

Chapter Five

Madness, Evolution, and God

*“Reason and madness, yoked unwillingly to each other,
must advance together like partners in a three-legged sack race.”*

Leonard Shlain

Twenty or thirty people sit motionless in chairs or stand about, scattered like so many discarded manikins, across the big open room. Most of them stand or sit alone, each of them lost in the strange and captivating worlds of their minds and the anguish of their souls. I escort my students into the room through the security locked double doors, and past the guard and the nurse who watch over the ward.

We are on a field trip into the world of madness, something I do as a teacher with every abnormal psychology class that I teach. We can read about insanity and discuss it in the classroom, but I feel it is important for the students to observe it first hand. So every semester I lead my newest group into one of the big ward rooms at the mental hospital filled with psychotics and manic-depressives and set them loose, to walk around, talk, and interact with schizophrenics, paranoids, borderlines, and people who want to die or believe they already have.

I am always surprised at how easily many of my students take to this experience, walking up to patients and quickly striking up conversations with them. Many of the patients tell the students their stories – how they got into the mental hospital, who is responsible for making their life miserable, who confined them in this crazy place (frequently family members), and why everything would be just fine if they only had a few good breaks in life. Life isn't fair – so they say - and there is always some reason why those “others” think that they are mad. I

usually let the class stay in the room for around an hour, absorb the twisting, convoluted vibes of the place, and then we leave.

When we meet again in our regular classroom I ask the students questions about what they observed and what they think about the people they encountered, and inquire about their overall experience of being in a hospital for the seriously mentally ill. The students always have a lot to say and frequently come away quite sympathetic with the patients. Perhaps the patients are indeed victims of bad breaks in life (that's what the patients, in fact, tell them) and if someone would just help them, their lives would improve. Of course, an array of people, including family and friends, has been trying to help many, if not most, of the patients for years. They are in the state hospital because all these once helpful and connected people have burned out in the process. The patients have exhausted their resources, both personal and financial. The patients' lives are tragic wastelands and my students, of course, feel empathy and sympathy for them. If only...

In the last few years talking to schizophrenics, the first thing I learn about them is that they seem terrified, and I mean *terrified*, of life – of people – of any kind of conversation that gets too close to what is bothering them inside. I have never seen such fear and trembling and angst in a human being.

The second thing I learn is that it borders on the impossible to have a conversation with many of them. You start talking about some topic and they invariably make a right hand turn in the flow of the conversation, going off on a tangent that seems to have nothing to do with the topic being discussed. And each tangent at some point leads to another tangent. Their minds jump about through an entangled net of mental space. They seem incapable or unwilling to move in a linear direction in thought, and the more you try to push them to go straight ahead, the more agitated they become and the more they move sideways in their responses. You might suppose that if you could just talk with these people, you could help them figure out what is going on and what to do to change things. But you can't do this; the patients by and large resist and

sabotage any efforts to help them. But this seems true in general for all people who are in some kind of psychological mess or problem with living – they zigzag in avoidance and distraction around the solution to things. The schizophrenics just do it with more severity, abandoning the constraints of reality and logic.

The third thing I learn is that the Second Coming, the reincarnation of the Virgin Mary, or the realization of the Anti-Christ have already occurred, many times over, and that we have locked a surprising number of the central figures involved these events in this one hospital in the Chicago metropolitan area. It seems to me that the most common type of delusion is religious or spiritual; the hospital is filled with angels, demons, gods and goddesses. In fact, the more grandiose the image or personal identity, the higher the probability you will find versions of it in this hospital. If you are going to be mad, you might as well be somebody very important.

Finally, although the psychiatrists and staff frequently say that the patients are dysfunctional, I think that they function very well and have found their perfect niche. They have a roof over their head, three nutritious meals, medical and psychological care, group activities, clean clothes, a TV to watch, and people who talk and listen to them and give them advice on how to improve their lives, all free of charge. People listen to their crazy stories and take notes on it all.

In the cold winters of Chicago the number of patients goes up. In the summer the number dwindles and the patients, having been released for summer vacation, spend a lot of time in the city parks watching the pigeons and talking to God and demons and dead relatives amidst the beauty of the Chicago skyline.

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The year is 1986. After having struggled for years to find a way to leave northwest Indiana by heading a thousand miles or so either east or west, and ending up just circling like a planet, spinning topsy-turvy, trapped in the gravitational sink of a black hole, I find a way out by moving just seventy miles

northwest into the Chicago metro area and landing a steady well-paying rather prestigious job working for the Illinois Department of Mental Health. I find my way out of Indiana and my own madness by going to work in a big city hospital for the seriously mentally ill.

I interview for the position of director of education, staff development, and quality assurance with the medical director of the hospital, Carlos, who is a psychiatrist. Born in Cuba, Carlos wears colorful expensive clothes, is very refined in his lifestyle and mannerisms, and reminds me of a combination of Desi Arnaz and Ricardo Montalban. He also reminds me of my maternal grandfather, Grandpa Joe DiNardi – a combination of flamboyance with an under-current of depression. Carlos is looking for a Ph.D. in psychology for the position and when we meet we resonate right off the bat. We like each other. He hires me and within a couple of years, not only am I heading staff development, education, and quality assurance but I am also given responsibility for credentialing, accreditation, psychology, and patient hearings in the hospital.

What a turnaround. I am almost forty and after roughly six years in personal and professional chaos and confusion, I get focused again in “the real world.” Though I frequently feel like running away again - at least at first - I keep myself steady (remembering Marilyn Monroe’s advice) and dig myself out of the hole I had fallen into. After being a vagabond, a drop out, a habitual pot smoker sequestered away from the physical world in ultra-Platonic isolation while living in the gutter, within a couple of years I am in a position of significant professional status and power. I have a considerable array of responsibilities in the mental hospital and am making much more money than I have ever made in my life. Becoming the Chief Psychologist in 1986 is the cherry on the sundae. Tenacity. The key is tenacity and I find it again.

I also find my voice again in teaching; I get back into the classroom teaching introductory psychology and abnormal psychology at a local community college. I bring a lot of my new philosophical ideas into my teaching and begin connecting the ideas to the study of psychology and to the nature of mental

illness – to the question of why things go wrong in the human mind and human life. I am also able to take my students on field trips to the hospital, to have them see what it really looks like to be mentally ill and to see how such people are treated by society and by the mental health system. I give them a dose of reality to complement the books. The personal and the concrete are woven together with the abstract and theoretical.

The mental health hospital I work at is one of the four major mental hospitals in the Chicago metropolitan area serving the seriously crazy, psychotic, tormented, and deranged. I always find it odd, though, that it is called a mental health center and yet it is filled with illness, misery, and flights from reality. At full capacity, there are around three hundred patients in the hospital, divided among eight pavilions (or wards). Everything is locked up and the whole facility is surrounded by a very high fence, but patients still manage to escape at times. The rooms for the patients are pretty much empty of any objects that patients can use to hurt themselves, but somehow they still manage to cut themselves or try to hang themselves. Tenacity and impassioned determination are the keys to their success.

We are across the street from a major private hospital and medical school with a psychiatry residence program. The head psychiatrist there, who used to be the head of our hospital, specializes in the study of multiple personalities and, interestingly, they presently have more documented cases being treated in this one private hospital than in the entire previous history of the disorder across the United States up through the 1960s. In the 1980s it seems that there is an epidemic of multiple personality disorders emerging across the United States and particularly concentrated around Chicago. Minds can fragment in many different ways, and for some reason (more on this later), the southern tip of Lake Michigan appears to provoke an inordinate amount of mental fragmentation. That seems to have been where I fragmented. Perhaps it's the fumes from all the factories and automobiles.

I have the opportunity to observe quite a few psychiatric interviews of multiple personalities such as the case where the patient at different times thinks he/she is a man or a woman, or black or white, or even pregnant or not pregnant. You can put this "person" (one body/many minds) in front of a mirror and this "person" will stick to his/her present assumed identity (be it a man or woman, black or white, etc.) in spite of whatever the mirror "truly" shows. We send all our multiple personalities over to the private hospital for study and treatment by the psychiatric residency staff since that is their specialty – their thing. They get into it.

In our hospital, we have predominately schizophrenics; manic-depressives; paranoids and paranoid schizophrenics (a particularly interesting group); schizo-affectives (which are a combination of schizophrenic and manic-depressive symptoms); personality disorders; psychotics and mood disorders who abused drugs; and an assortment of "disorders unspecified" which basically means that the person is clearly deranged but does not fall neatly into any one psychiatric category. If you are a garden variety neurotic, depressive, phobic, or a drug abuser, you don't belong here; this place is for seriously disturbed people. It often seems to me, though, that many of the staff are the garden variety neurotic types, which includes me.

One psychiatric interview which gives a real flavor of the kind of people who are patients in the hospital, involves a middle-aged woman who believes that she and her daughter are being pursued by agents of the Devil. She has been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. She thinks that the agents of the Devil want to kill her and her daughter. She firmly believes that she is the Second Coming and that if something were to happen to her then her daughter would take over that role. That's why the agents of the Devil are after her; they want to undermine the cosmic scheme of God. She is particularly concerned about protecting her daughter for she will be the last hope for humankind if the mother dies.

What impresses me about this woman is how well she has memorized the Bible. She quotes numerous passages - quickly retrieving them from memory - that she believes support her interpretation of reality. She has an amazing mind and if you listen to her, she seems quite logical and even convincing. (Madness is contagious.) The psychiatrist doing the interview keeps trying to catch her in an inconsistency or a patently false belief, but she holds fast and continues to argue with him quite effectively that she is indeed the Second Coming. As part of her delusion she believes that every night Christ visits her and hovers above her while she lies in bed, coming ever closer. It clearly sounds like she believes that Christ is having sexual intercourse with her during these visitations.

During the interview she keeps looking at me and I feel increasingly self-conscious. I have a dark black beard and mustache and it occurs to me that perhaps I remind her of the Devil. (Paranoia is contagious.)

After about an hour into the interview, through persistent questioning, the psychiatrist finally gets the woman to divulge who the agents of the Devil are. The agents of the Devil are men, all men. But of course.

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As I mentioned above, although the patients at the mental hospital are described as dysfunctional, it seems to me that they function rather well within the confines of the reality within which they live. One could say that they simply do not function or function well in what is commonly viewed as the normal world.

At the very least, when out in the normal world the patients do not behave in ways that are acceptable to the general population. Talking to dead relatives, for example, while walking down the street is generally considered inappropriate or insane behavior. No one can talk to dead people; it's unreal or hallucinatory. Dead people are dead; they no longer exist, so you can't talk to them. In a similar vein, normal people would consider it impossible to hear the voices of other people (alive or dead) in their own minds. The mind of one person, according to

the theory of reality accepted by most people, can not inhabit another person's mind. We can not peer into each other's psyches.

Now, if normal people encounter individuals who talk to the dead out loud, they often find such behavior uncomfortable. In fact, normal people find many of the behaviors and beliefs of psychotics uncomfortable. One could argue that psychotics are often put in mental hospitals simply because normal people find psychotics unnerving or difficult to interact with. Normal people can't function well with psychotics around and consequently put them away. Psychotics are too much trouble. Psychotics upset our view of reality.

As a general rule, in fact, psychotics are ostracized by the general population. Walk down any street in a big city (like Chicago) and you'll notice that those individuals on the street who are acting strangely are usually intentionally ignored by normal people walking by. We want to get away from them. So perhaps the crazies function well outside (as far as they define what it means to function well); it is us, the normal ones who prescribe to a certain theory of reality and appropriate social behavior, who don't function well around them.

Listening and talking to psychotics and the seriously mentally ill provokes questions in my mind regarding the nature of reality. One of our psychiatrists frequently asks if our patients are really out of touch with reality or if they just have a different way of looking at reality – in fact, many different ways. Perhaps what constitutes being in touch with reality is determined by what most people agree upon – the consensus theory of reality; we say that psychotics are out of touch with reality simply because they don't agree with us normal people regarding what is real and what isn't. And here we are, of course, back to the related issues of truth, objectivity, and the theoretical nature of facts. Perhaps they interpret things differently. Perhaps the "facts" are not the same for them. Perhaps what is true is in the eyes of the beholder.

I ask myself at times, who is to say that their reality is any less real or valid? Perhaps they are gifted in some way to see things we can't. Sometimes in listening to them it seems that they are in some strange way getting at something

important, something revelatory, and I just can't quite get it or they can't quite spit it out.

One thing is clear. A lot of them talk to spirits or see spirits; a lot of them interact with God, Satan, and their various emissaries. In general, the staff does not talk to God or spirits (at least they don't openly admit it). This is our consensus reality. If we talked to spirits we would be locked up like our patients. Parenthetically, I realize that it is socially acceptable for priests, ministers, and rabbis – all of whom come at times to visit our patients - to talk to God, or even “hear” the word of God. They have education, training, and professional credentials regarding such matters. It is OK – it is sane – for them to talk to God, but it is not OK for the patients or the staff.

Yet what makes things more complex and interesting regarding all of this is that I frequently have the feeling or intuition that somewhere in the back of their minds the patients know what is actually going on around them – that they understand what the staff is saying to them – and that they just don't want to admit it. That's where the fear seems to come in. Often they appear incredibly terrified by what you say to them or what you ask. When they go off in horizontal directions of thought, it feels like they are running from what they don't want to see, unwilling to face the questions being asked. Consequently, in many cases it seems (a gut feeling) that the symptoms are feigned, that they know full well that what they are saying is nonsense, or that what they are doing isn't genuine. (From Vonnegut: “In Nonsense is Strength.”)

At least it seems that the patients get to know the system and know how to act or what to say to be admitted into the hospital. I have also seen this in alcohol and drug abuse: people, who have learned how to be patients, learn what they must say and do to get in for treatment and secure a place to stay. Mental illness or drug abuse can become a lifestyle, perhaps an intentional one – in and out of the mental hospital (the revolving door phenomenon), or back and forth into the therapist's office.

Carlos thinks differently though. For Carlos, schizophrenics suffer from a biological disorder, perhaps with a genetic base, and there is no way to cure them. The schizophrenics in our hospital are given anti-psychotic drugs that subdue their symptoms, such as the disorganized (horizontal) thinking and the hallucinations, but the drugs do not turn them back into normal individuals, and if the drugs are stopped, the psychotic symptoms come back full force. Schizophrenics often intentionally stop taking their medication because the drugs psychologically suppress them, making them appear rather dull and zombie-like. Their minds go from crazy and animated to muted and flat.

Not everyone agrees with the genetic-biological point of view. One group of “recovered schizophrenics” argues that with the right type of mental training, focus, and psycho-therapy the schizophrenic can become normal again. And then there is the schizophrenic patient at our hospital (with a Ph.D. in chemistry), whom I become friendly with, who claims to be able to bring himself out of a psychotic episode by typing methodically on a typewriter the same series of keys over and over again. It appears that a focused and determined mind can somehow feed back on the physiology and chemistry of the brain and modify it and dampen the delusions and hallucinations. Another view holds that psychosis emerges in psychotic families – that it is the social environment that people grow up in that teaches and supports the art of being nuts.

In my abnormal psychology classes I discuss the various hypothesized causes of mental illness or, as I prefer to say, mental disorders and the corresponding approaches to therapy. (I don't see madness as an illness any more than I see alcoholism as an illness.) The first view I describe is the biomedical model. In our hospital, the predominant theory is that the cause of psychotic disorders is biological or physiological, often with a genetic foundation. Given this view of mental disorders, the appropriate type of treatment prescribed is drugs, or something that affects the physical body, in particular the biochemistry of the brain. (The hospital also uses shock therapy at times for the seriously depressed, which really jolts the brain and the body.) The theory

dictates the treatment. Some psychiatrists who adopt this “medical model” of mental illness think, in fact, that all disorders, even the more mild ones such as phobias and anxieties, have a basis in brain physiology and chemistry and can consequently be cured or at least suppressed through some kind of appropriate drug. But if the physiological problems are, in fact, due to genetic factors, some type of genetic or neurological engineering would be needed for a complete “cure” since drugs simply mask or suppress the symptoms – there is no permanent alteration in the brain chemistry. But whether or not a genetic factor plays a role in mental disorders, the predominant working hypothesis adopted in my hospital is that if there is something seriously wrong with your mind, there is something seriously wrong with your brain and its chemistry.

If, as a general rule, psychiatrists tend to favor a medical or physical theory of mental disorders, psychologists tend to favor mental or behavioral explanations. For psychologists, the causes of mental disorders are certain patterns of thinking or feeling, or certain habits of behavior, and if you can change the mental and behavioral patterns the disorder will be eliminated. Sometimes social explanations are also included. Psychological disorders are due to social influences, such as dysfunctional families or groups that push people in the direction of psychological problems. Culture is also sometimes included as a cause of mental disorders; that is, there are “sick” or deranged cultures that make those within them who adopt the cultural norms sick or deranged. It is a standing joke regarding modern Western society, with its mad, frenzied, and stressful lifestyle, that the only way to adapt and function within it is to be crazy and stressed yourself. To be normal in our world is to be crazy – the anxious, stressful, neurotic type of crazy.

Hence, I think that perhaps we live in a world where one group of crazy people, who are in the majority, locks up a different group of crazy people – crazy in a different kind of way, who are in the minority.

I tell students in the abnormal psychology class that all of the explanations of mental disorders have elements of truth and that, generally, any particular

disorder has physical, genetic, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social, and even cultural features to it. The correct answer to the question of what causes psychological problems is invariably holistic: it is all of the above, in interaction with each other. I bring the principle of reciprocity into understanding the disorders and miseries of the human mind. How a person behaves affects his or her environment, which impacts back on the person. (Paranoids, for example, act in suspicious ways, which provokes suspicious and guarded behaviors in others, which confirms the paranoid's suspicions. Depressives don't look for opportunities - which leads to not finding any - which reinforces the hopeless state of mind of the depressive.) What a person thinks and feels affects his or her body and brain, which in turn, feeds back on the mind. (Entertain depressing thoughts – cultivate them – and your brain biochemistry changes.) If I act a certain way, this behavior affects my thinking and feeling, which feeds back on my behavior. (If I am demur and diffident in my behavior toward others, and people treat me accordingly, this confirms my sense of low self-esteem and I will continue to act in accordance with this model of myself.) Brain, body, mind (thoughts/emotions/perceptions), behavior, and the environment circle round on each other, creating self-amplifying loops of interdependency. I also tell the students that despite how psychological problems and disorders are often glamorized in the media, it is frequently very unpleasant and painful to suffer from a mental disorder. Chaos doesn't feel good. Talking to God can be torture.

Working in mental health, as well as previously in alcohol and drug abuse, dramatically demonstrates to me how much intense misery and psychological pain there is in the world. Extreme as the cases I encounter are, I am only looking at the tip of the iceberg in such places. The world is full of stress, depression, anxiety, paranoia, drug abuse, and inter-personal conflicts and violence.

It is also driven home to me, especially from my experiences in alcohol and drug abuse, that anyone can end up in a personal mess. No one is immune. This basic fact is also driven home to me from the years of craziness and

disarray I have gone through myself. Madness, disorders, insanity, mental dysfunction; distress, fear, depression, and psychological misery – whatever labels you apply – all are ubiquitous throughout our world and the seeds of their manifestation lie lurking at the perimeter of everyone’s mind.

Some subscribe to the idea that pain, psychological as well as physical, is something that can be eliminated in the future, given a better understanding of the body and the brain. Perhaps through drugs (the psychiatrists and hippies’ choice), genetic engineering, and technological implants (the futurist’s choice) we can eliminate human suffering. Or perhaps through meditation, prayer, and/or psychological training (the spiritualists and psychologists’ choice) we can exorcise the demons and causes of suffering within us. But one can counter that some amount of psychological pain and misery is a necessary element of life and often stimulates psychological growth. Would we grow if we did not hurt? (I have raised this point before.)

Yet, it is also the case that pain and misery can suck a person down into a whirlpool of depression, psychosis, and madness from which there may be no escape. In alcohol and drug abuse, presumably a person doesn’t come up into sobriety until the person has “hit bottom.” (Yet how far down is the bottom, and is there a bottom?) Some people bounce upon hitting the proverbial bottom and some people fall apart and stay down permanently, perpetually sinking further and further. Some die. Growth and decay exist at a bifurcation point; one way leads to evolution, the other way leads to further deterioration or total collapse. I have one client in the detox center who will eventually kill himself because his estranged wife refuses to come back to him. And there are countless others who will kill themselves in the slow death of perpetual drunkenness and/or haunting nightmares.

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So in the mid-eighties I plant my feet in the suburbs of Chicago and secure a full time job as an educator and administrator in a mental hospital in the Illinois Department of Mental Health, and a bit later, a part-time job teaching. I had wanted to find a full-time college teaching position but after having been out of the academic world for a number of years, it turns out to be very difficult to come back in through the front door. Perhaps this is just as well, since going to work in the field of mental health broadens my credentials, enriches my learning, and ultimately pays off for me. I learn quite a bit more about the human condition and life. I am not in the ivory tower; I am observing the existential trials and tribulations of the human mind first hand. I reflect on it all. And I appreciate that at least now I am able to reflect on it all from a growing position of sanity and security.

One thing I realize as I re-surface in the “normal” world is that good habits and positive states of mind can be unlearned and replaced with bad habits and negative states of mind. Many factors were involved in my personal descent – in my unlearning of things. Getting divorced from Laura; recoil and over-reaction to my constrained life with Laura; gravitating into destructive environments; chemicals (basically alcohol and pot); the wrong people; making poor decisions; engaging in unethical behavior; feelings of guilt - the veritable slippery slope of things in tandem with the forces of the cosmos all contributed to my downward spiral. The mess I was in was holistically determined and what had been good in me had been ripped asunder by all these forces combined.

I realize as a general corollary principle that good habits and positive character traits need to be regularly exercised or they atrophy. Of course, I could say that this is a principle derived from weightlifting; if you don't exercise your muscles regularly, they will shrink and become soft. One can think of habits and character traits as things that need to be constantly nourished; they don't just simply remain strong and ingrained in you. Entropy (the movement toward disorder in nature) works against everything. Things break down. The body breaks down. To move forward, the body needs to keep rebuilding itself and the

mind needs to keep recreating itself. All is flow. All is continual creation and recreation. Things fall apart if they are not perpetually being reconstituted. We grow or we die. There is no standing still in the flow, in the currents of time.

Having acquired the bad habit of jumping from one place to the next, of running from this to that, of distracting my mind with perpetual changes in scenery and marijuana highs, it is difficult, especially at first, for me to remain steady and committed to the mental health job or to anything else for that matter. I have to re-acquire the traits of persistence and determination. In fact, as I had discussed with Richard, getting back on track now requires a Gestalt switch along many dimensions. It means re-developing a whole set of important things – both physical and psychological. Stability comes through re-invention. I am having to re-invent my life.

So, again, strange as it may sound, one thing that has a positive and constructive effect on me in this re-building process is frequently being around mental patients in the hospital and observing the sad, deranged, and unfortunate in life. Between the earlier therapist job in the detox center and this new job in mental health, I really get a good existential dose and repeated reminder of how bad human life can become. Viewing such misery, such confusion and hopelessness in the patients, scares the hell out of me – over and over again. I am seeing the really “dark side,” which motivates and re-energizes me to work very hard to avoid the possibility of ever ending up like what I see around me. The previous five-year period hangs over me as a personal reminder of how bad it can get. As I mentioned, as an alcohol therapist I learned that anybody can fall into the gutter. Anyone can ruin his or her life, his or her mind and body, with the bottle or with other types of drugs. And, now in the mental hospital I see all kinds of people whose minds have taken a nosedive into insanity for whatever the vast array of possible reasons. Many of the factors that created their dismal realities could impact and destroy any of us. Indeed, I keep reminding myself that on several occasions during the period I’d just surfaced from I came very close to sinking my own ship. One must take care to cultivate what is good and not to

minimize the potential dangers of life. The darkness lurks close at hand – the darkness lurks inside oneself. One mustn't forget that.

During this time things settle down and improve between Lisa and me as well. When I first come back from Connecticut in the spring of 1983, she does not seem all that thrilled by my return. She thinks I am rushing things. And perhaps I do come back too soon and push too hard, but I really want to make things work, both within my own soul and between the two of us. So given the stress and the rush of things, for a while we go this way and that, arguing and getting tense at times, as we have in the past. Sometimes I want to leave again and at times she probably wants to throw me out. But I don't leave. I keep telling myself I need to – want to – make a go of this. Toward the end of 1983 we re-marry – this time with a minister.

We find a condo in Illinois in 1984, the best place we have ever lived in since we have been together. I actually started going to church with her. I listen to people in church talk about how God has changed their lives, how God works in their lives and answers their prayers. In 1985 we have a second son, Daniel, a sign of our renewed commitment to each other and our marriage. We start buying things again, new furniture to replace all we had lost in the earlier years. I become a responsible husband and father, a commuter going to work nine to five, driving through the rush hour traffic of the Chicago metro area. We settle into the middle class suburban lifestyle. I settle back into normalcy.

In the process, I retreat and disconnect from all the people I knew during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Part of the Gestalt switch. Tom disappears. Paul disappears. And as I mentioned, Bill and Frankie are gone. I am beginning a new life. (I tell myself this almost everyday – that I can change and that I can become someone new.) I start to make new friends among the staff who work at the mental hospital. I change my environment and change my friends.

But underneath this new success and re-emergence into sanity, focus, and a new series of concrete accomplishments, there is an undercurrent of complexity, ambiguity, and ambivalence. For one thing, working in the mental

hospital gets me thinking about what normal is; what is functional, what is reality, and what is success? And further, I ask, what did the whole six years of wandering about the country coupled together with an intense re-thinking of reality mean? Was something accomplished? Was something learned? Yes, I insist to myself. I feel a deep sense of love and destiny with Lisa, and I have Tommy and a new son, Daniel, whom I dearly love as well, and I am teaching again, and all of that. But I am like the character in *Close Encounters*, living a normal life in suburbia but with something from afar calling out to me to follow it and leave all of this behind.

As a metaphor on the whole thing, our condo doesn't have any room for a study. Hence, my books are now in the basement of the condo, some unpacked but most of them still in boxes. They sit there waiting – waiting for a new place to live.

For the moment I need to hold tight. There is a time and a season for everything.

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During the 1980s I study and think about the idea of evolution a lot. For one thing, I talked extensively with Peter about evolution back at the University of Connecticut in 1983 and read a number of the books he mentioned in our chats over breakfast. These conversations, piggy-backing on top of my study of Fraser, got me going deeper into the scientific study of evolution. While working in mental health in the mid and late 1980s I read a whole slew of books on evolution.

One of Peter's favorite topics was the evolution of complexity in the natural world. Peter was interested in why the universe, from galaxies and solar systems to molecules and atoms, was so intricately organized. How did all this order at different levels of size come to be?

The answer to this question provided by Western religion was that God had created all this complex order, from the amazing coordinative detail of the living cell to the beautiful harmonic relationships embodied in the solar system. Nature is ordered due to “intelligent design” or “intelligent creation.” With the development of modern Western science, the idea of natural laws was proposed to explain the orderly patterns of events we see in the physical world around us. Nature is ordered by laws. Yet, such hypothesized laws only explained why things behaved in a regular and predictable fashion. They did not seem to explain how all the complexity in the universe first came to be. And if the question was asked, where did the laws of the universe come from to begin with, or why these laws and not other ones, the answer usually given was God. Isaac Newton, one of the central architects of the modern Scientific Revolution, believed that the laws of nature were created by God and that the universe, in its present form, was set in motion with these laws by God at the beginning of time.

But what Peter was studying, and what we spent a good amount of time discussing, was the newer scientific view that the complexity of the universe was not a given at the beginning of time, but has evolved due to some basic natural principles of self-organization. That is, the universe was not organized from “above” by God at the beginning of time, but has self-organized from the bottom-up over the billions of years of its history. In the beginning there were not even atoms, let alone stars; in the beginning, there were perhaps not even many precisely defined laws; in the beginning, there was chaos, or at the very least, incredible simplicity. This is what Fraser, among many other contemporary scientists, were now arguing.

The new scientific story – the evolutionary story of the cosmos – provides a much different vision of the origin of order and complexity than Newton. The simplest material particles (including quarks and electrons) coalesced out of the radiant energy flow – matter emerged out of energy. The quarks, due to the strong nuclear force, came together in different triads to form protons and neutrons, which, in turn, coupled together with electrons (the electro-magnetic

force) to form more complex structures, atoms. Through chemical bonding, different combinations of different types of atoms formed into molecules. Atoms also collected, due to the force of gravity, into massive aggregations that formed stars and galaxies and, surrounding the stars, at least in some systems, atoms and molecules came together in relatively large aggregations also due to the force of gravity to form planets. Solar systems emerged. On at least one planet, the earth, simple molecules integrated into highly complex self-replicating molecules – the beginnings of life. From there, single cell life forms such as bacteria emerged, and more complex (nucleated) single cell organisms formed into collectives and colonies and multi-cellular life emerged. And then, over the last five hundred million years or so, these multi-cellular living forms evolved into increasingly complex life forms, as measured, at least, by the size and complexity of their nervous systems. Finally, complex environmental structures created by intelligent life forms emerged, most significantly, the human development of instrumentation, protective habitats, urban centers, civilizations, and technology. Culture, by which learning and knowledge are intentionally collected and passed on across generations, blossomed, and this repository of knowledge has been growing at an accelerative rate. Each level of complexity builds upon the previous ones, (from the bottom up) generating a hierarchal structure of increasing organization, differentiation, and modes of learning and efficacious behaviors.

Two other important related points to include in this evolutionary scenario are that the laws which describe the regularities at each level of complexity within nature emerge with the entities or systems at that level – the laws do not exist prior to their manifestation in the behaviors of the particulars – and second, the fundamental forces within physical reality (nuclear, electro-magnetic, and gravitational) also emerge in a process of differentiation off of a hypothetical fundamental force that goes back to the beginning of time. The various forces of nature “freeze” out (as it is described) along the way. In essence, it is all evolution: entities, levels of organization and complexity, laws, and forces.

To recall, Fraser had first introduced me to the idea that the complexity of the universe had evolved, that the organization of atoms, molecules, biological organisms, planets, human societies, stars, and galaxies did not exist when the universe began but emerged through a series of evolutionary steps. What Peter added into this general theory of reality and time was the thinking and research of scientists studying such diverse areas as astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology and the way evolutionary principles applied to each of these dimensions of nature.

Peter was especially fascinated with the work of Ilya Prigogine, a Nobel Prize winning scientist, who was attempting to formulate a general theory of how natural order arises out of chaos. Prigogine wrote a book in the mid-1980s appropriately titled *Order Out of Chaos*, a pop science exposition of his fundamental scientific ideas with a good dose of philosophy thrown in. Prigogine's basic idea was that natural systems at times can enter into periods of extreme fluctuation (chaotic turbulence) and these unstable states can lead to jumps in self-organization; the system can literally become more complex if you shake it up and pump enough energy into it. Systems can also fall apart – a collapse in complexity – during such extreme fluctuations. Prigogine referred to the state at which a system could evolve or disintegrate as a “bifurcation point.”

When systems move to higher levels of complexity they move in the direction of increasing disequilibrium relative to the surround. Highly complex systems, such as biological ones, exist in states far from equilibrium. In fact, all systems in nature exist in states of disequilibrium or differentiation relative to the surroundings. The evolution of complexity in the universe has involved a movement away from homogeneity (equilibrium) toward differentiation and disequilibrium. As a result of this evolutionary process, the present universe is filled with asymmetries or complex multiply imbedded structural differentiations.

Throughout history, the concept of order has frequently been associated with the feature of uniformity or sameness. Conversely, chaos has been associated with lack of uniformity. Yet, if we look at systems in nature, although

there is great coordination, integration, and uniformity within a system, ordered systems can also be seen as structures that are differentiated relative to the surroundings. Systems have boundaries, borders, separations. Within a natural system there is a great deal of structure – meaning relatively stabilized and differentiated parts. On the other hand, chaos can be seen as the lack of any structure, hence the lack of any systematic differences. One can compare this idea with Gibson’s concept of information: information is differences or patterns of differences, whereas lack of information is undifferentiated energy. In the beginning, if the beginning was chaos, there was little, if any differentiation – things were ambiguous and blurred into sameness.

One of the key ideas in physical science is the principle of entropy. Entropy is the state of disorder within a system, which can also be understood as the level of homogeneity or equilibrium. Disorder or entropy equates to a lack of differentiation or structure. According to contemporary science and the second law of thermodynamics, all natural systems should move in the direction of increasing entropy, which would include the universe as a whole; order and differentiation should break down and dissipate. Things left to their own nature should fall apart unless provided with a source of external energy. (To fall apart would mean for the complex structure of a system to disappear into increasing homogeneity.) Yet, as Prigogine and other scientists pointed out, the universe shows a movement over time, at least in local areas, away from entropy. This movement away from disorder and equilibrium is evolution.

Yet if the overall direction of the universe is toward increasing entropy – if the natural tendency of systems is to break down as the second law of thermodynamics predicts - how can complex systems maintain themselves without dissipating, let alone increase in complexity in the opposite direction away from entropy? Evolution seems to contradict the second law of thermodynamics.

The answer to this puzzle is the scientific theory of open systems. Systems theory became a hot topic of scientific interest during the 1970s and

1980s. Prigogine emerged during this time as a central figure in scientific circles in explaining the nature of open systems, which includes as a prime illustrative example biological organisms. To begin with, a system is understood as a complex configuration of differentiated parts that are interdependent and function as a whole. Also, systems in nature are dynamic rather than static. Stable natural systems, such as our solar system, our bodies, and the earth, are not inert; there are various oscillatory or cyclic processes and balanced oppositional forces creating the stability. Frequently there are cycles of creation and destruction within natural systems. What “is” is a combination of coordinated “becoming and passing away.” All is flow, even if it is in the form of a circle.

Further, bringing in the concept of “openness,” systems in nature are open, in that there is a flow of energy running into and out of systems relative to the surround. There are, in fact, no perfectly closed systems in the cosmos. Energy (and matter as well) is exchanged between systems. The universe as a whole is a vast network of interacting systems. Within this ambient flow and energetic interaction of systems within nature, systems come together and systems fall apart. There is an ongoing process of creation and destruction of open systems within nature. Of special note, living organisms as open systems within the energetic ambience maintain their complexity, and even add to it, by taking in sufficient energy and resources to continually rebuild themselves in the context of this overall churning sea of energy flow – in the face or context of entropy. Entropy is counter-acted through energy-driven re-creation. If a biological system is cut off from outside sources of energy, it quickly starts to fall apart. A biological system needs to be open to stay together – to grow.

To connect this idea back to the original definition of reciprocity, I came to think that the distinctive configuration and make-up of a natural system is tied to the interdependency of a system with its environment. All complex systems in the universe are necessarily interactive as the means by which they maintain their distinctive identity. In fact, the general hypothesis dawned on me that the entire configuration of natural systems within the universe represents a multi-level

multi-faceted network of open systems maintaining a state of complex differentiation through interaction with each other and the surrounding cosmos. Things are distinct because they are interdependent; they are unique because they are part of a whole. (What a *Yin-Yang*.) And within the cosmos as a whole, this network of structured systems has, across time, exhibited a progressive movement toward increasing differentiation and complexity which we call evolution.

So as beings of order we exist in a perpetual state of fighting against the force of entropy, which of course is another word for death. Yet, we maintain this precarious state by drawing energy from our universe. And where, in fact, does this energy come from? In general, energy flows in the direction of increasing equilibrium, which is another word for entropy. Energy flows outward from energy sources such as the sun, spreading as it does across space. This energy flow from the sun is in fact the entropic dissipation of the sun; the sun is dying and releasing energy as it does so. Life therefore feeds off the death of the sun. Energy, for living organisms, can also be derived from other living organisms. Life consumes life. But life consumes life by killing it and breaking it down to use as fuel. In fact, the act of breaking it down is the release of fuel. So although life and evolution resist the force of entropy within themselves by drawing energy from their surround, the energy drawn is a direct result of the process of entropy at work within the cosmos. The flow of energy is entropy. To speak metaphorically, life asserts itself against death by feeding off of death – using it. Order differentiates itself from chaos by using chaos as the fuel for its own creation. And so to return to Fraser, the theory of open systems provides a general explanation regarding how order is connected with chaos and how the interplay of the two forces generates evolution.

In talking with Peter about these new evolutionary ideas, and in the following years thinking them out, I saw the principle of reciprocity or the *Yin-Yang* at work in this scientific description of reality. But just as importantly, this scientific explanation of order and the evolution of increasing order within the

universe seems to provide a clear alternative to viewing the cosmos as being orchestrated and guided by God. One could still ask where the laws of self-organization and evolution came from, and one might answer that such laws were created by God. Or one could say that the creative force of evolution, which includes self-organization, is God. God does not move from the outside or above, but from the inside out. But, assuming a universe and such evolutionary laws, there does not seem to be any reason to postulate a personal, designing, purposeful God from above to create the intricate structure we see in the cosmos and in nature. In particular, from the contemporary scientific perspective, it looks as if the universe intrinsically organizes from the bottom-up; it does not look as if something or someone is guiding it from way above, giving it order.

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In the eighties, I am immersed in the new empirically grounded ideas of evolutionary science, ideas that explain the cosmos as a whole without recourse to God or spirits. In the eighties I also observe all these people who, because they talk to God and spirits and dead people, and hence have presumably lost touch with reality, are locked up in insane asylums. And yet, in the eighties my own inner thoughts and feelings increasingly resonate in prayer with the felt presence of God. I grapple with a contradiction swirling around in the core of my mind, a contradiction I have been trying to resolve ever since my conversations with Richard and Bill.

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Personal evolution in one's own life is clearly a struggle at times. The psychologist, Erik Erikson, saw psychological development through life as consisting of eight basic stages, where the realization of each successive stage in psychological growth involves dealing with a crisis or challenge that has to be

successfully met and resolved. Once the challenge has been met, a person moves up to the next level in development and, in the process, acquires some distinctive new character virtue for having passed through the life test. Erikson saw the journey through life not as a smooth process but rather as something punctuated by a series of universal personal difficulties that need to be confronted and resolved. People do not always successfully deal with the fundamental challenges of life (for example, moving from adolescence to young adulthood) and can stay stuck at a given level, failing to grow as individuals.

To me, Erikson's theory of psychological development seems to connect with Kuhn's idea that scientific change involves periods of relatively stable scientific research (normal science) that eventually lead to periods of challenge, chaos, and revolution, whereupon a new paradigm eventually emerges, heralding in another "normal" or stable stage. It feels like this is what has happened to me. I have passed through an existential challenge and a revolution and have realized a new stable stage in my own personal development.

Both Erikson's and Kuhn's ideas also seem to connect with the new evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibria being developed by the contemporary biologists Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge. In the eighties I start reading and studying Gould and Eldredge. Based on fossil evidence, Gould and Eldredge hypothesize that evolution does not occur at a steady smooth rate but rather involves relatively long periods of stability punctuated by relatively short periods of significant and dramatic change. Evolution has a pulse – a rhythm. Darwin supported the idea that evolution was gradual and steady because he believed that to think otherwise would be to advocate for miracles through the hand of God. Though Gould and Eldredge do not believe God is involved in the evolutionary process, they do see themselves as challenging Darwin's original theory that biological evolution is a slow and gradual process.

The idea that change occurs in spurts or sudden dramatic jumps can be found not only in evolutionary biology, psychology and the history of science, but in physical cosmology and numerous other disciplines of study that look at

change or development across time. It clearly shows up in Fraser's theory of time. In Fraser, there are levels of complexity within the cosmos; the major events in evolution have been jumps upward from one level of complexity to the next.

Within one's life, there seem to be periods when things settle down (reach equilibrium points) and run rather smoothly, and then there are shifts that occur, after which you find yourself, rather quickly, in a different place, both externally and internally. The world around you changes and so do you. It feels like you are in a different universe; it feels like the old person – the old you – is somebody else.

It is clear to me, following Prigogine, that jumps in complexity are preceded by periods of chaos. As a complex system, a human being, at times, experiences turbulence and upheaval (madness perhaps) in his or her life. This is a prelude to evolution or a prelude to death. As Prigogine notes, though, given the capriciousness of existence, there is no way to know for certain what is going to happen. When you are in the battle field you might or might not get shot.

But if existence is inherently uncertain, how could there be an omniscient God?

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Heat is motion. In fact, energy is motion, either potential or actual. When things heat up, things happen. In a cold universe, there is stillness, but at least for billions, if not trillions of years to come, things will be hot, at least in some places in the cosmos, and there will be flow and transformation.

According to Heraclitus, the universe is on fire. Heraclitus presumably lived isolated away from humanity, up in a cave somewhere in the wilderness. He lived before Socrates and Plato and is famous for a variety of metaphorically powerful philosophical sayings, including "You can't step into the same river twice," and "The only thing that stays the same is that nothing stays the same."

He is also known for the idea that “The father of all things is war.” The flow of water, the flickering of fire, the destruction and disintegration connected with war – Heraclitus saw the cosmos in perpetual flux, but thought that this fluidity and chaos and bubbling and churning was the source of creation. If only Heraclitus could have known (but then maybe he did) that the stars are on fire, that they are, in essence, contained continuous explosions, illuminating the heavens, while their intense heat and pressure forge the heavier elements that make up the planets and all of life. Heraclitus was right – we are born in fire – the fire of stars.

Heraclitus stands to his contemporary Parmenides as *Yin* to *Yang*. My intuition tells me that Heraclitus is *Yang* whereas Parmenides is *Yin*: Heraclitus is explosiveness, Parmenides is envelopment. Where Parmenides saw ultimate reality as an eternal and absolute stability, Heraclitus saw flow and change. Where Parmenides held motion and change to be illusions and saw unity and consistency within the cosmos, Heraclitus saw conflict and the balancing of opposites. Parmenides saw reality as “being”; Heraclitus saw “becoming and passing away.” If, like his intellectual descendents, Plato and Spinoza, Parmenides aspired to realizing some great metaphysical stillness and completeness in his vision, with Heraclitus we come face to face with the issues of time, change, birth and death, contradiction and incompleteness, of having to consider the pattern and the rhyme and reason of the great river of turbulence within which we all swim.

The *Yin* and *Yang* of stability and change – of eternity and time – is one of the great metaphysical issues in the history of both Eastern and Western thinking. I have talked about this question in the context of Fraser and Gibson, and I puzzled over it as I put together in my mind the fundamental reciprocities of reality. As Western thinkers, Parmenides and Heraclitus can be used as paradigmatic cases emphasizing the two sides of this metaphysical coin; they serve as philosophical anchor points in thinking about the issue. The puzzle continues to the present day. Is reality fundamentally something stable and

eternal, or is reality something fundamentally fluid and changing? Is reality a noun or a verb? Recall Leibnitz and Spinoza.

If Plato emphasized the eternal and permanent, Aristotle, in many ways, emphasized growth and development. In more modern times, Spinoza posited the eternal Oneness of God, whereas Leibnitz saw “evolution” in nature and the universe. But Fraser and Gibson, each in their distinctive ways, attempted to connect stability and change into a necessary coupling. Both of them, though, believed in evolution – in the ubiquity of directional flow - and Fraser, in particular, saw the ongoing creation of novelty as a defining quality to the nature of existence.

It is hard to understand within a dualistic framework that separates eternity (stability) and time (change) how one can derive the creation/beginning of time from an eternal and stable reality. Time seems to throw a monkey wrench into such general cosmological theories. If people puzzle over why there is something rather than nothing, the idea that anything can happen at all in the stillness of eternity is just as much a conundrum. It seems that there has to be something unsettled at the heart of reality. (I have said this before.) How can there be a God, still and complete?

I am with Gibson and Fraser: stability and change are tied together. And time is not simply fluidity; there is a stable and continuous dimension to time as well. This coupling of stability and change over time comes through in Gould’s and Eldredge’s theory of evolution as well – periods of relative stability punctuated by periods of rapid change. Stability and change are reciprocities, equally essential, neither one primary.

And so, what is eternity? Is there, in fact, an eternal realm? Fraser paradoxically stated that the timeless is pure flow. Heraclitus similarly said that “the only thing that stays the same is that nothing stays the same”. Absolute stability seems to make no sense. If anything is eternal it is flow.

Is God the eternal flow?

Heraclitus also believed that there was a “Logos” - a pattern - to how things change. At the very least, even if everything changes, there is an underlying and constant logic to change. The answer that Heraclitus provides regarding the nature of this “Logos” sounds very much like a *Yin-Yang*. For example, he presumably stated, “That which is in opposition is in concert, and from things that differ comes the most beautiful harmony.” So conflict (or opposition), which metaphorically is identified as “war” and is the “father” of all things, is the key to harmony or order. It is the “Logos” – the logic of things. As John said, centuries later, “In the beginning was the *Logos* (the Word).”

Is God the “Logos”?

In his theory of time, Fraser states that evolution occurs through the conflict of order and chaos – a *Yin-Yang* logic explaining progressive change within the cosmos. The law of change is some kind of reciprocal interplay. Time is not just empty flow or duration. There is a pattern to transformation, to change. And what, indeed, is this pattern, this form of time? The answer, in the most general sense, is that it is evolution. Time has a fundamental progressive direction that is realized through a reciprocal logic. Though evolution leads to the creation of new order, chaos (the Heraclitian fire) plays an essential – an unavoidable - role in this process. It is evolution – understood in this way – that is eternal.

Is God evolution?

Empedocles, who comes later than Parmenides and Heraclitus, proposed that reality consists of the interplay and oscillation of love (as represented by Aphrodite, the goddess of love) and strife (personified in the god of war, Ares). Love brings things together; it is the force of attraction, of the creation of ordered realities. Strife pulls things apart; it is the force of separation and disintegration. Empedocles believed that love and strife alternate in dominance in the world, and in mirror resonance alternate in dominance in the human heart and human mind. This sounds very Taoist. It is interesting, though, that in Empedocles it is the

female principle that is associated with love, order, and what is good and it is the male principle that is associated with strife, disruption, and what is evil.

Perhaps God is a woman – a mother rather than a father.

Empedocles reminds me that there is a pulsation to life, and this pulsation often takes the form of integration and disintegration; of synthesis and fragmentation; of the many becoming one and the one becoming many; of the couple uniting together and the couple individuating into separate beings. It is like the breath of life – to inhale and draw inward; to exhale and expel outward in different directions.

But this would make God a parenthood – a coupling.

Evolution has a pulse, a rhythmic oscillation of harmony and order followed by periods of upheaval and transformation. There are clearly revolutions and upheavals in the flow of time. Presumably the periods of order are longer in duration; the periods of chaos and disruption are shorter and more intense. But I have some mixed thoughts on this one; it may not be so simple. Clearly though the periods of upheaval mark the ends of eras and the beginnings of new ones. The markers are convergent points of energy – of turbulence - in the process of revolutionary change.

God is resurrection.

There is a rhythm and music to the fire – to life – to God.

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Kate visits me in my office in the hospital most workday mornings and chats, first thing after we both come in, me behind my desk and Kate always in the same chair to my right, both of us drinking our first cups of morning coffee, puffing on cigarettes, pondering the meaning of life. Frequently, we discuss education or hospital politics and the various personalities in the place (both diagnosed and undiagnosed as crazy), but we also talk about our lives, and frequently I expound on some topic or issue in philosophy. At one time or

another, I explain all of my philosophical ideas to her. She is one of the few people in the hospital that goes with me into the ethereal and abstract realms of the mind. She is my educational assistant – a nurse by training – and she loves to talk. She has a lot of force and energy in her being. She is a short, solid looking woman, with a deep, boisterous voice, and she is a very effective teacher in staff development. She is a motivator, a fighter, and she is always pushing the staff to learn more and improve themselves. She particularly loves to engage me in deep conversations, personal and metaphysical, and has something to say on everything.

I talk to Kate about my sad feelings regarding my first two children. Their absence has haunted me all these years. Since Laura and I divorced it has become increasingly difficult to see Bryan and Kristin. Not that I was always an attentive father when I was with them, but nonetheless I wanted to see them and interact with them after the divorce. But I ended up wandering around the country, coming in and out of touch, going broke along the way, and not being able to pay the child support. Ultimately, because of this financial negligence, I lost legal rights to see them. Now in the mid 80s, I can't even call them up on the phone anymore and I haven't seen them in years. Kate tells me that someday – when they get older, when they can think for themselves - they will come looking for me. I hope she is right, but a big part of me feels very skeptical about this happening. My clear sense is that Laura does not want me to see them anymore - ever. It is a kind of punishment. She has stood in the way (with her legal rights) of any kind of contact. It feels that I have just plain lost them. Along with many other things in my former life, they have disappeared into the past.

Kate talks a lot about her kids as well. She has four teenagers stretching their wings and asserting their wills and all of them seem to be a challenge for her. She stresses about them a lot.

It seems strange that although I am older than Kate, my kids at home are much younger than hers, but this is my second family and my second life. (Who was that person who lived in Minnesota, New York, and Indiana?) Kate, on the

other hand, married her high school sweetheart young and has stayed married since, leading a life of stability and continuity (rather than chaos and transformation) - the typical and traditional middle class kind of existence.

Because of having suffered the rupture and loss my first two children, this time around I am trying to be a better father – I want to be a better father - than the first time. Again, you don't appreciate what you have till you lose it.

I make many other new friends in the mental hospital aside from Kate and Carlos – a new circle of people replacing those whom I have said goodbye to. There is young Glen in his three piece Michigan Avenue suits, white and pastel shirts, and colorful ties, the boss of the whole place. Glen has a graduate degree in business management, which is probably just as well; psychiatrists notoriously make poor hospital administrators. And there is Len, a psychotherapist, who is just finishing up his doctorate in neuropsychology. I feel Len is too articulate, gentle, and polished for this place, but he has great sensitivity and compassion for the patients, writes superb treatment plans, and really understands the workings of the brain. And I can't forget Sam, dear Sam, balding no doubt from all the stress of the place, and sporting a philosopher's beard which he always strokes and plays with whenever he starts thinking and talking philosophy with me. Sam identifies with Japan, having lived there for a few years, and I think, if given the chance, he would move back permanently, leaving American culture behind. He likes the Japanese; he finds their way of life more refined, more polite – perhaps more Zen – than the aggressive, rushed, loud, and troubled reality of urban America. Sam is very thoughtful, sincere, and soft-spoken – a strange fit with the executive council of competitive, high-powered, outspoken administrators who run the place. Yet Sam is one of the senior members. Despite his mild manner, he is the director for all the wards on the north side of the hospital complex, one of the highest positions in the hospital, overseeing the challenges of 150 psychotics, as well as half a dozen psychiatrists, as many psychologists, and thirty or forty mental health workers and nurses, who treat and interact with this population of crazy people, the whole lot mixed together in a

great stew of human drama, conflict, and mayhem. Sam reminds me of Bill; I think perhaps he has replaced Bill in my life, becoming my philosopher friend – my alter-ego – one who now hangs out in a mental hospital rather than a cabin in the woods.

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As the director of staff development at the mental hospital, one of my responsibilities is to provide education for staff who wish to advance their job status or careers in the field of mental health. Counseling staff on their goals and creating in-house courses and workshops on personal and professional development gets me thinking about what is most important to communicate to the staff about psychological growth.

Circulating around in my mind are the various themes of evolution, order and chaos, good and evil, the *Yin-Yang*, and open systems, as well as my personal experiences in my journey through life, both positive and negative. From my studies over the years I have a good understanding of the field of psychology, of Freud, Jung, Pavlov, Skinner, Miller, Maslow, Rogers, and many others. Finally, I have the years of experience working in mental health and thinking about why people seem to get stuck in life, why they fall apart, and what can get them back on track.

I think if I can understand what goes wrong with people's lives and within their minds, then conversely, I should be able to make sense of what makes things go right. The challenge I face with the staff at the hospital is putting all of these elements together in a form that makes sense, one that they can understand. But I also grapple with similar themes in teaching abnormal psychology, since the question of just what distinguishes mental health (functioning well psychologically) from mental illness comes up frequently in class as well. How is stagnation and decay to be contrasted with growth and development?

Looking at my recent past, now from a position of relative calm and a sense that things are improving again, I interpret the troubles and turmoil I have passed through as a necessary period of chaos. (This is Prigogine, Fraser, Kuhn, the *Yin-Yang*, and Christianity all talking simultaneously.) I tell students and staff that progress, evolution, and psychological growth involve both order and chaos. Within one's life there are periods of increasing order, of progress toward goals, of realizing a sense of direction, but there are also periods of chaos and disruption. I tell them that one needs to accept the chaos and move through it with an eye to the future and a belief that a new order will come. I remember that when I felt down and out, I would tell myself that the overall flow of time was uphill and evolutionary, and that sooner or later, things would begin to improve. I had faith. I never gave up hope. And I emphasize that. Hope is critical in the darkness. There will be a jump forward at some point in time. I explain that it is important to maintain such hope and determination especially when things get tough. In fact, I also suggest that chaos and disruption play a necessary role in personal evolution, for life needs to be "shook up" every so often to bring creativity and new directions into things. Chaos is connected with creative surges. In fact, perhaps there is no dramatic movement forward in life without chaos.

As I explain to them, I could have remained a college teacher in Indiana and perhaps moved along a steady, deterministic line leading to a foregone conclusion. Instead I dove into the abyss and suffered for it (chaos does not feel good). But, once I created a direction again for myself (perhaps a direction was created for me), I emerged on the other side with all kinds of new ideas, new experiences, and some new and improved character traits. I became a new species.

I emphasize that as beings-in-the-world, the central challenge is creating order and direction amidst the turbulence, disruptiveness, randomness, and unpredictability of life. We are all open systems existing in interaction with our environment and the environment is not always a peaceful or predictable place.

We draw resources, inspiration, and knowledge off of the environment, but the environment is also explosive. It unsettles us.

I tell the staff they need to understand time. (I give this talk one day with Carlos present – me, the philosopher, expounding on the nature of time with my boss, the psychiatrist, the realist and pragmatist, the physician and administrator of drugs listening to me – a strange combination indeed.) I explain that the principles of evolution, punctuated equilibrium, entropy, the *Yin-Yang*, order and chaos, and open systems help us to understand the nature of time and, in particular, the time of our lives. We can imagine time as a steady, uniform, and absolute flow in which we move and live, but time is complex – it has a dynamical structure. Time is not an empty vessel, a temporal “space” without resistance, friction, pulls and pushes, or curvature. To invoke metaphors, if time is a river, then the river twists and turns, surges and swirls, rises and falls. Sometimes new tributaries enter the stream; sometimes we go over waterfalls; sometimes we find ourselves in “dead water” with neither current nor breeze. We are navigators on this river, attempting to plot a course amidst this fluid and unsettled complexity. We are, in fact, part of the river; our very being (mind, body, and emotion) is temporal and turbulent. As the psychologist William James said, it is a “flow of consciousness.” To manage time – the time of our lives - we must first understand it and see ourselves within it.

What then goes wrong and what goes right in people’s lives? The psychologist, Abraham Maslow, whom I studied back in the 1970s and talked about in an earlier chapter, argued that everyone experiences periods of fear, anxiety, and depression. Everyone encounters obstacles, painful realities, and disappointments. But those people he describes as existing in “self-actualization” are able to pass through such negative states and learn from these experiences. Growth involves the capacity not to get stuck in the negative. Self-actualizing people pursue growth and realize the risk and challenge involved. They accept the anxiety, fear, and depression that at times accompany this journey.

Maslow makes a fundamental distinction between deficiency motivation and growth motivation. Deficiency motivation involves behaviors that attempt to eliminate an aversive state (like hunger) and return the individual to a stable state. Growth motivation involves behaviors that attempt to seek out or realize something new, to transform one's life. Deficiency motivation is homeostatic – geared toward maintaining equilibrium - whereas growth motivation moves a person into a state of disequilibrium and away from the norm.

As I mentioned before, this distinction in Maslow connects with Neal Miller's distinction between approach and avoidance motivation. In deficiency motivation a person attempts to eliminate, avoid, or defend against factors that would upset things. In growth motivation, a person approaches something – goes after something – that will enrich and change the present situation. In Maslow's theory of motivation, self-actualizing people are growth motivated. People suffering from and incapacitated by fear, anxiety, and depression are deficiency motivated. They avoid and defend against perceived threats in the world; they attempt to eliminate what is perceived as aversive. Their lives are a "running away from things."

Within such a model of motivation, mental health depends upon the desire to grow – to change – to experience new things. Mental illness, conversely, is the result of getting stuck in life, of wanting to maintain a stable state and defending against threats to stability or negative states. Those who suffer from mental disorders are ruled by anxiety and fear; those who enjoy mental health are ruled by hope and enthusiasm for life. Now to repeat, everyone feels fear or depression at times but healthy individuals do not run from such feelings. They accept them, learn from them, and pass through them. Their overriding goals are toward change and growth, rather than protection. They accept the bad with the good.

Mental health revolves around love; mental disorders revolve around hate and fear. Mental health is evolution; mental disorders are forms of stagnation.

This, at least, is one theory.

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Here is another theory.

What I don't talk about in my psychology and staff development classes is God. Inside, I clearly feel that my belief in God and my ongoing activity of prayer is helping me to move forward into a progressively better life. It is, in fact, the central motive force behind it all.

I have many thoughts about the power of prayer.

My initial prayers are simply asking God to get me out of the mess I am in and give me what I want - the typical "petitional prayer." But what I find is that through prayer I begin to discover all kinds of hidden emotions and primitive hopes and fears within me. In fact, I come to see this ongoing self-revelation and self-discovery as the major function of prayer. I endure the pain within my soul in the psychological presence of God, see it as necessary, learn from it, and pass through it. In the process, I learn what I am all about. Prayer brings personal empowerment and self-awareness, rather than external rewards.

Though I had studied Freud's theory of the unconscious many years before, it is through prayer that I begin to see and experience what primordial and often infantile things churn around inside of me. In spite of my elevated philosophical and intellectual thought processes, I am afraid. I am lonely. I desperately want help. I hunger for sex. I want love and admiration from others. I get mad if I don't get my way. I whine. Inside, I cry like a baby. I demand. I find that praying to God is the road to the unconscious, the key to unlocking all that I am holding inside, right under the surface, and won't admit to myself. Through prayer, I become more honest with myself. I see and feel my weaknesses. I realize my deep humanity. Prayer is clearly not an escape or running away for me; it is decidedly more confrontational - with myself - with God - through God.

Reality is exposed rather than covered up or denied. This self-honesty definitely calms me down.

Now I should point out that I am not practicing any particular religion or subscribing to any particular religious doctrine. I simply pray to God. I don't have some "bearded man in the sky" concept of God in my head. I feel a presence and talk to that presence from my gut, from my inner voice, and from my deepest personal self. Of course, as I brought up before, a secular or atheist thinker might argue that I am simply talking to a psychological projection, an imagined archetypal "father" or "parent" figure. But I'm not sure about this. Who is to say that the human mind is trapped within itself, that it can't "tune into" something beyond or something more encompassing than itself? Do I buy the idea that we are each trapped in our own little minds? In fact, I bring all such doubts to God in prayer. God becomes the ultimate anchor, the ultimate sounding board at which I throw everything, including that I doubt God's existence. I feel that that whatever I bring up inside, I will pass through it to the other side. As Richard said, through God all things are possible.

I have come to the conclusion that I need to believe in something that transcends all challenges and misfortunes in life. I need an anchor – a stability point – an approach to life I can tenaciously turn to, come hell or high water. I connect this mindset with evolution, that is, the belief that the overall direction of reality is progressive and positive. Whatever problems arise, there is some solution and some way forward. In fact, the overall force of things is to move forward through this unending struggle with things. I believe that the journey through God and evolution will involve such inevitable challenges, both internal and external. It is OK to feel the emotional pain. It is OK for there to be turbulence and frustration. This is part of the journey. That is how you get where you want to go – in fact this is how you get in tune with God. When you pray you enter into turbulence and move into transcendence.

Ultimately, what becomes clear to me is that I am trying to connect God with evolution – struggling to bring these apparent opposites together. I think God

is the evolutionary force or principle and believe that somehow I can resonate and commune with this reality through prayer.

But then how does one pray to a force or a principle? What does this mean? And God seems like some kind of personhood there within my mind – beyond my mind simultaneously – both immanent and transcendent. And in the act of prayer, God is un-definable, a presence that can not be analyzed. God is not a theory; God can not be objectified; getting in tune with God doesn't mean thinking about God. You talk to God – you don't analyze God in prayer – there is no need to. That would be a different mental state.

I think that God must transcend all finite gods (such as success, money, sex, social popularity and even the intellect and rationality). I have chased many of these gods and each one is lacking. This idea of absolute transcendence grows out of thinking about the *Yin-Yang* and the dialectic. Any idea – any reality – has its complement or opposite, and one can always move upward to a higher, more encompassing reality. Each thought, each feeling in me triggers off another thought and feeling. Each state of mind generates a reflection; each conclusion provokes a further consideration. It is OK that there is no end to it. The direction of the dialectical process, as Hegel believed, is toward God. But God can not be any finite representation along the way. God cannot be a one. God can not be gotten to; God is not at some proverbial end of the road; God is always out ahead. The Tao that can be named is not the Tao. The word or idea of “God” itself is suspect.

As I said, prayer produces much deeper personal insight, which clearly helps me in life in innumerable ways; a practicing belief in God (as expressed through prayer) gives me a steady re-charging of hope, determination, self-hood, and calm, and it also gives me a sense of humility. Confidence is important (real confidence built on effort and success) but so is humility. It is easy for me to admit to myself I can be wrong, afraid, or any other typical human failing.

As I evolve in the practice of prayer, I increasingly enter into what is often referred to as “meditative prayer” – to simply open one's mind, one's feelings and

thoughts, to the presence of God, without really asking for anything. This is a slow process and a long time coming and only happens some of the time. In my work in alcoholism, I encountered the idea of surrendering to a higher power. Meditative prayer feels like a surrendering. Spinoza talked about the intellectual love of God – the desire to simply know God. In my case, it is a type of felt conscious resonance through just letting go and becoming open. In some ways it is like Buddhist meditation. My soul breathes.

There is a medieval metaphysical puzzle. Could God create a mountain so big and heavy that even He couldn't move it? If you answer yes, - since God is all powerful and can create anything - then there is something that God can't move; hence, He isn't all powerful. If you answer no - since God can move anything - then He isn't all powerful since there is something He can't create.

I come up with a solution to this puzzle. The answer is that indeed God can create a mountain He can't move, but then God can amplify His own strength so that He can now move it. If you assume that God is fixed, then the puzzle remains; if you assume that God is not fixed but transformative then there is a solution.

When I am asked at times to define God, I say that God is the unending capacity for self-transcendence in the universe. God is the quality of self-transcendence, of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps – of the universe with you as part of it rising upward on its own accord. And this is also a good definition of mental health – to be one with God – this power to rise up, to pull oneself up by one's bootstraps.

But then, what is mental illness? To be stuck in defeatism, nihilism, denial, dishonesty, and self-defense? Is this, in fact, what it means to be one with the Devil? Yet in modern times we have given up the notion that madness is connected with evil or possession; we have given up the notion of the Devil and evil spirits. Of course, this whole line of thinking is a far cry from a bio-chemical explanation of madness. As I said, I don't talk about God (or the Devil for that matter) among the mental health staff – that is what the crazy patients do.

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And here is a third theory.

It is the summer of 1986 and I am in Ohio, with Lisa, at a psychology conference at a local college giving a presentation on “The Evolution of Madness.” In the presentation I propose that madness is not a constant reality within human history, but has evolved over time. Further, I suggest that the mental health system and the fields of psychotherapy and psychiatry have contributed to this evolution.

My argument goes as follows: Mental health and mental illness are defined relative to standards and values which derive off of psychology, psychiatry, medicine, and human society. The professional and cultural environments determine what is good and not so good, what is admirable and strong versus what is negative and dysfunctional. As the values of society change – as the professions of mental health evolve – the standards and ideals change as well. What was once considered acceptable, if not admirable, may come to be seen as something negative. Hence, what we think of as healthy versus ill changes or evolves through time as a consequence of the evolution of our ideals and values.

One classic example of this type of social change concerns the hearing of the voices of spirits - or gods and goddesses - in one’s mind. Several thousand years ago, such experiences may have been the norm. As one example, the characters in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* routinely converse with the divinities of Olympus. Their lives seem directed by the desires and directives of these super-natural beings. Their world is filled with the presence of gods. All of this is recounted in these great Greek sagas as if it was the norm – the common state of being and mind. This is the theory presented in a book I read at this time by

Julian Jaynes titled *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. (What a title!)

By around 500 BC though, such experiences were considered a special gift – something unique and not the norm; the oracles of ancient Greece heard voices in their minds and people sought out the inspired words of these oracles. Presumably these voices came from deities and spirits. Further, to have visions in ancient times, again circa 500 BC, was considered an elevated state, a metaphysical revelation of some deep truth or reality. In fact, all of the world's great religions feature significant special figures who are said to have communed or communicated with gods and spirits – to have “seen” or “heard” things. They were the prophets, those who passed on the revealed word of God to the masses.

In our enlightened, modern era people who have “visions” are viewed as crazy – as psychotic - and those who talk to God or to spirits are usually put in mental hospitals. I say usually because there are some who have such experiences and become preachers, religious leaders, and New Age visionaries. Still, in the mental hospital the only people who openly talk about communicating with God are the patients and that is one central reason why they are patients. Hence, what was once considered a higher enlightened mental state, has, in modern times, come to be considered a form of mental derangement and delusion.

But to push the argument further, I notice that in teaching abnormal psychology, I can usually see myself as fitting, to some degree, almost every diagnostic category covered in the course. I literally feel the symptoms – the disorders – as I think about them or talk about them in class. It feels as if I suffer from various anxiety disorders, that I am paranoid, depressed, etc. etc. Insanity seems to rise up in my consciousness as I study it.

This, in fact, is a common affliction or reaction to studying or teaching about illnesses; the individual begins to think that he or she has every illness in the book. It is called “iatrogenic illness.” The individual becomes hyper-

conscious, sensitive, and vigilant regarding the disorders being examined. Now, as a general point, in studying psychology through the years I have become much more cognizant of all kinds of things about my mind and personality. I have learned names for every little twist, twitch, and quirk about myself. In learning psychology, one becomes more “enlightened” about one’s own psychology, good and bad.

I remember when I first encountered Maslow that I felt somewhat depressed after reading about self-actualization. I compared his description of mental health with my own mental state and found myself severely lacking. Before I read Maslow, I didn’t know that I wasn’t a self-actualizing person. Ignorance is bliss.

Over the last few decades, psychology has become increasingly popular in contemporary culture. There are innumerable books and myriad seminars and self-help groups that identify the key psychological problems of modern humanity and propose methods for solving these problems and realizing a better life. Through all of this information being distributed and broadcast around, the general population has become increasingly self-conscious about their inner psychology – of what is wrong with them, of what is a better way, and how they can get from A to B. We are screwed up in ways that we didn’t know about before, and there are innumerable psychological ideals or mental health standards that we should strive for that we weren’t aware of either before. Something we saw as “normal” or perhaps did not give a second thought to – something that was part of the background noise - is now a disorder in need of a solution. Madness evolves.

The number of official psychiatric disorders has quadrupled over the last few decades. Only a few things, such as homosexuality, that were once deemed mental disorders have been eliminated from the official list, but many, many things have been added. And where there is a disorder, there is a need for treatment and a need to identify what the ideal state would be if the disorder was cured. But in spite of all the consciousness raising, psychotherapy, and

psychotropic drugs, we seem just as miserable and deranged as ever – at least we believe we are and “believing is being” when it comes to the mind. When I propose in my presentation that psychotherapy actually contributes to the evolution of madness, someone in the audience says I am crazy.

As I mentioned earlier, I find it interesting that the hospital across the street has so many cases of multiple personalities. The thought, of course, strikes me (and others) that the psychiatric staff is on the look-out for multiple personalities and consequently finds lots of them. It is notable that the upsurge in diagnosed cases of multiple personalities occurs after the release of *The Three Faces of Eve* and *Sybil*, movies that deal with documented multiple personalities. Did the movies get psychiatrists more sensitive to what was already there, or did the movies create a mindset (a theory) that created a host of exemplar cases – of observable instances? Sounds like Feyerabend. Or does it sound like Gibson? Perhaps the movies provided a label for many people to hang their identity on. Did people decide they were multiple personalities after watching these movies? Did they become what they saw on the screen? Did the label, paradoxically, give them a sense of identity?

I argue in my presentation that madness is an ecological reality, as is mental health. Each phenomenon exists as an interaction effect with the environment. People tell people, and tell themselves as well, what is crazy and what isn't. People feed on this and act accordingly. We amplify and evolve the realities.

And this is not a uniform flow. There are multiple competing perspectives on sanity and madness, of what is OK and what isn't, and for each perspective there is a unique and appropriate way to fix it. It is your behavior. It is your thinking. It is your unconscious, all bottled up. It is the chemicals in your brain. It is what you eat. It is that you have lost touch with God. Or – a favorite explanation of the patients (and they should know) – it is that they are possessed by the Devil. All these answers describe the problems differently and get you looking for different things. In fact, these different perspectives list different kinds

of problems and all of them provide different solutions – solutions that are frequently marketed aggressively and sold to consumers of mental health. We are in search of what is wrong and what is right with us and who and what we are in a marketplace of competing remedies for the human mind.

I also argue that since psychiatry and psychotherapy require people who are ill and need help, the disciplines do various things to create this reality. The mental professions need illness to survive. Of course, you could say that it is because people suffer psychologically that therapy emerged and developed in modern times. A need existed and a service arose to fill the need. But an ecological and evolutionary perspective on madness would imply that, equally true, the service creates the need. Psychologists convince people that they need their help. (It used to be priests and ministers doing this; it used to be evil and sin that needed to be purged. Now the official line is that it is phobias, neuroses, psychoses, and bad brain chemistry.) In order to convince people of this need, disorders and ideal states have to be identified by psychologists and psychiatrists and sold to the public. This is not to say that spiritual problems and spiritual cures have gone away; there is still a big thriving business for all of this as well. I have passed through it myself.

The question would come up in the hospital I worked at: Are the patients in the hospital because they are crazy, or are they crazy because they are in the hospital? People learn how to be nuts. It is an art or a skill. It is a way to make a living, a way to function. It is not a forgone conclusion that if you tell people what is nuts and what is sane, that given the power and the choice, they will choose sanity. They may choose craziness. Mental illness can become a way of life.

A relevant episode sticks out in my mind. Once I was walking along the streets in San Francisco and I entered a bookstore. I was browsing through the psychology section when a woman came up to me and told me that she had found the presentation I gave at a conference I was attending very interesting. The conference hotel was at least twenty blocks away. She had apparently followed me clear across the downtown area to this bookstore. She began to tell

me about her problems. She was a diagnosed manic-depressive and had been in psychoanalysis for a number of years. She did a very good job – no, in fact, she did an excellent job - of describing her symptoms and her psychological history. She was amazingly articulate and knowledgeable about her madness. It was her way of life. She had learned it – learned it very well – from a Freudian.

Society defines what is ill and puts you away if you fit the definition. You may put yourself away.

Madness is a state of mind. If you believe you are mad, you are. It is an act of creation. Others may help you in this act of creation.

Madness is a habitual way of living, a habit that is often hard to break. For many, it is a habit that they don't want to break. People may seek out madness as an escape from life.

Mental health is a business. It is the reciprocal interaction and mutual amplification of a service and a need. Religion, in fact, set the standard for this reciprocal pattern.

There are times when I think that the staff at the mental hospital are as mentally disordered – as crazy – as the patients. As staff joke, it takes one to know one.

All of the above seem true.

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Clearly during my own “dark ages” I got depressed over not having much money or a decent place to live. I also felt a sense of alienation from mainstream society during the time that I was working on my book as the solitary, isolated writer. Toward the end of the period I got very depressed and despondent over my difficulties with Lisa. But through the whole period from 1978 to 1983, the thing that bothered me the most was the loss of the classroom – the loss of students – the loss of teaching – the loss of that socially amplified recurrent state of enlightenment. If anything gave me a sense of mental health and vitality, of

self-worth, of sanity, it was teaching and that was pretty much gone during that time.

And this particularly painful loss would later drive home to me one of the key principles of life and of wisdom: the power and central importance of love. I began to find a way back into teaching in the mid 1980s because I loved doing it. I could never get over having lost it and however much I felt buffeted about, I did not – in fact, I could not - let go of the desire to return to it. Love is eternal; it will not die. (Is that the answer to the nature of eternity?) The Romantic lies at the heart of the meaning of life – the purpose of existence.

The thought has crossed my mind though, more than once, that I left teaching and took off for Colorado to transform myself from a teacher who taught the ideas of others, to a teacher who had something personal and original to say of my own. Once I worked this out in my mind and in my life – the *Yin-Yang* journey of personal troubles and collapse into the Dionysian coupled with my Apollonian meditations on philosophy, science, and psychology, all of it synthesized in the Tao of God, evolution, and reciprocity – I planted my feet again and started to put my life back together. I had to leave what I loved to understand it better, to more deeply and truly participate in its reality.

Through it all I eventually come to a starkly obvious conclusion – and it is something I tell everyone whom I guide and counsel in life: Whatever it is that you decide to dedicate yourself to, make sure you love it. Make sure that it is something you would do if you were independently wealthy and didn't need to do it in order to earn a living. This is the road to happiness and mental health. Love is the answer.

There is lots of advice about how to succeed, how to manage your time, how to realize your goals, how to find happiness and self-fulfillment, etc., but these cognitive and behavioral guidelines don't mean very much without passion and love. If the passion is there, you will find a way to do whatever it is you desire and you will manage and direct your life so that you can give the object of your love sufficient effort and energy.

Love conquers all. In love, you will find sanity and God. Love brings focus, determination, motivation, discipline, energy, commitment, and flow. Love destroys, negates, and trivializes distractions. Love brings excellence and quality to your work and your life. Without this emotional core, you will sabotage (consciously or unconsciously) whatever plans and strategies you concoct to structure your life and time. With love and passion you can resurrect yourself from the dead – more than once if need be.

And so ...

I find my way back into teaching in Illinois and achieve more than I ever had before. This is what happens. Within a couple of years of getting back into it at the undergraduate level, it loses its excitement. I am into the rhythm of teaching and want something more challenging. And on cue, the opportunity opens up. Right at the beginning of 1987 I am offered a part-time teaching position at a graduate school for clinical psychologists (a Psy.D. program). I will teach graduate courses in perception, learning, motivation, and cognition. Though I am somewhat apprehensive over teaching graduate students, it is the kind of academic position I am looking for and I eagerly accept the job and begin over-preparing for the courses I am going to teach.

A principle that comes up in the psychology of learning: If you want to do something really well, over-learn it. Even if you think you know it well, learn it better. There is no best you can do; you can always do more, do better. It is like God, like the dialectic, like the Tao. You can always go further. You are never at the top – there is no top. My passion for teaching and the memory of the love I lost, coupled with some good old fashioned fear and trembling over coming off stupid in front of smart educated graduate students, motivates me into getting super-prepared, intellectually and emotionally, for this new challenge.

I bring my enthusiasm, my intellect, my experience, my new philosophy, and my education into the classroom. Coming into class the first night, I don't know what to expect but I just start in, explaining the psychology of perception and the ideas of Gibson. What happens is that the students begin asking

questions, making comments, even debating various points. They engage me, but, of course, they are provoked because I engage them. Make no mistake though: there are some really smart, clear headed, passionate students in the class. I have the right audience and ambience to create the energy. They like using their intellects; they enjoy learning. The mental electricity that emerges is a reciprocity, a meeting of minds that want to participate in the exploration of reality, philosophy, and psychology. Initially having been apprehensive, I realize rather quickly during this first winter semester that intelligent educated students are a real plus. They are not critical or cynical; they are curious and enthused. I have begun the best, most elevating period of teaching in my life.

The second semester in the spring I continue with many of the same students through the psychology of thinking and creativity, the psychology of learning, motivational theories (such as Miller, Maslow, and others), and the study of emotion and its connection with cognition and thinking. If the first semester was good, the second semester is even better. There are some interesting debates that go on in class regarding whether computers will ever be able to think creatively or feel emotions. Most of the students (as would-be clinicians and humanistic thinkers) argue against such possibilities. Given my science fiction background, I take the reverse position that perhaps it will eventually happen. What is it about the human brain that allows for emotion and creativity, for self-identity, for consciousness? How well do we understand these capacities anyway? How can we summarily say no, if we don't even understand how the brain does it to begin with? Hence, why can't such capacities be created within a machine? This issue will follow me into the future.

The more I debate with the students, the more I challenge their beliefs and their thinking skills, the better they seem to like it, at least the best ones. And the same is true in reverse. These students read the textbooks. These students can write. These students aren't afraid to talk; they want to talk. These students understand what I explain in the classroom and sometimes want to dig deeper

into the topics. I can relate to these people. I like these people, these strangers who have now become friends. I like their questions – their challenges.

I find a great sense of sanity in this reality, a great sense of clarity and purpose. This reality seems right – in some deep moral sense. This is the good life, the life of truth, the life of light and mind. The outside world seems gray, indistinct, muddled, and uninteresting. (That’s how it felt when I was out there.) This newly regained reality – the life of inquiry and thought – again becomes the center of gravity relative to which everything else is understood. Perhaps I am Platonic in my philosophy and approach to existence after all. The outside world is obscurity, trivialities, aimlessness, banality, and marginal consciousness. In the classroom we journey to the center of the universe – where it is really at.

The experience of teaching I have the first year becomes my new standard for defining quality education within the classroom. Describing the ideal learning experience, the ideal way to teach, involves more than just what I, the teacher, should do; it requires certain essential contributions on the part of the students. Learning in the classroom is an ecological reality, an interaction effect of teacher and student. It involves students who wish to pursue knowledge, who see the value in learning, who see the value in books and ideas, and who attempt to live their lives in resonance with this perspective on things.

I am a resounding success as a teacher this first year. A new door has opened. A faith within me about myself and about the beauty and radiance of reality is restored.

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It is late March in 1987. I am lying on a grassy knoll looking up at the bright blue sky. There are palm trees on the other side of the hill. I can feel the heat permeating through my body. I am beginning to thaw out. I have been frozen for the last twenty years. The temperature is approaching one hundred degrees. Clearly this is not Illinois. I am in heaven. I am in Arizona.

Lisa and I are on a vacation. We decide to come to Phoenix for our spring vacation because it will be warm in late March, in contrast to the gray cold of Illinois. Also I had applied for a faculty position at one of the local colleges and, though I don't get the position, the head of the search committee agrees to meet and chat and discuss future possibilities. We get together and he tells me that I was one of the finalists for the position and he was very impressed with my work in Gibsonian psychology. We connect personally and intellectually and in the future there will be more to come.

Lisa and I had first visited Arizona back in 1978 as we wandered around the west in search of a place to live. We had come back a second time later in the year to attend a science fiction conference in Phoenix. We had not been back since. But Arizona stuck in my mind and now in the early spring of 1987 it promises some warmth and sunshine to combat the winter freeze of the Midwest. The cactus and the palm trees simply add to the old allure and sense of adventure about the west that I still carry in my mind.

Within a week I fall madly in love with Arizona. I dread having to go back to Illinois. I start to think.

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My second year of graduate teaching during the winter and spring of 1988 brings some big surprises and complicates reality. In fact, 1988 is a very eventful year, setting the stage for the next big challenge in my life.

To begin, I am awarded the outstanding faculty member of the year at the graduate school, although I am only a part-time teacher. My second year of teaching is even better than the first. I have a whole new batch of students that I connect with, perhaps even more so than the first group the year before. These developments set the stage for the first big surprise.

On the personal front, Lisa is pregnant again, so we decide to buy a house since we are going to need more room. I haven't owned a house since I was

married to Laura and that was twelve years ago. I only lived in that first house for six months, so I am a bit apprehensive but we take the plunge. I am also ambivalent about the house because we go back to Arizona in the spring of 1988 and my desire to move there only strengthens. Something is drawing me, something very powerful and increasingly obsessive in nature. Whatever it is welling up in me feels magical and mysterious. Something is going on here.

In the summer, now in our new house, our third son, Matthew, is born. One day soon thereafter I receive an unexpected and highly significant phone call.

It is from the president of the graduate school where I am teaching and he wants to get together “to discuss some possibilities.” We meet at a local restaurant and he tells me that the students at the school really like me and respect me, that I seem to value quality education, and that I have a reputation of being a fair and just teacher. I also seem to really enjoy the students at the school and I appear very supportive of their concerns and professional goals. Finally, in addition to my abilities as an educator, I have administrative experience from the last four years at the mental hospital. He offers me the job of dean of the school – boom – just like that – can I start right away.

To say the least, I had not seen this coming – at all. My ego is stupendously flattered and my sense of reality is jolted. Me – a dean? After talking it over with Lisa, who is apprehensive about the move – something that I find perplexing - and upon negotiating a deal with the president, I resign my position at the mental hospital and accept the job as dean.

Five years earlier I was a bum; now I am joining the top administrators at a reputable academic institution. Ten years have passed since I left my full-time teaching position in Indiana and now, finally, I am back full-time in academia and not just as a full professor, but as a dean to boot. Having been broke, now I am going to earn the highest salary in my life. I have the best students I have ever encountered in my career and I feel I am more in the groove as a teacher than ever before. Better yet, I will continue to teach, perhaps even more than before,

starting in the fall with a course on the brain and physiological psychology to add to the courses on perception, motivation, and cognition.

But in the midst of my success a quandary develops. I am flowering as never before in Illinois, but it comes just as I feel another change coming on. I want to hit the road and head to Arizona.

Yet in accepting the job as dean, I am in for another lesson, or let us say, a variation on a lesson already learned that will help resolve the problem. It sounds great being a dean but...

I have been offered the prestigious position of dean because I am an excellent teacher, one whom the students really admire, and I have a number of years of experience as an administrator as well. But I do not enjoy being an administrator. I love teaching. I love ideas and exploring them. I do not enjoy the messiness, bureaucracy, people politics, hostile competitiveness, endless meetings, trivialities, and mundane mechanics of being an administrator. I had encountered all of this administrative stuff in the mental hospital.

Among the most unpleasant tasks I now take on is firing teachers, something I will do quite a few times in the coming years as dean. One teacher whom I am directed to sack by the president tells me that I am exacerbating his cancer, that I am killing him. (Never mind that he falls asleep in class while the students are giving presentations.) None of my administrative duties gives me the pleasure I derive as a teacher from reinforcing students for their academic work and accomplishments. And rarely do I have students complaining to me as a teacher. As dean though, students, faculty, and staff all bring their complaints to me, expecting me to solve problems that I did not create. On top of all this, there are disgruntled students who are suing the school and a governing board that watches over my shoulder with a critical eye and a self-righteous attitude. This particularly grates since, in my mind, the board members are not as educated, intelligent, or attuned to the world of education as I am or for that matter as many of the faculty. In becoming dean, I enter a war zone of power, and whining, and crying, and muck and mire.

So over the next three years I come to realize that image and prestige are poor substitutes for love and passion. I have already talked about the central value of love, but image and status are strong forces – forces having to do with power - which can overwhelm your mind and corrupt your soul. I had hoped when I took the position that perhaps I could lead the faculty and students toward some higher educational ideals. Once in the trenches though, the negatives far outweigh the positives. In fact, I feel that the position is having a bad effect on me ethically. Whereas in the role of teacher I experience an ethical elevation, as dean I feel that I am being drawn into a moral cesspool. As a teacher I pursue knowledge and enlightenment; as dean I am perpetually engaged in politics, interpersonal conflicts, and the soap operas of professional life.

In psychology there is a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is where you do something because it is perceived as leading to some desirable end, but the action itself is not experienced as pleasurable or inherently valuable. Intrinsic motivation is where you do something because it feels good to do it and/or seems to possess inherent worth. Intrinsically motivated actions are intrinsically rewarding. (This is how Spinoza thought about ethics; virtue is its own reward.)

People will often work at jobs where the reward is a good salary, prestige, and professional success but the job itself is not that satisfying. People will stick with such jobs, though, because of the money, security, and sense of importance attached to them. This is a very common scenario. Being the dean of the school has lots of external rewards, including the salary and a sense of power and professional elevation, but I don't love it. Also, I find that I actually have more power in the classroom. As the dean, I am frequently simply carrying out the wishes and agenda of the president of the school and trying to accommodate to all the requests, attitudes, and agendas of both staff and students. I feel more like a slave than a master.

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The movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* which comes out in 1988 makes a big impression on me and I talk about it in class. The movie generates a lot of controversy when it is released. It depicts Christ as a man who, throughout his life, has to struggle against numerous temptations, and who frequently finds himself feeling afraid, confused, and depressed. At times Christ suffers great self-doubt and is uncertain whether or not he is the true Messiah. Is he following the word of God, or is he a madman, vain and delusional? (Somehow this perplexity makes perfect sense to me.)

Toward the end of the movie, a luminous young girl – apparently an angel – comes to the crucified Christ and tells him that he does not have to suffer death upon the cross; that he can find love and happiness with a woman, have a family, and live to an old age. He has proven to God his faith and commitment in his willingness to die on the Cross. Christ accepts what she says, expressing his desire to lead a normal life, whereupon the angel miraculously brings him down off the cross. Christ goes on from that point in time to lead a fully human life - to find romantic love, have sexual relations with women, procreate, raise children, and live to an old age.

On his deathbed, though, Christ is visited by a number of the apostles. Judas, who in this movie is portrayed as the most devout of the apostles, accuses the dying Jesus of being a coward and of not following through on what he was supposed to do; not following through on his promise to die on the cross in the preordained act of redemption for humanity. As it turns out, the angelic young girl is actually an agent of Satan, sent to persuade Christ to turn away from his great act of cosmic sacrifice. This, indeed, is the last temptation, the most deceptive and powerful of all.

Once Christ faces the truth of things and the validity of Judas's disappointment, he asks God, the Father, to place him back up on the cross and allow him to complete what should have occurred in the first place. In a kind of metaphysical time travel shift, all that has happened is undone and the suffering

Christ finds himself again nailed to the cross at the moment he had left it. He dies, realizing his destiny and feeling self-fulfilled. He states as his final words at the end of the movie "It is accomplished."

I resonate very much with the movie because it is a total rejection of metaphysical and ethical dualism. Here is a man with all the troubles and weaknesses associated with the human condition who doubts his own sanity at times, but who is touched, in fact, possessed by the divine. Good is not separated from human failings and the temptations of evil; good is the struggle of having to pass through evil and rise above it. In the movie the very Son of God is fooled by the Devil, who appears in the guise of a young angelic girl. The final and most powerful temptation is to lead a simple and happy life, a life of love and family. The movie is a great *Yin-Yang*, a metaphorical message of having to journey through the darkness to come to the light, of stumbling and falling and failing and yet, because of this, making it to a divine place. Christ is not perfect and that is the whole point; if he were, he could not be Christ. Traditional and fundamentalist Christians have it all wrong. Lots of people have it wrong.

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During this time teaching at the graduate school, I discuss with my students the respective roles of thinking and emotion in the human mind. To recall, throughout human history there have been two opposing lines of philosophy, one emphasizing the intellect and order, and one highlighting emotions and the chaotic side of human experience and behavior. There is the Apollonian and the Dionysian, and later, the Age of Reason and Enlightenment that triggers off the counter-reaction of Romanticism. From a psychological perspective, in Freud there are the desires of the id versus the rational ego. In Plato, there is appetite versus reason. In everyday common sense, thinking and the intellect are usually distinguished from emotion and passion. Presumably,

reason is detached and objective; emotion is engaged and subjective. Reason is methodical and orderly; emotion is impulsive, disruptive, and thoughtless. Thoughts are clearly different than feelings, or so it would seem. In my own life, it seems I have swung back and forth at times between one extreme and the other. Parts of my life appear ordered and focused; at other times, my life has seemed disordered, and my psyche and spirit drawn into human drama, passion, impulsive sex, abandonment, and personal turmoil over love and the meaning of life.

But the distinction between thought and emotion – at the very least their opposition and mutual exclusivity – seems false. As I discuss in class, thought clearly impacts, if not directs or creates, emotion. What a person feels appears to follow from what a person thinks. There are characteristic thoughts that accompany depression; characteristic thoughts that accompany hope and elation; characteristic thoughts that accompany fear and anxiety; characteristic thoughts that accompany serenity. Following from this cognitive theory of emotions, in cognitive therapy, the goal is to change the way a person thinks, to change the habitual thought patterns that produce the negative feelings of misery, worry, despair, or stress in the individual. Change the thoughts and you will change the feelings.

One could therefore argue that if there is a difference in attitude or approach between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, it may have to do with the kinds of thoughts each framework is connected with. It is clear that the Romantics often highlight human tragedy, human weakness, obstacles and unfulfilled hopes and aspirations, and the fickleness and chaos of life. The philosophers of the Enlightenment, on the other hand, believed in human progress, in the orderliness of nature – an orderliness that could be understood - and in the power of the human being to control nature and destiny. The philosophers of the Enlightenment saw human life, ideally, as having a direction and purpose that could be determined and controlled. The philosophers of the

Enlightenment embraced hope; the philosophers of Romanticism embraced the agony and the ecstasy.

Hence, there is no pure id, that is, thoughtless emotion and desire; nor is there pure intellect, that is, emotionless and detached thought.

Further, one could say that madness and misery are simply the playing out of a way of thinking about life, an interpretation of reality that creates a specific array of distressing and unsettling emotions and modes of behavior. Sanity – what many have described as the life of reason – is simply the playing out of a different set of thoughts, thoughts of order and personal power and control. Sanity and madness are, in essence, different ways of thinking. Sanity is thinking in terms of self-efficacy, order and control; madness is thinking in terms of chaos, victimization, uncertainty, and abandonment.

Yet, there is something valuable, in fact, educational, about passing through madness – about passing through all the kinds of thoughts that would drive a person crazy and all the accompanying distressing emotional states such as despair, anxiety, depression, and fear that follow from these thoughts. Perhaps being really sane – really healthy – involves a moving back and forth between the philosophies of order and chaos and the emotions that come with these two mindsets, these two philosophies of the nature of existence. Perhaps being really sane means having passed through madness and assimilated it. This aligns with Maslow, the self-actualizing person being able to go after growth; to take risks and accept the possibility, even the inevitability, of failures; to dive through the dark side as the only way to get to the light. The Romantics perhaps understood this, as did the followers of Dionysius. Perhaps the followers of the Enlightenment did not.

In teaching human motivation, I review the theory of Freud but also the ideas of Clark Hull, a highly influential behavioral psychologist of the early twentieth century. Both Freud and Hull believed that human motivation was geared toward drive or tension reduction; we eat, have sex, and engage in all manner of goal-directed behaviors to reduce the arousal level within us.

Psychology also presents the opposite view, though, that people often do things to increase their arousal level. Getting stimulated is motivating. This view is called the drive induction theory of motivation. One interesting difference between these two points of view is that the drive reduction view implies that the more you do something, the less you want to continue doing it; you become satiated or satisfied and content. (We strive for this satisfaction.) The drive induction theory implies, conversely, that the more you do something, the more you want to continue doing it. People who eat a lot want to eat more, not less; people who engage in sex a lot don't necessarily feel satisfied; they want it more. If you stimulate your mind with arousal-producing ideas, you want more ideas, more learning, and more stimulation. (We search for excitement.)

Now it seems clear that, in general, people find excessive stimulation exhausting and nerve wracking and will seek out peace and quiet at times to counter-balance too much stimulation, but, conversely, people also find too much calm and monotony aversive as well and will seek out excitement. In considering this dual nature of human motivation, another psychologist named Richard Solomon proposed the opponent process theory of motivation in an attempt to account for these opposing theoretical perspectives. He suggested that what motivates people is the oscillation between opposite states, from calm to excitement and back again. Life is a roller-coaster and we like to ride it. Our nervous system is set up to generate these opposing states, of calm and rejuvenation versus stress and energy expenditure – the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. We are oscillators, constructed to move through opposing but balanced states. We are beings of pulsation. We are motivated toward pulsation. This, of course, is a *Yin-Yang*.

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During my first two years as dean, I do some job searching in Arizona. Living two thousand miles away presents some difficulties though. I visit Arizona

twice during this period, but nothing materializes. Then too I am comfortable, at least in some ways, in my present position and don't push it as much as I can. But the vision of Arizona stays in my mind. It will not go away. I have already begun to redecorate my house in Illinois with art and artifacts I've brought back from my trips. I think that if I bring enough things back from Arizona the center of gravity in my home will start to tip, to slide under its own existential momentum toward the west.

I suppose that down deep I have never given up on the dream of moving out west, of leaving the cold and gloom and flatness of my surroundings for something more scenic, exotic, and adventurous, some place sunny and warm with beautiful mountains and wild and open expanses of nature. Arizona is hot (which I revel in) and filled with a host of strange and wondrous plants – cactus and palms, bougainvillea and oleanders, and sparse but striking desert trees with their lacey canopies and graceful limbs etched against the sky. It is nothing like the Midwest or the East. At each turn colorful and rustic Mexican, Indian, and western art and architecture open to the eye. Sharply defined desert mountains, vast mesas, and spectacular rock formations rise from the horizon – this is part of its mystical quality. The sun shines brilliant almost everyday in a sky so blue it's surrealistic. And the heat is a palpable presence that blasts the molecules in your body and sends your spirits soaring. Arizona is a magical land and it won't stop calling to me.

This is my "Romantic" (as in an adventure of the senses), my existentialist (as in a flight of freedom), my metaphysical (as in a journey to some alternative, fantastical reality) interpretation of it all; this is the part of me that isn't satisfied, and never has been, with the white picket fence and the normalcy of professional success in the straight, suffocating world of sanity and common sense. I am a child of the Enlightenment, but a rebellious child filled with strange and crazy dreams.

I talk about it all with Lisa. In the back of my mind I think that since we were not successful in moving out west back in 1978, we should return – this

time to do it the right way – to deliver on what I promised long ago. I had said something like this to her in 1980 when I had gone out to Denver, but it is very different now. I am in a different universe. My life and my mind are now relatively steady and focused. We can all go together now – her and me and Tommy, Daniel, and Matthew. I think our kids should grow up in the land of the sun. I will find a good job before we leave. I convince her that it is a good idea and that sooner or later we are going to do it.

Through all of this talk and dreaming and thinking, there is one thing especially that runs through my mind: I do not want to feel that I am running away again this time, but rather that I am searching out a place - my place, our place - where we will settle with a sense of love and enchantment and from which we will never move again. I am very successful in Illinois and it does not seem that I am running. I am approaching something good this time rather than avoiding something aversive. But as I remind myself, there is always a little approach and always a little avoidance in everything. For one thing I am totally sick of the cold, the gloom, the snow, and the ice of the Midwest; I am definitely trying to escape from that.

The bottom line, though, is that something is pulling me to Arizona. It is not like Colorado. When we moved to Colorado I was ambivalent. This time, I don't feel like I have any choice. Arizona has taken hold of me these last few years and will not let go.

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In the summer of 1990, things take an unexpected bad turn at the graduate school, a development which kicks me into high gear to find a way to get out west – another one of those misfortunes that has a positive effect – another one of the coincident, synchronistic meteorites that hits when the system is getting ready to fall apart.

To set the context: I work in a dangerous, cut-throat place. I come in as dean immediately after the previous dean has been fired by the governing board for failing to gain accreditation for the school. The circumstances under which this happened do not bode well for me. It turns out that the chairman of the board axed the dean without consulting the president and then the president, because of this presumptuous act, convinced the board to fire the chairman. People at the top of the organization have the habit of quickly getting rid of employees (including sometimes each other). Right after I come in, the board starts pushing on the president to re-apply for another accreditation visit, but I do not feel, and the director of clinical training agrees, that we should rush back into it so quickly. We need time to build our case. The board keeps pushing, though, so we re-apply too fast, and we fail again. Once more, heads must roll, someone must pay. This time it is me.

So under pressure from the governing board, the president decides to split the dean's position into two separate slots: a dean of students and a dean of faculty. Because of my close connection with the students, so the argument goes, I am given the position of dean of students. Though I retain the same salary the position of real power goes to the dean of faculty. (I am not a state certified Clinical Psychologist and this - according to the president - that is, according to the board - is a liability.) To make matters worse, the planning and negotiation on all of this is carried out clandestinely behind my back. (But then I was originally hired as the dean in a neighborhood bar. That should have alerted me to the way the place operated.) In essence, then, not only am I demoted but demoted without any warning or input. This quick decision and the way it comes about is a punch in the gut, and I feel like quitting there on the spot. Lisa helps to settle me down, though, and convinces me not to react impulsively. Instead, I start to think about how to take advantage of this turn of events. It hits me that perhaps it is just as well that this has happened. I realize, in fact, that I am happy underneath that things have taken this turn. It gives me an excuse to really go after my dream.

Sometimes the answer to one's prayers does not feel good at first.

The future is drawing me; the unknown is calling out; the past and the present are coming unglued, losing their grip. The impetus – the drive – is coming from within me, is coming from “out there,” the inner and the outer in some kind of cosmic resonance.

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The bar in the expensive upscale restaurant is dimly lit. We've just finished our dinner and are now drinking fancy liquors and port wine to top off our luxurious meal. Shimmering blue and green disco lights move across the surfaces in the room in rhythm with the music playing in the background. It's a weekend retreat and we are all sitting around talking about the future of the school, presumably working out how we are going to move forward after having been denied accreditation for the second time in two years. The unspoken objective of healing psychological wounds and realizing some level of peace and harmony among us hangs in the air. My heart isn't in it, though, and neither is my head. The academic and emotional agendas of the place have lost their urgency and I am engaged in my own private conversation on strategic planning – on what I intend to do the coming year. What I have in mind involves digging up a ghost and breathing life back into it.

But for the moment, I try to appear attentive to the conversation in the external world surrounding me. In the midst of it all, I am not so preoccupied that I don't notice Catherine. Catherine has been shooting looks at me all evening and I am quite sure that I am not the only one who feels the charge between us. It is hard to tell whether it is positive or negative or maybe both.

We end up on the floor in a slow dance. At first it is decidedly awkward, the feel of her hand in mine, our bodies closer than they have ever been before. Though we have had numerous highly animated, intellectual conversations over

the last two years, now our tongues are tied. It is like high school all over again. There's no doubt that I find her exceedingly attractive – I always have – her long sandy blond hair, the bright sparkle in her eyes, her long graceful body and the energy with which she moves. My sense, perhaps delusional, is that she is drawn to me as well. My mind is churning. I feel like two people. I am married to Lisa and I still feel this sense of destiny and unquestioning devotion to her. Yet, Catherine is sharp, smart, in tune with my intellect, and very beautiful. My body – my id – is sorely tempted. It would be so easy to give in to it. The draw of beauty and intellect combined is potent. I feel my hand in the small of her back and I want to pull her closer, press my body against hers and feel her melt into me. But I don't. I contain myself. I master my id.

When we sit back down, we drift into a conversation about love and marriage. I tell her that I feel a strong sense of togetherness with Lisa, that I feel our union was meant to be. She tells me that she wished she felt the same regarding her marriage. She says that she admires me. The green light seems to be flashing go, go, go. But there are other dynamics at play here and even as my id keeps insisting I go for it, my conscience and dignity pull me back.

Among other things, on the professional level I am feeling guarded because Catherine is the faculty member who going to be assuming my former position at the school. Underneath I am angry at her for her part in the whole thing. My suppressed anger and suspicion become effective weapons against my id, putting a damper on my desire to try to kiss her.

Still, as the group splits up we continue to sit together and talk, with undercurrents of desire, guilt, and anger (from me) permeating the atmosphere. Do I feel signals coming from her? It sure seems so. Several times through the evening, I have perceived openings – invitations. But maybe I am wrong. I swim in the uncertainty and the complexity of things. Perhaps she does too.

God knows how, but I go to bed by myself that night. As these things go it is nothing short of amazing. Afterwards I wonder if I did the right thing. I wonder about this for a long time. At times I really regret not having pursued her; at times

I feel I did absolutely the right thing. There is something significant about the whole thing, something that swims around down in my unconscious.

In the end, I leave it, though. I have to go resurrect the ghost and find my way to Arizona.

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For the next year I do everything I can think of to find a way to get to Arizona. I become even more obsessed than before. I talk to numerous people in Phoenix on the phone; I subscribe to Phoenix newspapers; I fill out innumerable job applications; I look through the Phoenix yellow pages. I broaden my job search to include anything in psychology, mental health, or education. I am willing to sacrifice my college-level teaching position, which I have worked so hard to achieve, to get to the enchanted land of Arizona. It is one of the most intense and determined efforts to achieve something that I have ever put my mind to in my life. Disappointments pepper the road – I am promised one job that that evaporates on me. Uncertainty clouds each day. But I pray and hold to a deep faith that things will work out. I maintain this overall faith and determination in spite of the fact that I often feel the reverse. Many times I feel hopeless and helpless; Arizona seems so far away. It is a whole different world. But I keep pulling myself up by my bootstraps. I have to persist. There is no choice.

Through the long year I plug along – through the fall when the first possibilities emerge and then die; through the winter when I feel as cold as the snow on the frozen highways of my daily commute; into the spring when a new set of possibilities fails to materialize and I start to stress and panic; and on into the summer when I resolutely, insanely put the house up for sale, in spite of not having found anything yet. Through it all I repeatedly, doggedly, compulsively tell myself the following:

When you try to maintain purpose and direction through the ups and downs of life, it is important to remember that the ups and downs occur within your own psyche as well. When you are on a journey, you will at times lose confidence, feel demoralized and, in spite of all the positive self-talk you give yourself, you will feel emotionally down. You will indeed often drift into negative, demoralizing thoughts. In such situations, you must keep going – you must keep doing – even if your heart and mind lose conviction and enthusiasm. When you feel no hope, you must drag yourself along through the doldrums of your own mind.

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As the summer of 1991 draws to a close, after over a year of job hunting, I receive an offer for an interview for a college teaching job in Arizona. Events suddenly move into fast forward. I come down to Arizona for the interview, do what I believe is the best job interview of my life, wait and pace around for a week or two, get another call for a second interview, come out again and do a second interview, and finally, am offered the position of faculty chair for psychology and philosophy at the college. Our house in Illinois, which has been up for sale for a few months, still hasn't sold, but now I have a job – a good job in academia – so we pack everything up and on a cold grey morning in early November, with the first snow of the year falling, I set sail in my minivan with my wife and three kids, taking them all on the adventure of a lifetime two thousand miles to the west. We are in the proverbial covered wagon heading across the wide open plains toward the mountains and beyond, leaving the security of our home and accustomed life for the strange exotic land of Arizona. This time it is for real. The future opens up in front of us; boy does it ever open up in front of us all.

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When I am informed of the change in my position – my lateral demotion – at the graduate school, not only do I decide that, come hell or high water, I am moving to Arizona, I also decide that I am going pick up my book on the *Yin-Yang* again. Instead of steaming in frustration and resentment, I decide to do something mentally stimulating. When life on the streets gets tough or disappointing, I dive into the Platonic. When the spirit of adventure comes over me, I start writing.

I give the book a new title, *The Rings of Reciprocity*, after the diagram I had created ten years earlier. In the first part of the book, written in the fall semester, I describe the idea of reciprocity and the *Yin-Yang* in depth. It is the philosophical part of the book. In the second part, written in the spring, I get into evolution and time, describing my ideas on open systems, life and nature, and cosmology. I also resurrect Harmony, but one faculty member who starts reading the book doesn't see the sense of including her – she doesn't fit. (And indeed this is true, but as of yet I do not see why.) I outline a third part on ecological psychology (including my new thoughts on madness, sanity, and personal growth) but do not get it written before heading out to Arizona. While I am completing the first parts, I give it out to some of my best students to read. What emerges from this first reading is that a small group of students and faculty, including Kelley and John, meet together with me once a week to discuss the ideas in the book. In the summer just before I leave, I teach a course on the ideas in the book. Here are a couple of the ideas:

The philosopher Heidegger posed the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" Heidegger considered this the greatest and deepest of all ontological puzzles. In the second part of the book on cosmology, I attempt to answer this question within the context of my reciprocal logic of reality. My answer is that something versus nothing is a *Yin-Yang*, a reciprocity. There can

not be “nothing” without something. “Nothing” is a distinction relative to something.

If we ask why there is anything at all, what are we asking? What are we assuming in such a question? It sounds like we are assuming that nothing could indeed be the case – that being or existence may not have to be. Why being at all? But relative to what – what is the other possibility? Of course, it is relative to nothing – “why being rather than nothing.”

When we ask the question why there is something rather than nothing, we are assuming in our question that somehow “nothing” is more fundamental than something. We are assuming that “nothing” doesn't require an explanation, whereas something does. We assume nothing as a given, but something must be explained. But this is a mistake. Being and non-being come together as a pair; again nothing is always a distinction relative to something.

Consider the ancient Greek philosopher Parmenides (“What is not, is not.”). According to Parmenides, there can not *be* “nothing” in and of itself. How can “nothing” – that is, non-being - be? “Nothing” is impossible – it is self-contradictory. We may try to imagine what it would be like if there was nothing instead of something, but there is nothing to imagine. If you visualize nothing as empty space, this, in fact, is something – nothing is not even empty space.

How can we assume that there even *could be* nothing - without something?

To ask for an explanation of the being of being is a very odd question to ask.

Consider the Big Bang scenario. One version of the Big Bang is that there is a first point in time, an absolute beginning. If one asks what came before the Big Bang, the answer often given is that nothing came before the Big Bang. There is no before, since the Big Bang is the beginning of time – a strange and perplexing idea indeed, since beginnings always occur in time. How could time itself begin?

But the Big Bang defines the boundary of being or becoming; only by contrast can we say there was nothing before it. The only sense that nothing exists before the Big Bang is by contrast with something – the something coincident with the Big Bang. The nothing that is the boundary of the beginning only has meaning relative to the beginning. (According to modern cosmology, there may be multiple Big Bangs but we exist in this one.)

Further, the first point in time – the absolute beginning – is only the beginning once there is a further point in time. The first point in time, in and of itself, is neither a beginning nor an end. It acquires a temporal reality once it is juxtaposed with another point in time after it. Its temporality is relative and contextual. Until the future unfolds, there is no time. The beginning only becomes the beginning after it is over – only after it leads to something else – the future.

I think that Fraser would say that the beginning is timeless. It is as close as one can get to eternity. It is the foundation for the evolution of time, yet it possesses no time itself. I think that Fraser would agree that the Big Bang is still with us, the eternal timeless moment that all time is built upon. (For Fraser, time is as much a hierarchy as a succession.) If one looks up in the sky, one can ask where the Big Bang happened up there. The answer is that the Big Bang happened everywhere. We are all in it. We are all expanding outward from the center which is everywhere. Deep within us is the Big Bang – the beginning. Deep within us is eternity. Perhaps that is who or what I pray to.

But this eternal core only *is* by giving rise to becoming – to something else - by giving rise to creation. Eternity and time are united.

Once I head out to Arizona I stop working on *The Rings of Reciprocity* and somehow the manuscript disappears. It is like a quantum fluctuation; it is and then it isn't. I know I don't throw it away; it just vanishes into the void. There is still something not right with it. It has to make room for something else.

And all that is and all that was, recedes away from me at the speed of light.