* a science — that is the wedge.

¹⁰ Lisle International began an annual six-week summer camp program in 1936.



Dr. Gerard:

And you may be able to find some really fascinating experiments that may be done. I will try to find something; I may not come up with anything, but maybe you should also talk to the psychologists that you know. They may be able to give you something. Do you, Dr. Grossman, have any ideas of the type of psychological experiment that a layman could do which would teach him the necessity for accurate observation like we have in the other sciences, and at the same time would be a little more creative type of experiment than the usual “rat” type of thing?

Dr. Lofgren:

I think that the reaction type is itself a very interesting one — given very simple acts to perform, and then more and more complex ones. But any of these things are going to take so much equipment.

Miss Miles:

Can we do this next summer?

Dr. Lofgren:

Well, we have to see. This would take a long time to set up, because this must be carefully done so that the proper people are brought in for supervision. It would be horrid if we got in people who would do a very dogmatic job of trying to teach subject matter. And it would also be unfortunate if we did not carefully select the population. I see no reason to rush into it; it would be better to work it through. I think that it is such a skeleton at this point that it needs a very careful planning at all of these stages.

Mr. Hilton:

I would suggest that we apply what Bob suggested in relation to the Techniques: that we correspond with one another and if anyone has any bright ideas they could give them. We have now got the thing into the group mind. We know that it will be a long-term project. (Miss Miles: it would be terrific!)

Dr. Grossman:

It seems to me that the problem brought up here has plagued education in this country, if not in other countries — when you talk about educating the child instead of teaching subject matter! And I think that one of the great drawbacks has been that we rarely find teachers who are prepared to teach the child rather than impart subject matter. I am sure that there are brighter psychologists than I, but I have certainly given this a great deal of thought and it is difficult, it is difficult to do just as you suggested, to get people to translate from this type of an experience to actual classroom situations under, maybe, a structure where you are plagued by supervisors and principals who will not permit it, or boards of education and so on.



Dr. Lofgren:

I notice with my own students that they will come back and tell me creative things they have done. They do not have to structure the whole setting; they can merely have little nuggets tucked away, and the students can grow immeasurably, apparently from just a twenty or thirty-minute experience. They can bear a lot of routine.

Dr. Grossman:

It seems to me that there is an institution here in this community — the Art Center. There is a Mrs. Johnson who directs the education — mostly I am thinking of children now, where children can go in and do anything they want in any kind of art material, and the only thing the teacher does is to help them express what they would like to express. And I was just wondering if we should contact her and get her interested. It is a possibility. It is in Wilmington.

Mr. Hilton:

Time is getting on, and we still have this great problem of a program for education. I think that you, Chuck, have been giving some thought to implementing the program, particularly in relation to educators and those with whom we shall be corresponding. We cannot just exchange a couple of letters; we must have some progressive program in mind. Perhaps you would like to start off with that and see if we can find the practical thing to suggest to people who respond to our psychosynthetic note.

Mr. Dawson:

I think that we should first recognize that those people who respond will probably be people who are stimulated hopefully. They will not be people who fit comfortably into the accepted categories. I think that this is an extraordinarily well-conceived program; you have emphasized the necessity for picking carefully the people brought in. They would necessarily be people who are open to new experiences so that this will be a formative experience for them; that is, they will have a great deal of obvious potential which they have not had encouraged or supported. This would encourage and support it. As I conceive of the possibilities of the work for the Foundation in the immediate future, it will be that of encouraging and supporting people who will be stimulated, who do have something of an open and creative orientation; that is, people who have not had a channel through which to express.

I feel that it would be something of a mistake if we were to impose a strict form upon them. I feel that this is a business of cultivation, a thing by which we can strengthen them to follow out the creative inclinations which they do have, and that they can come towards us gradually through being encouraged to follow their own inclination rather than prescribing that which they must do in order to receive our support. So that in many cases of people who respond to the call of this Foundation I think we shall



find people who are very much unprepared. I would expect that Ruth will find many such people, who are unprepared to do research and yet people who have basically sound ideas. The implementing of these ideas of their own would be a very valuable growth experience for them. They would find themselves through making these ideas real and actual in everyday life.

So I conceive that to be one natural activity of this Foundation: to provide, to discover these people, to provide them with the cultivating, nurturing type of support and encouragement which they require in order to actualize their unique individual trend, if it is in the line of their research.

Now, I have thought that there should be — as Ruth has indicated -areas of specialized activity in which these people will appear and have their ideas. It is rather unlikely that any *one* person will be competent and adequate to give the nurturing and cultivating force to all these people who need it along the different areas, so that I very much want some kind of person who is competent to give this, to provide services, make himself available for the encouragement of these relatively uninformed, immature people. Now, of course, we will start out more particularly in the areas of psychotherapy and areas of education. My own particular training has dealt more specifically with the area of art in education and in therapy; so this is where I feel that, from actual practice, I could give encouragement to creative thinking and be of some help. In some of the other fields, I do not believe that I would be as competent; for instance, as Ruth would be in biology.

If we were able to somehow set up an organized system of advisors for applicants, to help people who are stimulated by our call, I think that is one of the most concrete and most far-reaching kinds of forces that we could set into action; we should be doing some actual psychosynthesis *with* people, with individuals. It would be a kind of research that may be difficult to measure — I suspect that it would not even be possible to measure the growth and effects in the people we can encourage and support.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, I think that Frank said, for practical reasons, we need to offer in a few months' time the evidence of a specific project at least going on, if not completed, or with some tentative results. Is that so? (Mr. Hilton: Yes.)

Dr. Assagioli:

I am in favor, for the long range, for help to the individual; but there seems to be the need of a specific project — and also of evidence of the concrete. So a project on art application in education made by you two (H.C.M. and C.B.D.), and your project (C.B.D.), could be two specific projects, limited projects, that could be set going and presented in a written report in a year's time. Is that the idea?



Mr. Hilton:

To an extent, Roberto. I think I might be able to make clearer what I was driving at if we suppose that we are living out in Iowa, very much alone and without anyone in very close contact with whom to share our aspirations and ideals (I am speaking, now, of the sensitive, intuitive teacher such as you people here). Suppose we write in to the Foundation because, say, some friend has recommended the Foundation's name and we have received the brochure and the article on Psychosynthesis in Education. Suppose I write in to the Foundation and say, "I am deeply interested; this is the thing I have wanted to see. What can I do, or what can you do for me? Where do I go from here?"

Now, if such a person could be brought here and share in a conference like this weekend, he would probably go back with new ideas; he would have this picture of psychosynthesis, of the concept of the unifying center, and a better idea of himself and the children he would be handling; and would probably make a much better job of teaching. Now, what can we do at a distance, for someone living five hundred miles away, who asks these questions? We have got to have something for them!

Dr. Lofgren:

I think that a person like that, in as complete isolation as you postulate, needs something more than the kind of contact that Chuck suggests. I think that is something special, and it would be wonderful to make contact with them, but it is too thin, it does not give them enough of what they need. And I would suggest they should be encouraged to set aside sometime the next summer to take a workshop that would give them a clear understanding of this. I think we should provide a specialized setting for them, to enable them to really get their feet wet. I seriously question whether a person with that kind of isolation, coming here for two or three days, could go back and do anything much — except be very confused if somebody asked him two or three searching questions. A thing that I think is important is that they actually work through some experiences in a setting where they have made some roots, where they have made some progress.

Dr. Gerard:

In particular, for example, in such a summer setting (which may be Valmy, for instance), they should experiment and experience a series of psychosynthetic techniques, so that when they go back to their schools and start to teach, they will speak with a voice of authority — not, of course, of authority that says "I will tell you," and so on, but the voice of authority that comes from having experienced a thing oneself. Also, I think that a person who is in isolation, as Frank stated, needs the human experience of a relationship with other human beings who have similar, if not identical, ideas. So that one of the things we need to do within the next few months is to plan to have the material available for them when they come here next summer.



The planning that Ruth has in mind should start right now, because it takes a long time to have the material available for them so that most of their time spent here would be spent in acquiring experiences. Most of the lectures can at least already be in draft, mimeographed — the Techniques in draft, also mimeographed — and then the whole seminar will be spent on experimenting and discussing how these things can be applied in one's own setting. This is just an idea.

Mr. Hilton:

Yes, I think that is very, very good, Bob. It is a natural development and in line with Ruth's idea, but that is not going to be enough.

Dr. Lofgren:

Oh, but that gets the start! There needs to be communication, too.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am all for experience, as you know, and some framework of preparation could be provided for them, in order to save time. Perhaps a minimum of reading could be provided — existing writings, and excerpts, an anthology, a small anthology of psychosynthesis. Some tabloid could be provided as an intriguing appetizer and as giving lines of direction. So we would save time through some preparatory material being sent to them, but all this with a view to the workshop, indicating that only the real work could be done at the workshop.

Mr. Hilton:

Can we do anything for someone who cannot come to the workshop? North America is a big continent and a lot of teachers certainly cannot afford to travel one thousand miles!

Dr. Lofgren:

That is why it has to be subsidized. It has to have Ford Foundation behind it, or something like that. And that is not impossible; you see, the big bulge, the big concern, over science education is going to have a counteraction when people get terrified of a person trained in science only. And think it's deadly! I have been more afraid than any anti-science people, because I have seen too many who have no sense of conscience at all.

Dr. Assagioli:

The workshop must be limited in numbers.

Dr. Lofgren:

But I think we can get backing for people who see the need for the interpretation of science as part of a culture.

Dr. Assagioli:

Let us be optimistic, and if sufficient backing exists, there could be two successive workshops led by the same people.



Miss Miles:

One for science and one for other people?

Dr. Assagioli:

No, just the same.

Miss Miles:

But this, as set up by Ruth, was special for grade school teachers. I am also speaking of anybody, for I know two or three people who I think would want to consider right away being candidates to come; one is teaching at university level, but she isn't trained in research.

Dr. Grossman:

I think that one of the dangers is impatience. I think it would be better to think about quality, rather than quantity.

Dr. Assagioli:

We should not take formal decisions today, but have this all in mind.

Dr. Grossman:

Yes, I think that the way this could be run better would be if you had one or two workshops (perhaps next summer), and then let those few people in turn go to whatever parts of the country they can and hold a local one; work it that way rather than try to do this by personal correspondence.

Dr. Assagioli:

And I would also suggest another workshop next summer, in Europe, after or before those in America.

Miss Miles:

By the same staff? Subsidized?

Dr. Lofgren:

Well, who knows?

Dr. Gerard:

It is also possible that we may have to have a general workshop, with a more specialized workshop in addition. We could have a general workshop where we learn the fundamentals of everything, and then a specialized workshop for people who are particularly interested in the field of education, and a specialized workshop for people who are particularly interested in the realm of psychotherapy. For the latter we have to be extremely careful that we do not train people for psychotherapy who do not have at least an M.D. or a Ph.D. degree. But I still think that you need the beginning workshop in which you have both educators and psychologists, medical men, learning together to experience certain things.



Mr. Hilton:

I think that you, Dick, have some ideas on this.

Mr. Mades:

Well, I will start by saying this. My father told me, when I was a little boy, that anything with a “too” was no good — too much, too little, too pretty, too ugly, anything with a too in front of it! And I think that we stand here in danger of either attempting to do too much or of attempting to do too little. I think that we had better try to find a sort of middle ground.

The research and writing as planned, and as has already been laid out is, I think, wonderful. And this is a good start. The idea of starting a live workshop or school here at Valmy is again wonderful; and the ideas of communication are also wonderful, but I also think that we can start from where we are, doing things with ideas that do not depart very much from the orthodox. In other words, to start doing things in the field — I wrote down something; it did not come out too badly: the spreading of some of the more familiar ideas, of psychosynthetic techniques, to practicing psychologists and psychiatrists and to people in the school systems. (Dr. Gerard: A very good idea!) (Dr. Assagioli: Very good!)

Then, the planning, the *specific* planning (such as “How many toilets do you need for a school at Valmy?”), starting out with just a few children. If we have the plan I am sure that we will find the teachers, and we will find the kids to fit into such a plan. This seems to me to be a way to get the thing started.

In other words, what I am looking for is a list of rather small projects as far as financial backing is concerned — that is, something that people can be interested in and give money to. The planning of this workshop that you were talking about, Ruth, is very exciting to me. (Dr. Lofgren: It is not a large project!) I think it is a *small* one.

Dr. Lofgren:

The thing about it that has possibilities in our present setting is that each area of specialization will only last for a short time, so that the art persons* need only be here for a week, the music person* for a week, and a continuity staff to tie the thing together. (*i.e., supervisors — F.H.)

This thing might be worked out under, maybe, joint auspices — of say the Ford Foundation and the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation; and this would give us standing. It would give us a right to “get our noses into it.” Of course, I have no intention of telling you what to do — I don’t think you would take it! (laughter)



Dr. Gerard:

Dick, the Ford Foundation will not give money to an organization that is not *already confirmed* as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. Maybe I am wrong.

Mr. Mades:

Ruth is an organization, isn't she? (Mr. Hilton: No, an organism!)

Dr. Lofgren:

The pattern of this six-week seminar belongs to the Lisle Fellowship. Lisle Fellowship will be a joint member with you if you wish. Lisle Fellowship is tax-deductible and has been for the last fourteen years. (Dr. Gerard: Ideal!) So that if they did not have any money, they have the status; and they also have a fundraiser who is contacting foundations with this same copy... It seems to me that those of us who are all interested in the same thing should pool our resources.

Dr. Gerard:

By the way, since we are talking about funds, I am going to Washington to find if it is possible to get further funds for research in the use of color in psychotherapy, including visualization methods.

Mr. Hilton:

I would like us, if we could, to go back to what Dick has been saying. I think it is most important. We know that we have a long-term project, and *that* we must carry it out, but we must also have immediate projects put under way as from now. This is quite fundamental, and Dick has spotted the point very clearly.

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, you are in the position of those who have to decide.

Dr. Lofgren:

Well, there is another thing that can be started small. Let us start the bulletin right away — give it an official title and start it even in a mimeographed form.

Dr. Gerard:

In psychological circles, when you have a journal which is not yet a journal and is still an informal thing, it is mimeographed and generally called a "newsletter." So, maybe we could have " Psychosynthesis Research Foundation Newsletter," or whatever you want to call it.

Mr. Mades:

I have a small list — I have just finished it, and it is therefore very open to criticism. It is a list of what may be able to start immediately, as a way of getting the show on the road. I am talking like an advertising man, but I don't intend to!



No. 1. The Bulletin, or the writing to each other. I think this must be started immediately. We are all in agreement there. Now I am going to ask the people who are more qualified than I if a bulletin on some techniques, simple ones, could not go out to the school systems within a period of, say, six months. What are your opinions on that?

Dr. Lofgren:

I can write up this project (six week seminar) on experimental lines and have the thing published in one of the other journals. I know I can get it in The Journal of Human Relations.

Mr. Mades:

The sort of thing I was thinking about was this visualization experiment — of looking at pictures in a classroom. Now this might be a large help to a lot of kids; and I seem to think that somewhere along in my education someone did this to me. It is not being done very often, because I have not heard of it from anyone else, but this could go into a bulletin — going into school systems as a means of teaching children all kinds of things.

Miss Miles:

I don't think that you just send things like this to school systems; it is not the thing you do. There might be a writing channel through the orthodox NEA¹¹ journal — or the education magazines. Sometimes, when it turns out to be something of special interest and significance, reprints are made available.

Mr. Hilton:

Are we not concerned with something for those people who have responded? We do not want something just to send out through the mails, but to send to those who have actually responded.

Dr. Gerard:

By "school systems" you mean school teachers?

Mr. Mades:

Yes, I mean school teachers.

Miss Miles:

But I thought that Dick had a very good thought in his mind, which is that of beginning to plant the word around. This is another type of activity. (Dr. Lofgren: You have to have the soil, too!)

Mr. Mades:

If we can, we should not only write to people who hear of us, but have a bulletin that goes out — one directed to the educational system (by this I

¹¹ NEA = National Education Association



mean teachers, not systems), and another one to psychologists and psychiatrists who might become interested. These as two separate bulletins.

Mr. Hilton:

You had a very important comment on that, Chuck, when we kicked the idea around one day: that you thought that the bulletin should itself express synthesis, and therefore should be so designed that there would be no division. It would be such as would interest — just as this Conference has interested — educators and doctors and psychologists alike.

Dr. Assagioli:

I would suggest a lot of small pamphlets and also a bulletin. The bulletin is for information and news, and the pamphlets are for more permanent, fundamental points.

Mr. Hilton:

Later would come, I should imagine, more specific ones, when you are getting more deeply into the fields of therapy and you have more psychiatrists practicing psychosynthetic techniques.

Dr. Gerard:

There is no question that after I have personally gathered enough specific case material.....

(Two minute's talk missed during changing of tape)

.....I think it is important that we try to write it up as quickly as possible, so that it becomes published by the already existing journals; so the idea of Ruth — of having Journal of Human Relations publish her research project — would be extremely important. (Dr. Assagioli: Oh, yes. And reprints too.) That's right; and then also, in my case, the idea of experimenting on psychosynthetic techniques and then reporting it in psychological journals.

Dr. Assagioli:

May I suggest that first, experiment could be — and it would be advisable to be — training in observation, because it is amenable to measure. We could make a series of picture cards. For instance, the test which I described yesterday, but which I will repeat very rapidly: the pupil looks for a minute or two at the cards and then he reports in writing what he has observed. Then one can count arithmetically the facts which he has written down and the facts which he has not seen or not reported. Then a second half minute of observation and so on. Week after week we can see the increase in the power of observation, and thus the results of training in observation. The great advantage is that it is very simple, orthodox, and amenable to statistics.

Dr. Gerard:

And it works both for psychotherapy and in education.



Dr. Assagioli:

Yes. So I suggest an experiment be carried out and reported in orthodox psychological journals. That could be done within a few months.

Dr. Gerard:

Now in order to get immediate publication in some psychological journals you may have to pay for the cost of publication, which costs about fifteen dollars a page, or something like that. But the article could be written in four to six pages. Otherwise, there is a publication lag of about one year in any journals.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, it would be well worthwhile as a first experimental contribution in the value of training, in the value of active techniques.

Dr. Gerard:

By the way, this can also be reported in educational journals because it would also interest them. I suggest that we work with children, and the observation be reported in educational journals; and do this also with adults, reporting in a therapeutic or a non-therapeutic psychological journal. It could be reported in a journal of general psychology.

Dr. Assagioli:

That is very definite.

Dr. Gerard:

I just had an idea that in doing this we can use cards and pictures which have become completely standard in psychological practice in America; and I mean the T.A.T. — the Thematic Apperception Test. And I think if you do that, it is for psychologists like talking about a member of his family.

Dr. Assagioli:

But it (the T.A.T.) has too much emotional resonance. We should have something much more objective — objective details.

Dr. Gerard:

I would use both types of stimuli, because I want to show how training in observation can overcome the emotional, and also how, after a certain period of time, one can desensitize oneself to emotional connotations.

(Dr. Assagioli: Good!)

Dr. Assagioli:

We must have the blessings of Murray...

Dr. Gerard:

Oh, yes. But you can use the Murray test in all kinds of testing situations. That one is allowed to do.



Miss Miles:

Do you mean separate pictures?

Dr. Assagioli:

Just objective pictures of a landscape or something unemotional. Everything has some slight emotional response, but have them as objective as possible.

Miss Miles:

And you use a different picture each week — or do you use the same thing? But do they not remember?

Dr. Assagioli:

No, they have to report immediately. (Mr. Dawson: You could use a series of six each time.) Yes, give a session of an hour. They look and then they write immediately, or speak with a tape recorder, which is better; and then one counts the details they have given or emitted, and those which have been “transformed” or not given exactly. That also happens — the imagination wanders and they see things which are not there; they fail to see things which are there. It is very simple, but gives very curious results.

Mr. Dawson:

We go back to “Kim.” There is a game there where they used little jewels and things; and I am wondering, regarding these objective pictures, if it might be better if there was *not* any general over-all organization. (Miss Miles: That is what I had in mind; I should think it would be enormously valuable.)

Dr. Gerard:

But you would have to report to us exactly what you used.

Dr. Assagioli:

You must have a standard thing.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, you simply must have a standard thing so that we can use exactly the same material that you use.

Dr. Assagioli:

I would stick to two series: one of objective pictures and one of symbols. That for a beginning, and then we can develop an infinite number.

Mr. Mades:

I do not have much more to say. As far as my own personal contribution is concerned, I intend, once I have seen these papers, to see how I can apply it in my own business and then if it works there, see if I cannot spread it a little.



Dr. Assagioli:

I should think that training in observation would be very useful for businessmen, and for personnel in a business.

Mr. Mades:

This is one technique. The general ideas that I have heard expressed this weekend, I tried to consolidate them in my own mind, put them together to see what I can use. (Dr. Assagioli: Good!) We have our own trade journals and on that level occasionally there are articles dealing with how you deal with personnel relations in a plant, and on that level I would be accepted. (Dr. Assagioli: Good. It is a wedge!) So, I will see what I can do. Aside from that, I do not have anything else to say; I do think that we now have a concrete program. The program, I think, is wonderful, and I want to thank you for the weekend. I have very much enjoyed this. (Dr. Assagioli: It is mutual.)

Mr. Hilton:

Could we just refer to the question of the bulletin — which I think will be so good. Had you mind presenting the Active Techniques in the bulletin? (Dr. Assagioli: No. No!) I was just wondering what the general content would be. Say we issue it every three months or four months, what have you in mind to bring in? Would you, Bob, want for instance, to report on your color therapy?

Dr. Assagioli:

I think that there would be short items of information; and tell those interested in a special item to write to us. Give the background of what I have been doing or what is being done in the Foundation — the Observation, experiment, Ruth's project, your (R.G.'s) work accomplished, etc.

Mr. Hilton:

And if readers want to correspond with any particular person we would undertake to forward their letters.

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes, it would be communication — to provide *general* correspondence instead of *personal* correspondence, a kind of collective correspondence. Then it could be developed more, but that would be enough for a beginning.

Mr. Dawson:

As a basis for collective correspondence, perhaps ideas for research, perhaps something such as Ruth's scheme would be pertinent as it stands. And it would be a help to develop ideas more fully, to get the help of competent people to think through these things. Perhaps we could bring in ideas that are not as completely worked out as this.

Miss Miles:

To whom is this bulletin going?



Mr. Hilton:

To all those who respond. (Dr. Assagioli: To the special mailing list and then to all correspondents?)

Mr. Hilton:

You see, we have in our folders a couple of hundred names. There are various people whom we have realized will respond to this note, and to them we will send the basic brochure and the educational pamphlet with a personal covering letter.

Miss Miles:

Those two have to go together still — the basic brochure and the education pamphlet?

Mr. Hilton:

Yes, but I doubt if it is wise to start scattering this material broadcast.

Dr. Gerard:

The same thing with the Techniques! I don't think we should indiscriminately proselytize people.

Mr. Hilton:

Personally, unless a person expresses interest, I do not think he should get the bulletin. (Miss Miles: No, I don't either.)

Dr. Gerard:

Now, from a practical angle, who is going to be responsible for the bulletin as a synthesizer and editor? I nominate Frank.

Mr. Hilton:

well, I might have something to do with it, but it will call for far more than one person. This calls for collective thinking. I think this is something that I will have to talk over with Roberto before he goes back.

Dr. Lofgren:

Is this the sort of thing that should be edited? Isn't it something that is merely a job of compiling?

Dr. Gerard:

But someone has still to be the compiler.

Dr. Lofgren:

Yes, I know; but there is such a difference. Suppose I send something into the office and it comes out in the bulletin in a form in which the editing has changed what I meant.



Dr. Gerard:

As a principle nothing should be changed; nothing should ever be finally reproduced without the final okay of the author.

Mr. Hilton:

Yes, the final form should never go out without approval.

Mr. Dawson:

This is in line with my remark about advising consultants in the different areas; this is where they would come in. They would first collect and then ship it into a central office where the actual final layout would be made for mimeographing.

Dr. Lofgren:

Yes, but it seems to me that the job of editing is not the major one. The idea is that the person who has written the thing takes the responsibility for any stupid ideas in it. Then it is not up to the editor; the editor's real job in professional journals is a very serious one and it would seem to me at this stage it might be desirable to have differences of opinion; that it not be screened through an editorial policy — at present. And this is the reason why you would like a copy of each of the things, because there will be these quite diverse points of view.

Dr. Assagioli:

Not at first, in an information bulletin.

Mr. Hilton:

Are we providing a journal for a discussion of ideas, or to present ideas in relation to psychosynthesis? We have got to remember what our main purpose is.

Dr. Assagioli:

And then the information side is important — about what is going on in Europe or, say, in the East. We can give that overall picture; there is so much being contributed in a psychosynthetic spirit, even without the name of psychosynthesis. That, as a part of the information, is important. Give the address of authors in the bulletin so that people can also make direct relationship. Give the big picture, the world movement already going on; the Mister and Mrs. Jordans in the world. Don't you think so?

Mr. Hilton:

Yes, provided we do not duplicate other people's stuff.

Dr. Assagioli:

Oh, no, short abstracts.



Mr. Hilton:

I was thinking that we should not duplicate anything that is already being done. (Dr. Gerard: "Main Currents?") Well, I think that "Main Currants" is along a different line.

Dr. Assagioli:

I am thinking of items of about ten lines, just information, not articles. And mention of books; no real reviews — perhaps five to ten lines for each book, or something like that. Really an information bulletin, literally speaking, not a magazine.

Mr. Hilton:

The bulletin is going to be the synthesizing agent.

(Dr. Assagioli: Exactly!)

Dr. Gerard:

The bulletin is essentially for the co-workers. Is that what you had in mind? And for all those who are deeply interested in it.

(General exclamations of agreement)

Dr. Lofgren:

Essentially for co-workers.

Dr. Gerard:

Yes, for those who have responded beyond the introductory brochure. Right? (Various cries of "Yes")

Mr. Dawson:

Then we would not make an announcement, that the bulletin was in the offing or available on request. (Dr. Assagioli: No.) (Miss Miles: No.)

(Mr. Hilton: We could say that we *propose* to issue one.)

Dr. Assagioli:

Yes. (Mr. Hilton: And if we complete our purpose within a month or two, we can surprise them!)

Dr. Gerard:

I would like very much, before we disband, to have some kind of responsibility established because otherwise, it has been my experience in previous conventions, that everybody leaves and then the momentum is lost unless a person has offered his services and in very specific terms. Now I have offered my services very specifically to coordinate or to collaborate, to sift, write and correspond on the Techniques with co-workers, which will be first typed and then mimeographed.



It seems to me that one of us could very specifically offer his services for the bulletin, because that is another job in itself; even if it is only just putting things together, it is still a job.

Dr. Assagioli:

It is probably for the resident secretary or director; that should be his task.

Mr. Hilton:

You see, we hope that we will have someone resident here before the year is out, and it will probably fall on the shoulders of whoever took on that job. (Dr. Gerard: All right. So we don't have any action until then?) I can undertake to get the Conference Report mimeographed. I shall have to re-dictate the whole of the tapes and you'll have to give me at least a couple of months, etc., but I will undertake to do that this summer.

Mr. Dawson:

But that should be separate from the bulletin, I think.

Mr. Hilton:

Oh, yes. That is distinct from the bulletin, but this is an immediate thing that we can make a start on.

Mr. Dawson:

Well, in the compilation I think I could offer my services, those people who respond and who send a note to say they are interested in these things; somehow organize it into the different areas of psychosynthesis, of the departments of the bulletin. And I could ship it to you for mimeographing.

Mr. Hilton:

Eventually we will have a mimeographing machine here, but I think we can get by without one for this year and thereby save a lot of expense and labor. I think, Roberto, that first I will try to let you have a complete transcript of these meetings and then break down a copy for the final mimeo'd report. I will include as much as is physically possible...I am afraid it is going to be quite a tome, but it will be useful as the "founding talks" — and also some of the Techniques are in it.

Dr. Gerard:

It will be very useful to have a typewritten copy of the "Proceedings of the First Workshop." (Dr. Assagioli: Historical evidence!)

Dr. Assagioli:

Well, I think we can say that from Valmy this weekend, a new history in psychology may have been firmly started. So that the "battle of Valmy" was a very small affair!

Mrs. de Bie:

You all know what Goethe said...



Dr. Assagioli:

The battle of Valmy (1792) was a desperate affair, of a crushing victory over the enemies — who had a superiority of means and everything; but what really won was the idea, the enthusiasm, of those ill-assorted, badly equipped people.¹²

Miss Miles:

We want to know what you, Alexia, were saying.

Mrs. de Bie:

Oh, I just saw Chuk Dawson looking over at me and smiling.¹³

¹² The Battle of Valmy in 1792 was the first military victory of France after the French Revolution. In this battle the Prussian troops led by Duke of Brunswick were defeated and stopped from advancing upon Paris. As a result of this victory the French Republic was established. - Ed.

¹³ This is the end of the manuscript as we have obtained it.



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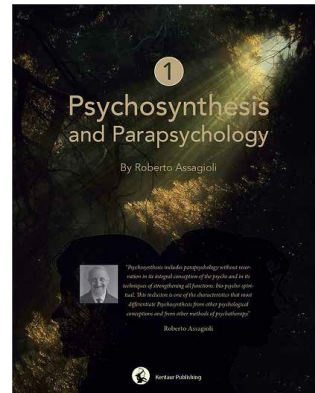
Psychosynthesis and Parapsychology

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Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis, asserted that parapsychological research is a valuable form of scientific inquiry and maintained that it is an integral part of Psychosynthesis because of the simple fact that paranormal phenomena are a psychological fact. In this collection of articles, Assagioli discusses some of the parapsychological functions, from clairvoyance to telepathy, and sees these functions as natural extensions of all our regular psychological functions.

He also offers a word of caution for most people to avoid becoming lost in these paranormal faculties because they open up to unseen inner worlds, which can disturb the psychological balance and cause serious mental or emotional trouble if the psychic explorer is not prepared and well-grounded. However, it becomes clear when reading Francesco Baroni's well-research paper Roberto Assagioli and Parapsychology (included in this book) that Assagioli had a lifelong active interest in these matters. Piero Ferrucci, a colleague and student of Assagioli, also offers his recollections of how Assagioli approached these matters.

Psychosynthesis and Parapsychology cast a new and exciting look at what hides outside the small cabin of the rational ego.



Subpersonalities – A Collection of Articles

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This e-book contains ten articles about subpersonalities by the Italian Dr. Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis. Nine of them have never been published before in the English language. There is also a collection of quotes from his books and articles, so in this work, you will find many of Assagioli's deep insights into the topic of subpersonalities.

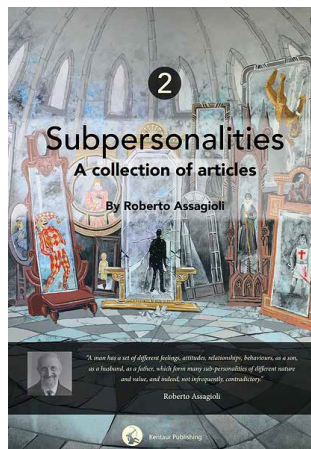
Subpersonalities are one of the chief points of Psychosynthesis because they are part of the conflicting forces in us, which must be harmonised and synthesised before we can have a life in harmony with ourselves and our surroundings.

One of the core illusions that Assagioli urge us to overcome is that we are one person, one psychological whole, something we can easily believe if we only take into consideration that we live in a physical body. However, a little introspection will soon reveal that there are multitudes of different voices within our heads competing for our attention – something we discover when we experience ambivalences or conflicting feelings and thoughts.

Assagioli suggests that subpersonalities are the various self-images we often develop unconsciously from childhood and up through our life, some are false self-images based on external influences, and others are more realistic. The most prominent subpersonalities are based on our social roles in the family, as a child, brother, sister, father, mother, and the roles we have in relation to our work and social life.

The difficulty with subpersonalities is that they tend to control our lives because we identify with them, often in a very unconscious way, so we become a slave of their impulses and needs, instead of being the conscious "I" who can freely choose to play our roles, without being too caught up in their inner dynamics.

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This e-book contains 22 articles by Roberto Assagioli, 12 of which have never been published before in the English language, so there are exciting new insights into the questions of suffering and how to make the most of it.

These articles take us through the journey of personal and spiritual development, the stages of unfoldment, and the crises and conflicts we must face to be authentic human beings. We all suffer; this is an integral part of being human, and not all suffering is caused by other people or circumstances.

One of the main achievements of psychosynthesis is the mapping of various forces and energies within us on many levels through Assagioli's famous "egg diagram" – from the instincts of the lower unconscious to the superconscious's spiritual powers. These energies collide and create conflicts and crises in our life. However, when we better understand them and have found our inner observing center – the self as a loving observer and director of our life, then we are on the path to becoming the masters of our own lives with the ability to create a harmonious synthesis out of our inner conflicts.

The message of this book is that there is a unique life path to greater personal and spiritual unfoldment and that suffering and joy are endemic to the evolution of consciousness – the pain of growth and the joy of expanding our capabilities and ability to be who we are in the innermost sense of our being.

