

MIND AND MYTH

[by Hugh M. Lewis](#)

A common mythical theme of the American Consciousness is that of the conflict between the frontier and civilization, between the rugged, independently spirited pioneer and the Eastern gentleman of an organized way of living. There are many permutations of this theme found in Cowboy and Indian movies, propaganda war movies and in home grown American legends of Johnny Appleseed, Paul Bunyan and John Henry. This mythology underlies a lot of science fiction and science fact, in our exploration of outer space and our heroes of exploration, in the popularity of Star Trek and Star Wars. John Wayne was an embodiment and paragon of this mythical expression in the movies. Superman, Batman and other superhuman comic book heroes are also cut from the same mythical cloth, as are Mike Hammer, Dick Tracy, Matt Dillon and the all boy Cartwright family in the long running television series Bonanza. Mark Twain's grown boyhood adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer and A Yankee in King Arthur's Court.

The mythical meta theme of the American tradition of the folk hero informs the attitudes, collective unconscious and world view of American culture--or psycho geographical symbolisms, the way we look out onto and relate with a larger world and a total universe, as well as the way we understand ourselves and our own sense of society. It helps to frame our moral sense of duty in the world and the way we deal with conflict.

In a sense, the hypothesis of evil as being rooted in an authoritarian power structure which strives for world domination and the basic conflict with the interests and independence of the individual as the source of morality, is but another, rather academic variation of this same old theme. A theory based on observation, experience, science and philosophy has captured and reproduced a fundamental mythology that underlies its own creation. The interesting aspect of this is that anthropologically the theory itself as well as the empirical experience and information upon which it was based was

cut from the same mythical cloth. It is meta-thematic in being both of myth and beyond and about myth. It is clearly an insider's point of view from the margins of the culture. The dilemma is posed is whether some other possible outsider's point of view might not be quite different or more objectively valid an interpretation or if an outsider's point of view would be possible or understandable from an insider's standpoint. Cultural anthropologists are routinely challenged by this basic dilemma during their long sojourns in other places where other traditions, mythologies, worldviews and civilizations predominate. They are marginal outsider's seeking a common ground with the insider's frame of reference.

There is really no escaping this dilemma unless we posit somewhat arbitrarily and presumptuously a transcendent, objective, scientific frame of reference based on 'pure observation' of behavioral phenomena which claims in a 'hypothetico-deductive' and statistical fashion to stand outside of the purview of myth, normative consciousness, world view, history, that informs and composes the ground of the insider's point of view. In other words, the objective outsider's objective frame of reference is held to be the only scientifically legitimate one. The criticism against this 'non-reflexive' attitude is that the outsider must have some general frame of reference for understanding human reality and will actually superimpose his own implicit and transparent, unquestioned world view, values, mythology and sense of history upon the cultural realities of the people whom he 'studies'. True social scientists do not even have a problem, because they do not study people, but people as things, actions, events, numbers, words and as observational statements. The scientist then simply substitutes his/her own sense of pathos, ethos, nomos and mythos the vacant spaces between the lines of their recorded data--a scientific transformation of the realities of the people whom they've converted in to data bits, without a sense of critical absence, that something important about their lives is missing in the script.

It is even claimed that science itself is bound within the cultural tradition in which it grew from and became paradigmatically formulated, and so is 'unconsciously' and implicitly rooted in the same myths, metaphors, values, moralities from which it originated.

There is another way out of this dilemma, and that is to presuppose that there exists a universal ground of being human in which all mythology is rooted, and that the goal of the cross cultural researcher is the discovery of this common ground between cultures. Then it is the case that both the outsider's and the insider's frames of reference, mythologies, sense of history and values, are rooted in the same basic fabric of human consciousness and the goal of science is to elucidate this universality of being. In the case of our meta-theme about the American character, we might claim that this mythology is itself but one permutation of a larger, pan human mythology, and that its objective comprehension is an excoriation of its inner layers of consciousness. From a classical Oedipal standpoint we might say that it is the rebellion and struggle of the free spirited son against the law of the father. This is the basis of Freudian in interpretation of the human psyche. Jungians posit the presence of a 'collective unconscious' and of archetypal symbolisms. Chomskians posit a universal generative structure underlying all human language and Levi-Straussians have done the same for myth itself.

All of these kinds of interpretations come out of a European philosophical/philological tradition of 'Culture History' and Platonic Rational Idealism which posits the a-priori existence of a Geist, a Spirit, a Noumena, a Cartesian Structure which underlies and predetermines human consciousness. It is interesting that the superman ideologies, the classical dichotomies between primitive and civilized, the Apollonian and Dionysian, and notions of cultural relativism and determinism all come from the same traditional source of Mind and Myth. It is also interesting that Marxist theory and post structuralist critique of such theory comes out of and is embedded in the same traditional fold.

To ardent empiricists embedded in a dialectically contraposed position of inductivism, such thinking is considered methodologically problematic from a standpoint of objective science. For positivists, the idea of a universal structure underlying language, thought, myth, and psychology is considered at best ultimately unamenable to scientific methods of falsification and validation and at worst, it is itself composed of the same ideological fabric of which it deals in its theory.

We are left back upon the same horns of mythological dilemmas with which this essay began. In resolving this dilemma there are several points worthy of close consideration. First, both themes of rationalism versus empiricism, of science versus mythology, in their many permutations, are but the contraposed extremes of a common dialectical continuum which itself exists for the purposes of dialectical elaboration and this dialectic has no final 'synthesis'. The only 'objective' standpoint then consists of stepping outside of the dialectic itself and of taking a neutral arbiter's position--both sides are right but neither side is completely so. To do so is to adopt a 'meta-dialectical' orientation. This is the only appropriate standpoint with which to objectively evaluate the terms of the dialectics. Secondly, if the notion of a common universality of human consciousness is correct, in which all our mythologies are embedded and from which all their permutations emanate, then we must reevaluate and redefine the role of science and its methodology in its study of human reality in such a way that scientific validity rests on some other common ground than empiricist or positivistic 'falsification'. This alternative framework demands a different philosophy of science and a different theory in science. Thirdly, the idea of a universal ground of human beingness is to be considered substantially self demonstrating in a similar way that its many permutations of mythology are to be considered naturally self organizing. They are 'self evident' truths and realities in our own human nature. We cannot step outside of its universal purview except by the adoption of a relatively non-dialectical position, and yet their validation of universality does not ultimately depend upon our stepping beyond its universality but in embracing its meaning as fully as humanly possible.

Finally it is the thesis of this work that this sense of universality of human 'beingness' is neither just linguistic, mythological, psychological or symbolic, but is a phenomena of the entire culture historical tradition of humankind which is rooted in the human capacity for 'sentience' of, about and in the world. It informs our mythology as a kind of dialectical conflict resolution through appositional analogical and metaphorical relations which are essential meta-logical and form our fundamental frames of reference/inference of the world by which we create meaning and come to question the unknown. It is the basis of both science and

mythology, rationality and empirical experience. This is referred to as 'Mind' and Mind has both collective, universal components informing the universal ground of human beingness, and also unique individualistic components which relativizes and renders the understanding of mind partial, imperfect and an inherent dilemma of dialectic.

We can never escape this universal condition of mind, or separate ourselves from its fabric of our existence in the world. We can only come to know it better by embracing it and reflecting upon our own and others experience of it.

Needless to say, this whole work, and the essays that follow, are intended for the elucidation of this basic human reality and of the implications which it has for our sense of mythology, morality, science, history, evolution, nature and phenomenological and conceptual human reality itself.

Evil exists in our world largely because we are actively engaged in acting out the mythological meta themes which compose our being and our world, of which evilness is but one possibility. The paradigm of evils is but one of many paradigms of our mythological consciousness. Pacifism as a meta paradigm is a paradigm of Mind, in the sense that Mind always comprehends and contextualizes the paradigms of Myth in our reality. Evil is a product of and model for myth. Peace is a condition of Mind--it is not just a possibility of the human world, as evil is, but it is the beginning and end of all human possibilities.

Mindness is a pan human state and sense of Mind which is expressed both individually and collectively. The problem of Mindness is dialectically contraposed to the problem of world view--each problematic informs the other by its counterpoint. World view is always situated within and bound by and relativized because of a culture historical context and horizon of being--Mind situates the culture historical context and horizon of being about a particular world view in reference to the universality of human beingness. Mind is a pan human, universal phenomena. It is the expression of pan humanness in the world and it is also fundamentally an irreducible expression of the phenomena of the individual in the world.

Mind has long been an unfolding, self revealing process. Mind has been continuously 'evolving' with the evolution of humankind. It has been self organizing and its processual patterning has been unfolding as a natural expression of anti-chaos in a chaotic universe. It has had an ecological function and an evolutionary purpose which has made the critical difference between the development of human culture and traditional civilization and the biological evolution of humankind as a species. The development of Mind has been a gradual process of evincing human possibility--it has largely been non-progressive in its development, except in the sense that human possibilities have become progressively expressed and its patterning played out through mythological and ideological enactment.

Mindness is the expression of the universal sentience and the totipotency of humankind as a kind of partial omniscience, a totipotency which has overreached its practical and philosophical limits in its present state of Earthboundness. Earthboundness is a paradigm of Mind, which carries us to the edge of natural entropy and chaos. It is precisely upon the verge of Earthboundness that we are able to reflect back and to comprehend the horizons of Mindness, as before now it was theoretically without limit and therefore remained incomprehensible and intractable to definition. In environmental exhaustion humankind has biologically and culturally reached the limits of its patterned possibilities which allows us to circumscribe what it means to 'become' human in the world.

Mindness was not a priori to the possibility of humankind--it did not preexist waiting to be discovered and elaborated by humankind. It sprung into being with the emergence of humankind--as its expression of the latent possibilities of human sentience and human being. It exists because we exist--we do not exist because it existed before us, except perhaps as a pure possibility of the physical universe. Mind does not frame our experience in the way that world view can be said to--Mind happens to us and through us, experience the world with us and for us. It un-frames and re-frames our frames of world view, as an expression of our possibilities of being. Mind realizes s as we realize Mind, as an expression of our total potentiality of being and becoming.

Mythology is the pan human expression of mind in the world. It is not mind itself but the process of its actual patterning in the world. Mythology is the ground of human consciousness, Mind is the collective unconscious. Mythology is the way Mind mediates reality for us. It is the expression of its adaptive function in nature in relation to environments.

Mythology is the only way that we can come to know Mind in ourselves, and in one another. Mythology is composed of the collective representations which cohere to create Mindness and Minding in our reality. Mythology gives us a handle on our minds and on Mind as a universal.

Mythology is always expressed metaphorically, analogically, relationally and dialectically. It frames our experiences, our phenomenology, our 'senseness', our references, our inferences about our environments. It contextualizes Mind for us in reality and contextualizes reality for us in Mind. The function of mythology is the mediation between Mind and Reality--it is characteristically human means of human sentience for resolving conflicts between our experiences and our environments.

Mythology is the way that Mind comes to know the environment and the way our own evolution of possibility has come to know its environments.

Mythology is a mosaic of permutations and possible patternings of Human Beingness and Mindness in reality. Mythology is the ground of meaning and being for humankind. Mythology is the paradigmatic patterning of Mind. Ideologies and world views are but characteristic kinds of mythologies, configured from the universal ground of Mythos. They are mythologies 'in the making', in the process of being acted out or performed within particular spatial temporal contexts or 'epochs' or culture historical horizons of human experience. Ideology and world view represent the realization, actualization and empowerment of mythology. Ideology and world view are mythologies as 'self fulfilling prophecies' which makes the culture historical patterning of Mind seem recurrent, repetitive and pre-determined.

In the enactments of power in the world, we cannot escape our mythological imperative in the fulfillment of our possibilities of becoming. Our mythologies, their many permutations and reinterpretations are our destiny in the world. Not even science is beyond its purview of pre-determination, as the technological teleology of science has come to epitomize the expression of our power in the world.

The recurrent themes of our mythology are in a sense meta-thematic' in the sense that they converge upon a single set of dichotomous sets of 'meta-relations' held to govern other relations in the world. The meta-themes of life versus death, sea versus mountain, male versus female, parent versus child, civilized versus primitive, culture versus nature, become reflected in philosophical and even scientific meta-themes of mind versus body, natural versus supernatural, physical versus meta-physical, time versus space, ends versus means, etc. The structure of mythology has

been well elucidated. Meta-themes govern sets of relations in the real world and they can be reinterpreted into other kinds of meta-relations. The value of such a structure is in its flexibility and in its contextuality--it always surrounds and explains things in terms of other things.

Science would say that this makes mythology tautological and unfalsifiable and this is correct. It is to be asked but never answered whether such a convergence of meta-themes is reflective of archetypal dualisms which are determined by the structure of the human mind, or whether they are merely a thematic convergence of taxonomies and categories of experience which is situated within a common existential set of predicaments faced by all humans. The former hypothesis is indeed amenable to scientific method. The latter alternative is at least amenable to verification of its context of elucidation, the investigation of its existential experiences in which such meta-themes find expression in the real world.

We cannot ultimately determine whether there are universal dichotomies in the human mind or if so, then what exactly these might be. But we can determine the recurrent kinds of existential relationships and common experiences in which these meta-themes are situated and expressed in reference to the world, and this is why the latter explanation is the more scientifically unproblematic.

The meta-themes of mythology lend themselves to poetic expression--the roots of poetic consciousness are grounded in these mythological meta-themes and mythology is dependent upon poetry for its effect and relevance in human reality. It is in the understanding of the aesthetic function of poetry as the origination and creation of human possibilities of experience, that poetry can be said to be the voice of Mind.

The meta-thematic elements of mythology are a reflection of the 'meta-logic' inherent to Mind. The 'meta-logic' of Mind comprehends several alternative meanings, yet all cohere to make Mind 'meta-paradigmatic' and account for the special, unique significance of human sentience.

The meta-logic of Mind consists of a 'meta-paradigm' of the following sort:-

a) Metalogue or metalogical dialogue between self and other constitutes dialectical question and answer conversation about a problematic topic such that the 'structure of the conversation as a whole is also relevant to the same subject. A metalogue comprehends more than one subject simultaneously, in meta-thematic terms.

b) Meta-logic is defined by Webster's Dictionary as the 'metaphysics of logic' and as '1. Beyond the scope of logic; not determinable by logic. 2. Relating to the metaphysics of logic.' Meta-logic is both about logic and simultaneously beyond the purview of logic.

c) Meta-logos is about words and yet beyond words or the metaphysics of words. Logic is rooted in language and all language is metaphorical in meaning. The two value logic is a reflection of the meta-thematic unity of mythology. 'Logos' or word, was for the Greek philosophers the 'rational relations of things to one another or the general sense of order or measure'. It '...designated the principle through which the cosmos is generated, ordered, united and maintained, or even the ordered, united, evolving cosmos itself...Logos is therefore the common principle making possible 'understanding between man and the world and also between men.' (Kleinkreth, 1967:page 81)

d) Our awareness of our common state of being is an extension of our self awareness. Our self awareness and environmental consciousness, our Mind, is structured by the apperceptive and simultaneous awareness of our own being in the world and the being of others in the world. Meta-logic carries the connotation of implication of 'apperception' defined as '1. Perception; 2. Consciousness by the mind of its own consciousness; self reflective perception applied to metaphysical ends--"Apperception is the essential mental act in the great stages of mental generalization, perception, conception and judgment--Baldwin." 3. The reinterpretation of new ideas by past experience.'

e) Meta-logicalness also carries the connotation of 'reflexiveness' which is of and about and yet beyond simple self reflection--it is the ability to make the strange seem familiar and simultaneously make the familiar seem strange. It fuses difference in the world such that we may find identity in difference. We find ourselves in others and others in ourselves and our mythologies become but variations of common meta-themes in other's mythologies and vice versa.

Sentience is found in our human capacity for establishing a meta-logic with the universe. This is the source of our human possibilities for becoming that are not constrained by nature or the physical reality of our presence in the world. Our meta-logic is the expression of the meta-logic of Mind that creates and comprehends paradox, antinomies, dilemmas, enigmas and questions in reality.

It is important that we frame out problematics of Mind in metalogically in terms of meta-logic--it is important that we find in our meta-logues about Mind the basis for both our poetry and our science.

In the understanding of Mind as the possibilities of human sentience, it is necessary to recognize the existential and phenomenological isomorphism between 'being' and 'meaning' such that the two are but opposite sides of the same coin. We must come to terms with the reflexive meaning of meaning and 'beingness' of being in our metalogical meta-loges of Mind.

To 'define' comes from Latin 'definere' (to limit, from "finis", a boundary) and is defined as 'to determine or describe the limits of, the nature of, to set down the precise outlines of, to describe exactly, to state or explain the meaning of meanings of a word, etc., to give the distinctive properties or characteristic of a thing, to constitute the definition of, or to settle or decide. (obs.) Synonyms include 'to bound, demarcate, delimit, determine, limit and fix.

Several connotations are evident in this 'definition of definition'. Definition is a response to the general question of 'what?' as in 'What is a thing?' or 'What is human reality?'. Answers to 'what' questions tend to be precise, clear and finite. It is a kind of answer tending to 'determine' what the meaning of a word is, in sharp outline or contrast to other words and meanings. It involves putting a clear, sharper outline of what a vague thing is.

Determining a boundary, demarcating a finite limit or a sharp outline by the definition of a thing or word constitutes an enactment of meaning in itself. Thinking up our definitions to 'what is' questions involves literally and figuratively the very meaning of that reality.

Furthermore, we come to define a thing in terms of other things that are related or compared or contrasted with it within a broader relational context of understanding. This is the metaphorical and basic mythological aspect of our definition of meaning in the world.

Our 'definition of definition' calls up the metalogical meta-logue about this problematic topic. Definition of meaning and the meaning of definition as being a metalogical meta-logue brings us to a 'mise en abyme' of meaning as constituting the essential

'paradoxicality' of Mind. Without our paradigms we would not be able to distinguish the nothingness which lies beyond it--'there can be no glimpse of the abyss, no vertigo of the underlying nothingness.' (Miller) But our paradigms both opens up the chasm of possibility, and simultaneously fills it up with meaning and covers it over by giving it a name--grounding the groundless. Our paradigms then automatically become 'trivial mechanisms' or 'artifices' of our production. 'It becomes something merely made, confected, therefore all too human and rational...' (Miller)

In speaking meta-logically of 'sense of order' or 'structure' or 'system' or 'paradigm' do we really mean something different from 'sense' itself as 'sense/nonsense' or 'meaning/ameaning' or are we merely 'tying knots in our handkerchief' as Gregory Bateson puts it, 'such that these terms will forever stand not as fences hiding the unknown from future investigators, but rather as signposts which read: "UNEXPLORED BEYOND THIS POINT". Our language can clarify as well as obfuscate.

Meaningful information consists of drawing a 'slash mark' between subject and object, known and unknown, something and nothing:

Meaning may be regarded as an approximate synonym of pattern, redundancy, information and 'restraint' within a paradigm of the following sort:

Any aggregate of events or objects (e.g. a sequence of phonemes, a painting or a frog or a culture) shall be said to contain 'redundancy' or 'pattern' if the aggregate can be divided in any way by a 'slash mark' such that an observer perceiving only what is on one side of the slash mark can 'guess' with better than random success, what is on the other side of the slash mark. We may say that what is on one side of the slash contains 'information' or has 'meaning' about what is on the other side...'(Bateson 1972: pages 130-2)

Our definitional 'What's' delimits a boundary, an outline circumscribing a thing through the dichotomizing between what is

and all else it is not, by inscribing a 'slash mark' between the unknown and the known by names and words which precipitate meaning and bounds a definite 'region of information' implicit contraposed to what lies beyond or outside of the definition.

The act of definition creates an order, a paradigm, of meaning, a semantics constituted by the interrelationships of meanings of words arranged in a particular syntactic sequence. Definition also excludes by implicit negation all that meaning is not. What is bounded by the word order is rendered explicit and concise and coherent, what is left unsaid and undefined, lying beyond the definitional boundaries, is left implicit only, unknown, unclear and chaotic. The question mark of the definitional question 'what' is a kind of slash mark emphasizing the definitional boundary between reference/inference. Precipitated meaning in the region of information constitutes referential knowledge gained definitionally--pointing to information beyond the slash mark consists of inferential information gained hypothetically.

Denotation is the explicit definition of a word as opposed to its implicit connotation. It is derived from the Latin 'denotare' or 'to mark out' and is defined as 'a marking out or off, the direct explicit meaning or reference of a word...an indication or sign.'

Connotation is the implicit meaning of a word left undefined but associated with the definition. It comes from the Latin 'com' or 'together' and 'notare' or 'to mark, note' and is defined as an 'idea suggested by or associated with a word, phrase, etc. in addition to its explicit meaning...in logic, the sum of all the attributes thought of as essential to the meaning of a term. To 'connote' is to suggest, convey, to imply or involve.

Denotation and connotation stand in mutual relationship with one another, the former being the literal, explicit, marked off boundary and the latter being the figurative, implied relationships of the term to a larger contextual framework of meaning. There can be no

complete definition without both strict demarcation and loose relationship.

We must understand the interdependency of semanticity and the structure of syntax in language as the dialectically contraposed components of sentience, understanding and information which is the communication of understanding. Syntax constrains the possibilities of Mind by the superimposition of a paradigm--without syntax Mind cannot be brought to full realization. Semanticity fill the syntactic structure with meaning--reinforcing it both referentially from within and inferentially from without. Syntax consists of the functions or rules of relation, all the kinds of slash marks of meaning. It is to be asked but remain unanswered whether there is a 'deep' syntactic structure of the human mind which is universal but precise in its determination of possibility. It is also to be wondered whether such a deep syntactic structure is always evolving with the evolving and possibilities and evincing patterning of human mind.

But such questions distinguish too greatly the difference between semantics and syntax--we must see that all syntax is contextually relational in its demonstration and all semanticity is syntactically constrained in order to be rendered meaningful and relevant. To look for a 'deep paradigm' of universal structure of the mind is necessarily to become 'meta-paradigmatic' to discover what is before and beyond structure, as the unfolding, patterning possibilities of Mind. All paradigms are environmentally relational and constraining--all structures have a subject-object context which is determined by patterning of Mind in which it is embedded--it is the result of a dialectical interplay between human conventionality and natural process. It is being continuously recreated, reconfigured into new patterns--it simultaneously creates meaning and nonsense in order and chaos.

The definition of definition suggests the 'meaning of meaning' as an important metalogical relationship. Meaning is defined as 'that which exists in the mind, view or contemplation as a settled aim or purpose; that which is meant or intended to be done; intent; purpose; aim; object or that which is intended to be, or in fact is, conveyed, denoted, signified or understood by acts or language; the sense, signification or import of words, or as sense, understanding, knowledge.' What emerges from this definition of meaning is the purposiveness of sense and the sense or significance of purpose as expressed through words or acts or the 'enactment of definition'. The centrality of the meaning of 'purpose' or the 'sense of purpose' or the purpose of meaning or sense, which is simultaneously connoted and denoted in definition of 'something from nothing' or 'sense from nonsense' conveys the idea of the 'meaning of meaning' as being the meaningful purpose of life in human reality as itself the meaning of purpose. The essential purpose of being is meaning, and the purpose of meaning is being. Purpose in this sense, becomes defined as 'aim, intention, design, resolution, determination or as an 'instance, example' or paradigm. Paradigm creates purpose and purpose creates paradigm.

This is the ultimate paradoxicality of human being and Mind, the inescapable tautology of the meaning of human being and the being of human meaning. When we refer to the meaning of meaning in human reality, we are referring to the paradoxical *mise en abyme* that meaning is both the means and end of living, the sense and purpose of being.

Indeed, meaning inheres intrinsically and inextricably in the fact and enactment of human existence--meaning is being--and the 'quest' for meaning constitutes the 'purpose' of human existence. The quest for happiness, for fulfillment, for wealth, for prestige, for truth, for eternity, or immortality or for El Dorado or the fountain of youth or for paradise or freedom or just a little bit of social security and a modicum of simple material amenities, is what it means to be human and the purpose of existence is the quest for ever greater meaning of human reality. Meaning is like a golden thread coursing through all the weave of existence

composing the fabric of many bits and pieces of the grand tapestry of reality--meaning underlies all of the greatest and deepest and most important reasons and purposes and truths of life.

It follows that meaning, being and purpose become defined through their creation, pursuit and fulfillment in terms which are the enactment of paradigm and pattern in the world and are expression of forms of human empowerment. Mythology and its poetic voice is the human vehicle for this empowerment.

The meaning of meaning and the definition of definition emphasize clearly the fundamental paradoxicality and the *mise en abyme* of the metalogic of Mind. It illustrates the essential, irreducible 'reflexiveness' of human sentience. Ultimately the structures of human reality and the experience of interrelatedness in the world are expressed through the 'reflexivity of meaning and being'. Reflexiveness is the principle structure of human meaning and being in the world.

Reflexive is defined as 'reflex, reflective, or as expressing an action turned back upon the subject; designating a verb whose subject and direct object are identical...'. Akin to reflexiveness is 'reflectiveness or the state of being reflective, taking cognizance of the operations of the mind, capable of exercising thought or judgment...exercising thought, meditative'. Reflection expresses among other things, 'the fixing of the mind on some subject; serious thought; contemplation or the result of such thought; an idea or conclusion, especially if expressed in words.' (Webster's Dictionary, 1983)

Reflexiveness emphasized grammatical connotations, connotations of reflexiveness and reflection and the apperception of 'the conscious of mind of its own consciousness' or 'self reflective

perception applied to metaphysical ends'. Inescapably human reality is universal, relative, symbolic and metaphorical and also has an inherently reflexive structure through symbols and metaphors. Human reality always evinces a quality of 'turning back upon itself' and of 'being self aware or conscious of itself'. It is a condition of self consciousness as this becomes reflected in contextual relation. Reflexiveness then is the ground of being in human reality--the ultimate meaning of this reality. But it is an ever receding ground in its inherent recursiveness and 'reduplicative' character. It is the well spring of infinite imagination and the abyss of infinite regress. It is the *mise en abyme* and the bottomless bottom of human potentiality and the possibility of Mind.

The reduplicative character of reflexiveness implies both a 'regenerative' nature of meaning, a processual patterning expressed through metaphorical symbolism and a fundamentality of paradox in that this regenerative quality contains both the potential for infinite regress and for infinite development of meaning. Reflexiveness defines the structure of meaning in reality and of human interrelatedness in the world.

Though reflexivity takes on different shades of meaning in various disciplines and contexts, a core is detectable. Reflexive as we use it, describes the capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself; subject and object fuse. A long tradition exists in which thought has been distinguished from unconsidered experience, where life is not merely lived naively without being pondered but regarded with detachment, creating an awareness that finally separates the one who lives from his history, society, from other people. Within the self, detachment occurs between self and experience, self and other, witness and actor, hero and hero's story. We become at once both subject and object. Reflexive knowledge then contains not only messages, but also information as to how it came into being, the process by which it was obtained. It demonstrates the human capacity to generate second order symbols or meta-levels--significations about signification. The withdrawal from the world,

a bending back toward thought process itself, is necessary for what we consider a fully reflexive mode of thought. To paraphrase Babock (1980), in order to know itself, to constitute itself, as an object for itself, the self must be absent from itself: it must be a sign. Once this operation of consciousness has been made, consciousness itself is altered; a person or society thinks about itself differently merely by seeing itself in this light. (Ruby, A Crack in the Mirror, 1982, page 3)

The metalogical reflexiveness of the definition of definition and the meaning of meaning constitutes the essential ground of being in human reality--it is the mythological mirror of Mind and situated in the world. It constitutes our knowing and our knowledge about ourselves and our world. Knowing implies apperception of our own consciousness, of our own awakened knowledge, as a state of self awareness. To know comes from the Sanskrit root jna', to know, and is defined as 'to perceive with certainty; to understand clearly; to be sure of or well informed about, or to recognize by recollection, remembrance, representation or description, or to distinguish.' Knowing implies information, shrewdness, worldly wiseness. Knowledge is defined as 'clear and certain perception...the act, fact or state of knowing, understanding, learning, all that has been grasped by the mind...cognizance or recognition, information, the body of facts accumulated by mankind; acquaintance with facts; ranges of awareness or understanding.'

From vagueness to clear 'knowing' knowledge denotes the definition of meaning in a certain paradigmatic pattern, a 'knowable' sense of purpose. It implies 'information'. Information comes from the Latin meaning 'an outline, sketch' or 'to give form to, to represent, to inform'. All information is definitely patterned with a fixed order of purpose. All formation is paradigmatic. The meaning of information implies definite knowledge which becomes communicated between self and other, 'objectified' by

acknowledgment, recognized by others by being presented in a recognizable, knowable form. It also implies meaning which is contained within a certain definitional boundary--subsumed within a region of Mindscape.

Reflexive information fixes and paradigmatises our own identity, meaning and being in the world. Knowing ourselves is a way of determining ourselves in the world, and determining ourselves becomes a manner of knowing ourselves.

Furthermore, information also implies communication or significant interrelationship between people, as that which is communicated.

It makes sense to refer to the reflexive 'knowledge of information' and the 'information of knowledge' as the basis of human communication and transmission. We might also refer to the information of communication and the communication of information as the principle paradigmatic of 'knowing' our world.

The essence and *raison d'être* of communication is the creation of redundancy, meaning, pattern, predictability, information and /or the reduction of the random by 'restraint'.

It is I believe, of primary importance to have a conceptual system which will force us to see the 'message' (e.g. the art object) as both itself internally patterned and itself a part of a larger patterned universe--the culture or some part of it.

...Still more important, we like to test and verify the correctness of our view of our relationship to others. (Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1972, page 132)

Defining or meanings involves us in a process of 'figure ground' relationship between 'internal, intensive, explicit, defined meanings' and the 'external, extensive, implicit, connotative, figurative, metaphorical meanings of the larger contextual framework'. The figure ground relationship between subject/object and the background 'connoted by the outline of meaning' is the basis of metaphorical meaning, boundary identification, the metalogical mise en abyme of the paradoxicalness of meaning, and also provides the sense of 'parallax of meaning' which orients, configures and provides perspective in the world.

The figure ground relationship constitutes the structure of antinomial meaning and being in human reality.

We intentionally, purposefully 'configure' our reality. It must be recognized that how we define the outline of this interrelationship, how we draw the slash mark and outline of meaning and being, is first and foremost dependent upon an arbitrary act of will. 'Identification with a difference' is configured by what we decide we want to make it mean, and by all that becomes unintentionally implied by our definition. Our definition circumscribes the meaning we choose, and chooses the context which then circumscribes our meaning.

The only constraints to our enactment of definition are those superimposed by⁷ the need for communication of limited information--the need for maximization of 'relatedness' in the world. These constraints are the pre-existing paradigms of convention, culture and history. Mind works through us independently as the expression of its possibility and also works outside of us as the paradigmatic patterning of its possibility.

'Figure' comes from the Latin 'to form or shape' and means the form, shape or outline of something, a pattern, design, a picture, a likeness, representation, or a 'being of the imagination, a conception of the fancy; a phantasm; an image.' To configure is to 'form; to dispose in a certain form, figure, shape.' We configure our realities by making our paradigms. We configure the form, appearance, shape outline, in relation to a 'ground' which is the bottom, topic, area of reference, valid reason, motive, cause, logical basis of conclusion, that on which anything may stand, rest,

foundation, basis or the 'figure of which a figure is represented' in relation to a context of constraining relations in the world.

Reflexive meaning is the ground of being in human reality. It is the essence of what we come to know of ourselves and our world. It is also an extremely relative affair--differently interpreted by different people in different contexts. There is no fixed measure or elemental atom of meaning, there is no fixed context or universal frame of reference for meaning--no life force, or pleasure principle or eros which permutes into the many variations of a common theme. Meaning expresses a theme of relativistic understanding of human reality, a universal theme of human comprehension of which there are infinite permutations. In its reflexive regenerativity meaning becomes also dynamic and changing.

Human beings are actively or passively engaged in making their own meaning systems in a continuous process of relating significantly with their contexts, of communicating themselves with the world. Human beings are engaged in continually refashioning their meaning systems to preserve and maintain a sense of existential coherence and continuity of self identity in the world. We seek paradigmatic unity of meaning and being, of Mind in the world.

Human beings who fail in this process of meaning creation inexorably suffer meaning in loss--psychological anomie--and loss of self identity--alienation--in the world. They become unreflexive and disintegrative.

In its reduplicativeness, reflexive meaning is also of an irreducible, universal and paradoxical nature. It is inherently paradoxical and therefore always problematic in the dual possibility of possible creation and infinite regression--the dialectically anti-thetical possibilities of progress and regress, construction and destruction, integration and disintegration inherent in meaning.

The paradoxicalness inherent in meaning arises from the forever momentary 'indeterminacy' or possibility--the relative uncertainty of meaningful change. This is a source of chronic anxiety about existence, an expectant anticipation of chance, the fear of the unknown and unknowable, from which we all seek escape through paradigms but from which there is ultimately no escape. This pervasive, pan human condition gives rise to a quality of 'liminality' of simultaneously being nothing and something, and of 'antinomality' the background condition of our existence, the texture of our knowledge, the irreducible relativity and uncertainty of our meaning and being, an unresolvable sort of internal psychic conflict 'generated by a proposition that suggests its contradictory (or the domain of its contraries) as strongly as its own affirmation and the moment of its affirmation.'

There are more than one level of the super organic functioning of the re-synthesisism of Mind. This is not the same imputation of super organic reality to cultural phenomena or to social life per se, as it is conventionally interpreted in anthropology, but that the mind and by extension the intersubjectivity of Mind, has a subjective life of its own separate from, but not completely independent from experiential human reality. This subjective life of the mind constitutes an objective reality of it own apart from the phenomenological experience or understanding of human reality. This super organic 'life of the mind' or 'experiential reality of the mind' or 'mentality' is irreducible and unamenable to analysis.

Symbolization as the dialectical process of symbolism has different 'modes of representation' which come to organize experience in a seemingly 'categorical' or configurational, paradigmatic way. These modes of representation are based upon different sign systems organized around certain implicit and explicit ideational rules of relation. Alphabets and syllabaries are two such modes of representation, as are ink drawing and clay modeling. Modes of representation organize and lead to the classification of varieties of

experience--differentiating in a systematic way many relationships. Modes of representation subsume one another and lead to the hierarchicalization of relations and the taxonomic classification of things.

Different 'modes of representation' allow experience to be 'experienced' in different ways--to become expressed through different symbol systems and to become reconfigured into different paradigms of being. Different modes of representation lead to different 'casts of Mind'--the identity of experience is molded and pre-formed in characteristic ways which have distinct cognitive, emotive and conative consequences.

Mind comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'gemynd' meaning 'memory'. Basic to the notion of mind has been the importance of past experience as the empirical, subjective, phenomenological ground of mental construction and the functioning of Mind as the integration of 'stored experience' which enables mediation of present environments. Matter comes from the Latin 'materia'--the 'stuff of which anything is composed'. This is an interesting contrast, as 'dreams are the stuff' and all mind is composed of the same essential human stuff--subjective experience--whether it is rationally or empirically derived or objectified.

Mind and matter is a fundamental dialectic mediated by human experience. Mind can be expressed as the 'temporalization' of experience and matter can be thought of as the 'spatialization' of experience.

The structure of experience determines that there should always be a degree of symbolic isomorphism between Mind and Matter--the structure of each is reflected by and represented with the structure of the other. We experience mind and matter, and mind and matter are experienced by us.

The synthetic unity of human experience provides us with a sense of reality which defines our beingness through the articulation of symbolisms within our environments. It is this identity of experience which provides us with unity of Mind--the common human sentience of thought, feeling and pattern which is referred to as the 'psychic unity of humankind'. The synthetic, symbolic structure of Mind, expressed as the identity of experience is the basis of the principle of the psychic unity of humankind.

We purposefully seek to maintain within our everyday streams of experience a sense of identity and the unity of Mind. The importance of this 'need' of human sentience,, both perceptive, conative, emotive, cognitive and normative, must not be underestimated as it becomes the organizing principle of culture historical development.

In the dialectic of identity, between beingness and non-being, selfness and otherness, there occurs a cybernetic interrelationship between Mind as the reflexive identity of self beingness and Culture as the other identity of non-being. The cybernetic relationship between Mind and Culture in the dialectical process of identification is more than analogical--the symbology of Mind being analogous to the symbolisms of Culture. The cybernetics of Mind and Culture are homological--they have structural affinity and the same ontology of development and are derived from the same origin. Furthermore, Mind and Culture constitute in their patterning of interrelations a single, cybernetically integrated system.

It is the cybernetic homology of Mind and Culture which allow us to speak symbolically of a Culture in terms of an individual personality or identity of being, and to refer to individual identity in reference to a particular individual's contextuality within a particular culture historical framework.

That this interrelationship constitutes a single integrated cybernetic system, one which is dialectical and symbolic, is important. There are many feedback mechanisms between culture and self which need to be comprehended. This dialectical system constitutes a developmental series of cyclical alterations which revolve around a single directional axis of development--of change and transformation of both individual and culture. This central axis is the 'center' of culture and character.

There is a cybernetic system of relations between the identity of Mind, the communication function of language, and the phenomena of Culture as patterned context. In a large part Culture is the physical expression and projection of the defense mechanisms which protect and reinforce the identity of Mind--culture constitutes the symbolic 'archosis' and collusion of tradition which provides a contextual framework by which identity of Mind becomes referenced and is rendered significant.

Language is the mediator of this set of relations--it is the medium of expression and articulation of its symbolism. It makes no sense to analytically separate Mind, Language and Culture in the on going stream of human conscious experience, but to speak of a single integrity of its experience as 'Mind/Language/Culture'. It is better to see these three sets of phenomena as but differential facets of the same basic operational system of human relationship in the world. It is possible to see Mind in terms of Language and Culture, and Language in terms of Mind and Culture, and Culture in terms of Language and Mind--there are symbolic resonances of each in terms of the other.

Mind is the super organic collective consciousness of humankind which is seated in the consciousness of the individual--individual's are the vehicles of Mind. Culture's are the contexts of the collective unconscious of people, and Culture-History is the context of the collective unconscious of humankind. Individual's are the separate 'ideas' of Mind--the holothetic symbolic expression and embodiment of Mind. Mind experiences reality through the experiences of people. The unique identity of each individual occurs as the one possible 'ideational instance' of Mind.

Mind as an 'idea' expressed individually is the product of the symbolic dialectic between beingness and non-being. As 'idea' it ultimately informs the individual's 'Reason for Being' in the world. Existential engagement of 'idea' as a deliberate decision requires the transcendence of the dialectic by the reaffirmation of 'self identity' in the world vis-à-vis the other identity as possible 'non-being'.

World view as the integration of 'mind/language/culture' informing the principle of presence and the centeredness of being, is in a sense the dialectical antithesis of Mind. World view occurs as a consequence of the functional integration of cybernetic systems of 'mind/language/culture' in terms of symbolic conglomerations. World view becomes the professional's perspective--Mind remains the amateur's naiveté' about the world.

World view is always an 'intensive' orientation, while Mind is always an 'extensive' orientation. World view becomes the symbolic cultural identity of 'otherness'--the embodiment of the 'idea' of non-beingness. World view does not transcend the dialectic of identity, but unfolds within the mythological parameters and paradigmatic patterning of its counterpoint. The individual does not 'embrace' world view--world view embraces the individual and entails lack of or control over choice. Mind is 'epi-genetic', the germ plasm of Mind. World view is culture

historically relative--a particular symbolic Geist predominating (as Centeredness of Being) within a particular context of place and period--Mind is transcendental and pan human in process, beyond the spatio-temporal boundaries and culture historical horizons of world view.

So far, science has been mostly a phenomena of world view and not of Mind. Only when it embraces Mind fully will it transcend its own limitations of paradigm and power.

The super organic integrity of Mind is always and only expressible in terms of dialectical identity of the individual. This is the holothetic principle--the integrity and 'structure' of the whole is expressed in terms of holism of its individual parts, in terms of dialectical textuality of individual identity. Mind becomes the 'thetic' starting point for the identity of the self, and the identity of the self becomes the synthesis of the identity of Mind.

It follows that any method based upon the holothetic principle attempts to understand Mind as this is manifest in terms of any given individual's basic identity in life, and attempts to infer from such studies an autobiography or life history the nature of Mind as a super organic transpersonal phenomena.

The dialectic of individual identity is a counterpoint between self and other identity in the world. It is the self sidedness of this dialectic which confers the holothetic structure of Mind. The other sidedness situates and orients the self within a culture historical context, providing the relational significances of the individual sense of being, but it is the unique self identity which the individual brings into the formulation of mind which confers upon it a vitality and a real world relevance, without which individuality as an 'idea of mind' would remain unexpressible or incoherent. The super organism of Mind, then, is not expressed in terms of an individual sacrificing him/herself for the sake of a larger corporate

social identity--though this may be one facet of the 'self' expression of Mind. Rather, it becomes expressed in terms of how and why an individual incorporates Mind as Self, as the organizing Reason for Being in life. It is in this self centeredness of the holothetic principle that the source of the momentousness tends toward a super critical unpredictability which may decisively redirect culture historical momentum.

It is the holothetic principle which confers a sense of wholeness to the self and to Mind as an 'idea' of human consciousness. The integrity of the self derives from the integrity of the Mind, and the integrity of the Mind is centered in the relative integrity of the self. There is thus a certain reflexiveness of identity between sense of Self and Mind which is the essence of the holothetic principle.

This is the part of the grand paradox of human existence--the sense of self and sense of Mind are separate and yet the same--both are an 'idea'. This paradox becomes even more problematic when this reflexiveness of identity is seen as expressed in terms of a dialectic between self and other--sense of self becomes defined in terms of the other-identity and vice versa, an individual identity is the self centered/other decentering dialectic of Mind. Other-identity intermediates the holothetic principle as the grand 'anti-thesis' of Mind. World view is situated in the other-identity of non-being.

Individual dual identity forms a dialectic of consciousness and context, character and culture, of contraposed values, interests, significances and choices which are always expressed and defined in terms of one another. This dialectical of identity constitutes the mythological fabric of culture historical consciousness written in the meta-language of Mind. The concepts of individual identity arises as the synthesis of this dialectic of Mind and Myth--it is the culture historically symbolic idea of Mind.

The individual, as the basic culture bearing unit of culture history, becomes as well the basic 'genetic unit' of Mind--i.e. an 'idea' as the basic constituent unit of Mind. It is the self side of the dialectic which serves to situate Mind as an idea with a corporeal materiality and with a uniqueness of purpose and integrity of being. It is the other-side of the dialectic which situates Mind within a culture historical provenience and which loads its 'ideas' with relative and universal symbolic significance.

The universal Mind of humankind is but the collective unity of all individual human minds--the individual human mind becomes an 'idea' of the collective Mind. As individuals pass away, they 'vanish' as ideas of Mind, but Mind as a corporate collectivity of ideas, continues through beingness of others. The meta-language of Mind is the sharing and communication of consciousness between individual ideas--the universality of this meta-language is rooted in the potential universality of this sharing of Mind.

Self-identity and other-identity are but two sides of a single coin of consciousness--the coin of individuality as the idea of Mind, and the exchange of such equivalency of coinage is the universal economy of Mind. Individuals, as basic ideas of Mind are the principle irreducible mediums of exchange of Mind.

What is self becomes expressed in terms of 'otherness' and vice versa, so it makes little net difference in the dialectic which side one begins or ends with. Whichever side is manifest, the other shadow side is always implicit and predictable.

Though individual 'ideas' may come and go, Mind as a collective entity continues as a corporate 'identity'--founded as it is in the possibility of patterning and necessity of communication--culture historical transmission of Mind. Mind as a 'collectivity' has than a 'super organic' structure and a meta-linguistic function above and beyond that of its constituent individual 'ideas'--it comes to have its own reasons for being beyond those 'reasons' if its basic ideas.

Mindness is always expressed symbolically and metaphorically as 'something which stands for something else'. It is the metaphorical structure of human meaning which accounts for its inherent paradoxicalness and 'antinomality'--Mind must always be expressed as 'referring to something else'. Knowing Mind is always indirect. World view substitutes Mindness for Mind--the metaphorical structure of meaning becomes denied as 'something which stands for itself'. Metaphor both opens human meaning to possibility and simultaneously prevents the realization of possibility--world view closes off possibility through its realization. Mindness always functions metaphorically in the symbolic mediation of human reality.

The 'ecology' of Mind is the measure of the inter-relatedness of reality--everything is related to everything else, however indirectly. This ecology is reflected in the Ecology of Mindness as the measure of relatedness of human awareness and understanding to the empirical ground of human reality--to the environments of Mind. It is expressed as an intrinsic ecological consciousness of the environmental physicality of Mind. The ecology of mind came into being gradually as a functional 'system' of interrelations which have some form of adaptive mutuality.

The ecology of mind is total in an all pervasive sense--it always surrounds, contextualizes and relativizes meaning in the naturally chaotic and entropic environment.

MINDSPACE AND MINDSCAPE

Mind occupies its own kind of space. This space is metaphysical mostly, but it does have extension and parallels in physical reality. The spatial metaphor is a necessary way of imaging and looking at Mind, because it provides a sense of its synchronicity and simultaneously of its ideas and their meta relations that would otherwise be difficult to 'see' in a glance. Mindspace is infinitely internal and internally infinite in its dimensionalities, just as physical space is infinitely extensive. Within its infinitude of intenses there is vast room for infinite possibilities of patterning. We cannot easily transverse mindspace, just as we cannot easily transverse even a minuscule region of physical space, because we are bound by our biological being within such narrow time frames of existence. As old as we become we always die too young and move too slow to cross even a section of its area, or to fulfill even a portion of its potentialities. And yet even from our limited vantage point, if we study its breadths we can formulate pretty good ideas of the kinds of things which compose it and the relations between those things.

Mindspace is 'holistic' in the sense that its multi-dimensionality cross cut every tradition bound academic boundary discipline, field of study and domain of imagination that there is available today and comprehend and unite the mountains of information into networks of understanding that we have yet been blind to. The depths of mindspace easily encapsulates the whole compendium and corpus of human knowledge and wisdom.

Mind also has a kind of topography, a kind of terrain, a kind of geography that is distinctive. We speak of regions of mind, of no man's land, of mountains and of paths and forests between the mountains, of horizons, benchmarks, stratigraphy, foundations. We see that in a particular region of mind, in a particular paradigm of its patterning, things and ideas are set in relatively fixed and stable relations to one another, while other things and ideas are in fluid and dynamic relations, flowing around and between the fixed coordinates. We can speak of meridians and of relative distances of relations between things, and see that some forests are more

thickly wooded that others, some mountains higher and some pathways more winding.

Spatial metaphors are important in our understanding of Mind because it provides us with a means of translating our temporal experience of Mind into a static sense of space, in which temporal frames of time become spatial measures of distance. Space and time in Mindness are not strictly separate--the experience of one becomes the experience of the other in different terms. Our normal experience of Mind is as phenomenological streams of consciousness which flow in time and across space. Even our perceptions of time and space can change and become altered in interchangeable ways, in a kind of synaesthesia of the fabric of Mind. Space and time metaphors are also the first and last 'scientific' anchors that keep Mindspace on the physical ground of reality.

Mind in time, as dynamic pattern and change, is fundamentally different than Mind in space as fixed structure and synchronic happening and movement and each has very different kinds of consequences in our paradigms and understanding of human reality. Temporal metaphors of Mind allow us to talk about some things such as change, development and process, which spatial metaphors of Mind do not allow--on the other hand spatial metaphors allow us to see and examine 'structure', periodicity and fixed pattern and context in ways temporal metaphors disallow.

Mind moves through a space time continuum. Mind always moves and movement is the key characteristic of its understanding. Its movement through space and time over the terrain of its mindscapes, animates Mind as a force, an event, a continuing happening of consciousness. Its movement, however constrained or however entropic never ceases. It may slow or speed up but it never stops.

MENTAL MAPS AND MAZEWAYS

Given the efficacy of the movement of Mind, of its space time metaphors and of its Mindscapes and Mindspace, we must see that mythological paradigms of Mind create mental mazes of walls, corridors, corners, doorways, windows, mirrors and thresholds which we must learn to navigate successfully within and which lead in many different directions but always indirectly.

In our daily streams of consciousness, we learn and develop mental maps of where, when and how to navigate our mazes in a manner that becomes meaningful to ourselves. These mental maps of our Mindspace are simple and small at first, but we gradually add onto them and they grow in complexity and sophistication along the way. These maps record symbolic markers which indicate a basic change in direction, a shift in mode, a slowing or speeding up of movement. They are flow charts which indicate the consequences of alternative directions and all the crossings along the way.

Our maps and the navigation of the mazes are rooted in our memories and in our alternative states of conscious, phenomenological experience. Much of our memory is state dependent and is triggered by key symbolic markers in our environments. We seek a sense of continuity and an experiential identity of consciousness within our ever changing environmental contexts.

META-PHYSICS

It is important to understand the possible relations between Mindspace and physical space. It is important to understand how our understanding of Mindscapes, however narrow and limited, becomes superimposed upon our 'normal' perception and experience of the physical world in which we live, such that it is always distorting and 'bending' the light of the things we see and experience through the prisms of its 'glassy essence'. Our perception of space and time are normally 'hyperbolic' and curved upon the peripheries of our conscious focus, there is distortion of

parallax of our perspective and we lose sense of proper proportion as if looking up at objects from the bottom of the sea. Mind filters our experiences and always mediates our relations with the world in ways we are rarely self conscious of. The finished version of the 'normal world' that we get through our sense is always from a 'Mind's Eye' viewpoint and rarely are we able to know the difference. But we can always be assured that however sensitive, however sensible, or however scientific, it always must be in some measure be 'relativized' and disproportionately distorted by our small idea of Mind. Even the understanding of ourselves and of our own being in the world, must be mediated by our Mind.

Only by embracing and understanding better the movement and workings of Mind, of the interconnections of mind and matter and the possible functions of human experience, can we hope to gain a clearer vision of both Mind and the world.

If the Mind filters the world through our experience of it, then we must also ask if the world of physical reality does not also in some important and hidden ways also help to 'pre-structure' or influence our Mind, or at least our understanding of Mind. We only discover the working of Mind through the reflexive elaboration of our own mythologies, and our mythologies always are derived from symbolisms rooted in natural environments and are always framed within relational contexts which are grounded in our experiential realities. It is to be wondered whether our narrow versions of Mind are somehow constrained and 'prejudiced' by the experience of our paradigms and mythological patterns in the world.

If so, it follows that better and broader understanding of the Mind can be found in gazing into grains of sand as well as mediating upon mountain tops. Learning how to see reality more clearly, more phenomenologically unconditioned, more naturally, and how to relate to our environments in ways which decrease the ecological distance between our own being and the experience of its nature, will not also help us to better embrace Mind.

MIND

Whereas world view is a totality of a fixed center, Mind is the decentered totality of the universe of human experience and reality--it has no center, no boundaries, no ends, and yet its expression can be found reflected in anything and everything. Its sense of wholeness can be represented symbolically in bounded and finite entities. It is never complete and always open to other possibilities. Mind is the human awareness and its manifestation in human sensibilities and beingness. The possibility of Mindness gives us a partial hold on reality by relating us to reality. The history of human consciousness has been one of the developmental unfolding of the possibilities of Mindness as a reflection of being in reality. World views have arisen, changed their positions of power, and disappeared in continuous succession, but only Mind has emerged and blossomed as a continuously characteristic of human possibility.

Mind exists as a universal possibility or as a possible universality, but it is always a restricted and limited human possibility. As structure, it is an a priori possibility, but as human understanding it remains always and only an a posteriori epi-phenomenon of human experience. It is not an immanent Geist or Spirit as an organizing force or ultimate Logos of reality as some eidetic, metaphysical and noumenal super reality. The physical phenomena of the universe are ordered upon patterns which can be represented by certain scientific principles or general law, but the human understanding of these ordering patterns and principles is always preconditioned by the limitations of human experience. There can be no perfect, proven, absolute isomorphism between the 'structure' of human reality and our knowledge of that 'structure' and all we are left with in the final analysis are our own sets of partial and imperfect ideas about the reality of Mind--our own limited sense of Mind (or Mindness) which serves as the basis for our scientific understanding and excoriation of real phenomena.

We exist because Mind exists and Mind exists because we exist--it makes no difference to ask which comes first or which cause the other. Both exist as manifestations of its possibility. We are the

result of its eventual working out of its possibilities and our Mindness becomes its expression in reality.

Our happiness, sense of well being, understanding, adaptive adjustment and mental health and sense of reality all depend upon our Mindness or 'state of Mind'--'a minding of our business'. Mindness is not necessarily achieved through embracing world view but through the dispelling of the illusion and delusion of power. Mindness is achieved in dialectical transcendence to world view as its antithetical opposite. Mind is attained through the cultivation of a sense of being, of beingness in the world in the fullest of human senses.

We cannot ever know or envision Mind directly--it is always construed indirectly, mediated by the mechanisms of experience. Its paradox is that if seen directly it is ultimately chaotic in appearance--chaotic because of its entropic complexity. Or mechanisms of experience superimpose a sense of order and meaning to this chaos, but at a price of superficiality and spuriousness. No sooner do we bound chaos to create order than Mind slips outside of our boundaries to exist in the unknown chaos beyond our field of view.

The dialectics of Mind are evolutionary--they are continuously being transformed in response to the adaptive pressures of a greater environmental context which is also always changing. The evolution of Mind as a characteristically species wide human phenomena allows us to speak of the 'psychic unity of humankind' and to posit a 'universal structure' underlying human language. It has been a 'by product' of natural evolution and it arose as an 'adaptive mechanism' of human survival. The function of Mind as a natural system has been in human adaptation to evolving, complex natural environments and later, social environments. The evolution of Mind as the evolution of life on earth, as been largely a chance phenomena as an expression of patterned possibility--there has

been nothing preordained or immanent or inevitable about evolution, not is it necessarily 'progressive' in the sense of fulfillment of higher purpose. It arises as a 'system maintaining' function--a consequence of maintaining an ecological, dynamic equilibrium of relations. This evolution is based upon an 'anti-entropic' and anti-chaotic principle of increasing order and complexity in the dialectic with natural entropy and the tendency towards random disorder. Life is fundamentally 'anti-entropic' and 'anti-chaotic' in a broad evolutionary sense in that it strives to perpetuate and increase meaning systems, organize relations, in the face of environmental change and chaos. Mind is in an evolutionary sense epi-phenomenal--it does not drive evolutionary development but is merely the resulting patterning by which such evolutionary development then becomes constrained. It is a second order feedback mechanism of evolution. Mind must be construed as the organizational patterning of natural systems, and as the human possibility for comprehending this patterning. This human capacity for Mindness is what most characterizes and distinguishes the human species.

FREEDOM OF MIND

The confrontation of new environments demands a different kind of courage, the courage to exercise rigorously the freedom of the Mind. Like any other kind of freedom it must always be fought for, as like any other kind of freedom it is being subverted or denied by all those people who feel threatened by it. And there is reason for their fears, for someone is probably profiting by them. Freedom of mind demand freedom of voice--to speak our loudly and to demand to be listened to. The enemies of Mind can easily be recognized as they are either trying to ignore you or to silence you. The reign of Silence, like the reign of Terror is the antidote to the social disease of 'too much freedom'.

Often times it seems that what is written is not as important as how it is presented. A rich person and a poor person may both be able to write, and even if the poor person is a better or more interesting writer, it is the rich person who is still more likely to get published and read. There are different kinds of voice and different forms of silence, and varying degrees of freedom.

Similarly, a professor and a pupil may share the same set of ideas, and even if the professor conveniently 'borrows' them from the student, it will probably be the professor's voice that will carry the weight of credibility and be listened to instead of the words of the student.

This is a sad testimony on our sense of progressive enlightenment, a lesson to be learned about the alienation and spuriousness of social relations in our modern environments.

Our exchange of ideas is still not very free and open. Minds do not regularly meet upon an equal footing. Worlds and the information they contain are still systematically controlled and suppressed. Access to information has become privileged within a rigid, class bound status hierarchy. Voices of opposition challenging the status quo of who knows what with bold new ideas are either strangled into social death, or the bright words merely fall upon deaf ears or else echo hollowly down long empty corridors.

Now we need to remind ourselves and publicly reaffirm our ultimate freedom of the human mind. Its continued freedom is the best guarantee we have for our progressive emancipation. The final control over our minds and our voices always depends upon our own courage and will power to resist programmatic brainwashing and behavior modification, to relativize ideological propaganda, to resist subtle and subliminal techniques of persuasion, to reach through the impersonal screens of political, economic and social prejudice and violence, to refuse to remain silent or to allow ourselves to become silenced under authority and power, and to reject the status quo of class bound consciousness.

This we must do at any price as the quality and outcome of our collective confrontation with our new environments depends greatly upon it.

Blanket Copyright, Hugh M. Lewis, © 2005. Use of this text governed by fair use policy--permission to make copies of this text is granted for purposes of research and non-profit instruction only.

Last Updated: 08/25/06
