

The Way of Art

A lecture by Joseph Campbell

What I want to do this evening is approach this subject that I announced in terms of “the problems of art.”

There is an important distinction to be made between art as *therapy* and art as *art*. Jean, my dear wife, once came with me to Esalen, where I’ve been lecturing for about sixteen to eighteen years, and there it’s all, you might say, therapeutic. And, Jean came with an announcement about something about the dance; and after the first day, when I finished my show and she had finished hers, I found a completely disintegrated wife. She said, “These people don’t know anything about dance. They don’t *want* to know anything about dance—they want the Esalen Experience.” And then the thing that had smitten her most was that they called this sort of psychological doodling “creative art.”

There is a big difference. And in talking about art one day Jean made, I think, a very important statement: “You know the way of the mystic and the way of the artist are very much alike, except that the mystic does not have a craft.” The craft holds the artist to the world and the mystic goes off through his psyche into the transcendent. You might say that’s all right for the mystic but not for any body else. The artist is going to many of the same places, but he is held to the world, and this is what I want to deal with this evening.

With respect to myth, I don’t know whether I told this story here, but I had a marvelous experience this last fall. I had a big fancy book published—you can buy it for seventy dollars or something like that. The publisher sent me off on a publicity tour. This is the worst kind of tour. You meet newspaper people and broadcasting people and so forth. And the first thing they say when you’re on the stage is, “What’s a myth?” So, after three or four of these I made up a definition that would serve to get me over the bump.

So I come to one—I won’t say where on so-in-so’s show—and it’s live on the air: not television this time, but radio. I walk in and here is this young man sitting across the table. And I saw him and I knew I have a real slick article here.

So I sit down and he says to me, “I’m tough. I’ll put it right to you: I’ve studied law.”

So, okay, the light goes on and the first thing he says to me is, “A myth is a *lie*, isn’t it?”

And I say, “No, a myth isn’t a lie,” and then I gave him my definition.

I said, “It’s an organization of symbolic forms, images, and narratives that are metaphoric of the possibilities of human experience and fulfillment in a given society at a given time.”

Well, that went out the window and he said, “It’s a lie.”

So, on we go—and we have one half hour of this kind of dialogue. And almost exactly five minutes before the end of the show, I realize this guy doesn’t know what a metaphor is.

So, I said, “Mr. metaphor, give me an example of a metaphor.”

He said, “*You* give me an example.”

“I taught school for a long time,” I said, “I’m asking the question this time. Give me an example of a metaphor.”

Well, if you’ve ever seen a building fall apart, you’ve seen what I saw. This “authority” became—I felt ashamed that I had done this to a human being, and it was on *his* show! He was all over the floor trying to look for a metaphor.

Finally, with two minutes to go—it was like the end of a ballgame you know, with half a minute—he comes up and said, “I’ll try.”

Isn’t that wonderful?

He said, “So and so runs very fast: ‘he runs like a deer.’ That’s a metaphor.”

“That’s not the metaphor.” I said. “The metaphor is. ‘So and so *is* a deer.’”

He said, “That’s a lie!”

And I said, “That’s the metaphor!!”

And that was the end of the show.

So, listen, that taught me a lesson. This is a metaphor. Good. Nobody knows what the hell a metaphor is. All religions are mythological. You see what that means: they don’t realize that Yahweh is a metaphor. The terrible thing about Yahweh is, *He* didn’t realize it either! He thought *He* was the connotation, don’t you see? So, when a metaphor is read with reference, not to the connotation, but to the *denotation*, it’s a lie. Hence atheism.

Meanwhile, the ones who are worshipers of the metaphor don’t know what they are doing, so they are missing the message. Do you get

what I'm saying? This is really important stuff. I don't know whether its in the New York Times yet, but it's important.

If you think your metaphor is the connotation then you think the other guys metaphor is a lie. You see what I mean? And here all these people all over the planet talking about the same connotation, sticking to their metaphors and we're having trouble. I think I've got the answer to the contemporary problem.

So, now I'm glad that chap wasn't bright enough to say, "Metaphorical of what?" just at that time, because I wasn't ready.

I've been thinking about this and it is as simple as can be. All dreams are metaphors, this much we know. No one would take the *imagery* of this dream as the *message* of the dream. I mean, Freud and Jung and Adler and others have taught us enough to know we must look for the *connotation* of the metaphor. In the dream, the connotation will always be right here, under your heart.

In myth, the metaphor is twofold in its connotation. One is psychological, and the other is universal. The metaphor of the myth is metaphysical as well as psychological in its connotation, and it is connotative of both at the same time.

Now you notice in these images that I filmed, every now and then one of them hits something that I could reproduce in a mythological image and say, "That person had broken through to an image that was not only personal, but also transcendent of the personality." So then we're on the mythological-creative line there.

All of us in our lives are psychologically motivated in terms sometimes of purely local, personal, almost accidental problems that become for us momentous. But occasionally also we hit problem fields that are universal to the human spirit, and then our dreams begin to be identical with myth.

Now in art, when the images of the artist are purely personal, this finally is slop—and you know it when you see it. Also, it lacks a certain formal definition. But, then, when it hits the mythological—that's to say, the dual message level: psychological and metaphysical at the same time—you say, "Ah ha!" because it's talking about what's deep in you. This is an important thing.

Now I said, opening the earlier talks: "Every aesthetic element or feature has a psychological reference; it invokes a psychological

response.” Certain ones have, at the same time, a *mythological* reference. Every what might be called, “universal psychological experience,” has a metaphysical analog. So this triangle of myth, art, and psychology is fundamental. And that’s what I’m trying to bring forward this evening.

Art is metaphorical. Naturalistic art—what’s that? It stops you with the image. There’s a type of a beautiful book which I loaned to somebody and never saw again, by Annanda K. Coomaraswamy, called *The Transformation of Nature in Art*. In myth, the experiences of the environment come to the mind through the senses and they evoke a response in the imagination. And where the imagination comes and meets input from the environment, you have a fusion, and that’s myth.

There’s the wonderful words of Novalis: “The seat of the soul is there, where the outer and the inner worlds meet.”

Okay. So what is the inner world that’s come up to meet the outer world? Is it lost in a lot of purely individual confusion? Or does it come from the ground?

Jung spoke of two orders of dreams: the little dream—the personal dream; and the big dream—the archetypal dream. So it’s in that field that we are dealing with.

Now, with respect to art as a *discipline*, what art as discipline does is purify the personal system, so that it moves over into the universal. As a discipline, these two women here just moved in like fools going where angels fear to tread, but came through. The artist is fortunate enough to be put in touch through his studio disciplines with these universals. And what are they? They are certain rhythmic patterns.

So, I thought I'd start this evening with just this sort of herr professor talk about aesthetics. And the best statement of aesthetics that I know is by James Joyce in *The Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man*. Young male artists very often have to get the matter straight in their head before they can let their action move. And Joyce worked this thing out sublimely. The aesthetic that I am about to describe is that which sustained him through the length of his career which is that of the greatest novelist of the twentieth century.

I say this having read a letter from Thomas Mann to a friend of mine. It’s published in Mann’s letters, where she had sent to him my little thing on *The Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, so that Mann had been

able to read about *Finnegan's Wake*. (Not the kind of book one can pick up and read.)

And in the letter? Of course when I received the volume of *The Letters of Thomas Mann*, I looked up Campbell in the index and found this letter immediately. And he was thanking her for having sent this book and he said, "I'm so grateful for this book because I could not have read *Finnegan's Wake* myself. And it has confirmed me in the suspicion I have entertained for some time, namely that James Joyce is the greatest novelist of the twentieth century." That's from Thomas Mann, who has thought himself in that regard.

So it's the aesthetics of this great author that I'm going to render here as an introduction to what we're going to be seeing later.

He distinguishes between what he calls *proper* and *improper* art. Proper art, of course, means art performing a function that is proper to art—the kind of function only art can serve. And improper art is art in the service of something else.

Now that's the big thing. I see some notes being taken so draw a line down the middle of the page and put on the left "proper" and on the right "improper" and the whole thing will come out very clearly.

Proper art, says Joyce, is "static" and improper art is "kinetic." *Kinesis*, as you know, means "movement" and *stasis*, as you know, means "standing still."

Kinesis: improper art is kinetic in that it moves the observer either to desire (positive) or to loathe or fear (negative) that object represented. That's clear and simple. Improper art is kinetic: it moves the observer either to desire or to refuse, to fear or hate the object represented.

Art that moves you to desire is pornography. The Supreme Court of the United States can't define pornography, therefore, that's what we have. All advertising art is pornographic. You are going through a magazine and you see a picture of a beautiful refrigerator and beside it stands a lovely girl with lovely refrigerator teeth. And you think, "I love refrigerators like that." Pornography.

Picture of a dear old lady and you think, "Oh, lovely old sweet soul, I'd love to have a cup of tea with that dear lady." That's pornography. You go into a ski buffs' department and you see pictures of ski slopes and you think, "Oh, wow! To go down slopes like that!" Pornography.

You get it? It has to do with a relationship to the object that's that of social, physical, or otherwise *action*. You are *not* held in aesthetic arrest: "Wow. What a picture." You get the point?

Art that repels is didactic. All of this sociological art is didactic. And the terrible, ghastly calamity about our studios in the United States for many, many years is that people have been going to school and they've been given sociology and religion to think about—and that's where all the grand ideas are—so you always try to come out with a moral of some kind, a point that is a social lesson of some kind. Social realism and all that nonsense is didactic art. And most of the novels since the time of *Zola* have been what I call the work of “didactic pornographers”—who give you the didactic and then something to carry you on through the lesson.

So that's where we are.

Now if you get over on the serious side—the other side of the page (and, as my students used to say, “Yeah, well what about it?”)—Joyce says, “All right: to find out about the static, go to St. Thomas Aquinas.”

Aquinas defines beauty as “that which pleases.” That's a very nice definition. There is another aspect, however, to art, which is *the sublime*. And the sublime is that which simply shatters your whole ego system. In either case, we are over on the static side: one static held by fascination, the other static held by annihilation. The beautiful and the sublime. The sublime: enormous power, enormous space, to simply diminish and wipe out the ego. *The sublime*.

But to Aquinas now. Aquinas says: “The aesthetic experience is in three moments.” And he names them *Integritas*, *Convenientia* and *Claritas*.

Integritas: wholeness. I've been backing up here in order to make an aesthetic arrangement. Wholeness. *Integritas*. Wholeness. Put a frame around any number of objects on this platform that you want to choose. Then what is within that frame is to be regarded as one thing. That's the basic point. Not a collection of things: *one* thing. So I'm just choosing this here. Now the rest of that chair that has been cut off by the frame is “other.” What is within this frame is one thing. Not part of a chair, part of a table, and then this little signal thing here. *Integritas*—wholeness—is to be seen as *one* thing.

Next, *Convenientia*: harmony. Within that frame—now we come to the essence of the aesthetic experience—within that frame, what is important is whether this is “here” or “here.” That's all that matters. The rhythmic arrangement, the rhythm of beauty—the *rhythm* is the instrument of art.

Integritas—one thing—you frame it off from the rest of the world: a hermetically sealed off field. Everything else is somewhere else. Nothing

within that field has reference to anything outside that field. Within that field what is important is whether This is “here” or “here”—the relationship of part to part, of part to the whole, and the whole to each of its parts.

And when that relationship is fortunately achieved you have *Claritas*: radiance. Fascination. Aesthetic arrest. “Ah ha!” You are held. That’s all it’s about.

And what happens is that that object becomes *pure object*; You are *pure subject*. You are “the Eye of the Universe beholding the Thing of the Universe.” The mystery of that thing is the same as the mystery of the universe. You have gone past all accidental experiences and arrangements.

It is awfully difficult to achieve a thing like that in a portrait, for example, where it always refers to somebody else. The standard definition of a portrait, you know, is: “A picture with something wrong about the mouth.” “It doesn’t look like Susan.” As soon as you get a reference from the object represented to something outside the object, you’ve got either a pornographic or a didactic work. It’s inevitable.

In the Hindu interpretations of artworks of that kind, such as fill most of the walls of our museums, are called *adershi*, which is a word which means “popular,” “local,” and they are regarded as aesthetically insignificant. The object becomes aesthetically significant when it becomes metaphysically significant. That is, it is an order of something that speaks past itself—carries the radiance of the transcendent into the field of time. This is what it’s all about. This is why art is a sacred thing.

And you can help the person to come into that possession by depicting in your art some deity who represents exactly the transcendent and carries you out of time and space. But you don’t have to do that. Cezanne’s apples will work just as well. Who would want to eat a Cezanne apple?

As soon as you assume a biological or social relationship to the object you have a kinetic situation and an improper art work. That’s A B C.

Now we come to the next problem and this is where it begins to get really tough.

A novelist, a playwright, is presenting characters who are in their own nature either attractive or repulsive: who excite either desire or loathing. And how are we to handle that? Now this carries us into the great

problem of the tragic and comic (and so forth) in art. Joyce: he turns for a beginning to Aristotle and the what's called "tragic" emotions.

Steven Deadalus—those of you who know this book will know he is a very snotty young man—and he says, "Aristotle speaks of pity and terror as the tragic emotions, but he has not defined them. I have." The definition is as follows: "*Pity* is the emotion that arrests the mind before the grave and constant in human suffering and unites it with the human sufferer."

The word *human* is the important word there. Not the poor "negro" sufferer. Not the poor "this," "that," or "the other" sufferer: the human sufferer. As soon as you get a definition of historical or sociological emphasis there, you've lost it; you've got a piece of didactic. The *human* sufferer. "*Pity* is the emotion that arrests the mind before the grave and constant in human suffering and unites it with the human sufferer."

Okay. What about *terror*? Terror is the emotion that arrests the mind before the grave and constant in human suffering and unites it with the *secret cause*. What is the secret cause? We're going to the metaphysical.

As an illustration, Mr. A shoots and kills Mr. B. What is the cause of Mr. B's death? The *secret cause*. Is it the bullet? If you are writing about the bullet, that's the instrumental cause, not the secret cause. If you are writing about the bullets, you may be doing a very interesting thing on gun control or something like that, and it would be a worthwhile piece of writing—but it's not tragic.

Mr. A is a white man and Mr. B. is a black man. Mr. A. shoots and kills Mr. B. Is the cause of Mr. B's death a quarrel between white and black people in the United States? If you are writing about that it will be a very important piece of didactic writing; it will have nothing tragic about it.

Now I've used the black and white obviously; it was with the thought of Martin Luther King in my mind. Martin Luther King, about a week or so before he walked to his death said, "I know I'm challenging death." Okay. Now you are beginning to get somewhere.

The *secret cause* is somewhere *in* Mr. B—not in bullets, or anywhere else. This is a man who in the performance of what is his destiny, moves to the limit. All of our lives are moving to limits, but not many of us threaten the limit. Here's a man who brought into play and so he springs forth a universal marvel here. This, now, is a heroic man and his story is properly a tragedy. As Aristotle says, the hero of a tragedy is one

of certain nobility—with a certain fault. The fault is that he doesn't respect the limit. He goes to it.

Now the next thing about art is it doesn't say "no" to the thing it's talking about. So it doesn't say "no" to the death of Martin Luther King; it says "yes" to it. "This is a way for a man to die," is what you're saying. Now *you're* in the tragedy. You see what I'm saying? It's a totally different perspective from that of desire and loathing. It's that of getting through an instance: the real zing of what it is to be alive, and what Life is, and what It's doing to us, and what we are doing with respect to it.

Now the tragic isn't the only emotion that is over on the static side. Milton, writing of the epic, speaks of *wonder*. Wonder is another aesthetic arrest emotion.

There is a very, I think, important—but hard to get—book from India called *The Dusrupa of Dhanamjaya*. *Dusrupa* means "ten forms" and Dhanamjaya is the author. It's a book that's absolutely inaccessible now except by accident in some oriental secondhand book store. But what it is is a very complete statement of Indian aesthetic principals.

In India they speak of the *rasas*—the flavors—of artwork. And the tragic is one flavor. The tragic is the flavor of pity and terror, or, as it is called there, the pathetic and the terrible.

The wonder Milton speaks about, they speak of also, as the rasas of "the heroic and wondrous," Both are together. Heroic and wondrous. Pity, terror. But also the odious and the malignant: threatening. And then there are two more: the erotic and the humorous.

It's amusing: I taught at Sara Lawrence women's college for thirty-eight years, and I used to put these things in scrambled order on the board. Then I'd ask, "With which of the rasas would you associate the erotic?" In thirty-eight years, no young woman ever associated it with the humorous. It was heroic, it was wondrous—it was even odious—but we never had the humorous.

Now I'll just run down this line: The heroic and the wondrous; the erotic and the humorous; the pathetic and the terrible; the odious and the furious. And a ninth one that must be experienced beneath and through them all: *Shanti*—the peaceful. Do you get that?

That's the release, you see. That's the static. You don't get in and do anything about it. This seems to me a wonderful, wonderful affair.

Now I would say that here we have a kind of ground base, a very simple, A B C, principal from which to regard works of art. And to regard artists in their production of works of art, do they render the peaceful

through it? You see? Do they show you this thing as: “that's the way the world whirls,” and you remain in aesthetic arrest and contemplation of *That*? Or are they inviting you to get in and do something about it? It's a very fine line.

Now the practical techniques of art are to carry a person into relationship to that “I” which looks neither with desire nor with yearning at the object. When I first read this definition by Joyce of the kinetic, it dawned on me that that is exactly the definition of the Buddha's temptation when he sat beneath the Tree of the Immovable Spot and was tempted by the Lord of Life.

The Buddha had achieved the *Immovable Spot* which is that place in the psyche which is not moved by desire or fear. And there came before him the Tempter, the Lord of the World, who moves us all. And in order to move the one there sitting from the Immovable Spot, he offered three temptations. The first was in his character as *Kama*, Lust, the god of desire. And he displayed before the Buddha his three beautiful daughters. Their names were: Desire, Fulfillment, Regret. And if the Buddha had identified himself with his temporal ego, rather than with his Eternal Consciousness (which is what I was talking about earlier: that Eternal Consciousness being already present in the girls as well as in the Buddha)—if he had identified himself not with *That*, but with his ego, he would have been filled with desire. But he had already identified himself with Consciousness—which was *Its* way of showing itself in *Its* glory, and he was filled with aesthetic arrest.

So the Lord of Desire was greatly frustrated and he transformed himself into the Lord of Death: *Mara*. *Kama-Mara*. And as the Lord of Death he flung his army at the one there seated. But there was not ego there to be frightened. And the weapons that came into his sphere of presence were transformed into Lotuses.

And then *Kama-Mara* turned himself into the Lord Duty. Now this is the one the Christians find very difficult. And he said, “Young man, here seated in apathy, Ivory Tower, have you not read the morning papers? Are there not some things to be done in the world in the terms that we suggest?” What he did was simply drop his hand and touch the Earth in what is called the *Bhumisparsha*, the Earth touching posture, and the goddess Earth herself said, “This is my beloved son who has, through innumerable lifetimes, so given of himself, there is nobody here.” With

that, the elephants upon which the Lord *Dharma* (or duty) was riding bowed, the army was dispersed, and the Buddha received illumination.

This doesn't mean you must not participate in the world, but this means to find your own center you've got to hold it off for a while. You've got to put a hermetic retort around you. You've got to put a frame around you and become *one thing*. You know—like an art object—an art object gives you those little experiences from time to time.

So to bring out my own moral lesson with respect to all of this, I think that for the modern world where all the mythologies are now, I would say, pass and defunct. There're all these mythologies of a local people somewhere with its programs for the world or with its notions of what the enlightened community is and the rest of the world is gentile. But there's not time for that anymore. And the god that's to come hasn't shown himself yet. But the mythologies that have guided us up to the present are now archaic and dangerous, every single one of them. And it seems to me that for an individual in the modern world with no social unit with which he can identify—since every social unit is, you might say, a reactionary element in a world that's longing to be one—*the way of art* is the way that will guide one to this, as I say, “finding of the immovable point in oneself that is the way of the opening.”

There are two aspects to our consciousness: one is the aspect that knows itself as consciousness engaged in the body—consciousness engaged in the field of time. This is symbolized in oriental mythological imagery as *lunar* consciousness. The moon has a shadow, it casts the shadow. The moon dies and is resurrected. Life casts the shadow of Death: Life throws it off.

The moon and the serpent: the serpent casts its skin as the moon casts its shadow. So the serpent and the moon represents consciousness engaged in the field of time.

The other aspect of consciousness, the notion of consciousness pure—consciousness released or not engaged in the field of time—is symbolized by the sun. And the sun and lightning are of the same symbolic family. Lightning is a flash of absolute consciousness. You see the *Vajra* in Buddhist images: the thunderbolt in the hand symbolizes the blow of immortal realization in the field of mortality. The goal of life in the world is to have these two united: to have the two in play and to realize that *the immortal is to be experienced through the mortality*. So die. Go ahead, let it go.

I have a friend, a psychiatrist in San Francisco, Stanley Kellerman, who has written a book, the title of which is *Living Your Dying*. If you weren't dying, you wouldn't be living. So yield to that process.

Another psychiatrist I know in California is Stanislav Grof. He has used for many, many years LSD therapy with people. Sometimes his patients would actually relive their birth—their birth experiences they relived. And it was a very interesting sequence of stages in this experience: the first of a kind of bliss of the infant in the womb. Not conscious of itself: “an ego-less being,” you might say—a kind of oceanic rapture. Then comes the experience of the uterine walls beginning pulsation, and the experience is sheer terror. And then, no exit. If a person comes out of this situation and is holding the experience, there's very likely going to be a suicide following.

Then comes the next one: the passage through the birth canal. This is one of masochistic and sadistic agony, and yet a sense of fulfillment impending. And finally there is the moment of birth, and that's the kind of thing you get: lights, feathers, chandeliers, great rooms, and so forth. And just imagine that moment. We've all had it, but we sort of missed it. The first experience of light. What a thing. And so for this woman at this moment it was, as it were, the first experience of the light of the spirit—in having accepted mortal death, you know? And it's through that mortality that the spirit shows through.

This is an alchemical picture that W. B. Yates presents in his strange and wonderful book, *A Vision*. It is of the lunar cycle as a counterpart, allegorically, of the life cycle of the human being. The moon goes through phases and so does the human life. The moon cycles is of twenty eight days or so and the human is of let's say seventy years: three score and ten. So that the year thirty-five is the year of midlife, and that is the great midlife crisis. Something has to happen at that time.

In Yates' interpolation of this picture, we are born as little dark nature creatures and the society puts its imprint on us: “This is right, this is wrong; this is what you should live for, this is what you shouldn't do.” This he calls the *primary mask*—the mask the society puts on you to wear.

The eighth night of the moon is the night when light begins to predominate over the darkness. This is the moment, in Yates' interpretation, of adolescence. At this moment there is an awakening of the spirit—and when the individual may, and usually does, get the idea of a life that should be “mine.” It's not the same as the life that was put on

me by the society. Now when this happens there comes a tension between these two ideals: the mask that the society has put upon you, and that which you would like to bring forth as your own proper mask. Yates calls this the *antithetical mask*. There is an antithetical pull.

Now in a strictly traditional society, you're not allowed to follow the antithetical mask. This is the left-hand path of following your own bliss—not the one society puts on you.

In an open society, under fortunate circumstances, the individual may be actually encouraged to go the way of the new image. In both cases there will be a tension, because there will be the drag of moral ideas and so forth upon you. So you have to die at that moment to your infantile ego of obedience and submission to authority, and also of expecting protection, and awaken to your adult potentiality: a self responsible life of your own. Or you may assume the responsibility of supporting society in its own terms. But there has to be that death to infancy. That's one of the big crises. That's a very difficult one. That's the one that the initiation ceremonies in primitive societies are supposed to help people over. We don't have those initiation ceremonies, and so very often in around the mid-forties or so you're still a child and the responsibility upon you, you can't accept—to shape your own life and so forth—and you have to go to the analyst.

Then we come to what might be called now the mystical crisis at the age of thirty-five. The image I like to use here—and I will use it again (though some of you will have heard this)—is of the fifteenth night of the moon. When at sundown the sun on the western horizon rests right on the horizon and at a certain moment and exactly at that moment if you are out on a plane you will see the moon rising, resting on the horizon in the east. The sun and moon at certain months of the year are exactly the same size and brilliance at that time. Twice I've seen it, and both times mistaken the moon for the sun.

At this time the lunar consciousness—the consciousness and life power within you—is at its maximum. It will never be in finer form. And that is the time when you can learn to identify yourself with consciousness rather than with the body, which from that moment on is going to decline. You ask yourself, “Am I the body or am I its inhabiting consciousness?” And if you can identify with the consciousness you have made the big mystical transit. The body may die now. You have identified yourself with that which is eternal. That is the lightning flash. This is the Christ crucified.

The name of the one of the wheel that comes to me is *Ixion*. Ixion held on to the ego; the Christ yields to the spirit. You can watch the body die. At this moment also, if you have identified really with the consciousness, you have identified with that which lives in every being. So there is a kind of simultaneous reincarnation of yourself in all others. It is the big moment that the mystics talk about.

So there is a crisis to be undergone here—that's yielding the body in time while holding on to it. And if you can do that, you are what in Sanskrit is called *jivanmukti*: one who is illuminated while alive—released while living. This is the bodhisattva ideal.

Then when we come to the twenty-second day here, or *night of the moon*, dark begins to overtake again. Nature begins to pile in. You can't say, "Oh, I'm going to be such and such kind of being." Not any more; that's all past now. You've gotta take it the way it is and just hang on.

The symbols in the center give the sense of the crises. The first *temptasio*, temptation: the cup of Tristan and Isolde. Isolde and King Mark were to have been married by the way of a social arrangement. The meeting of the "I"s of Tristian and Isolde. The individual destinies: "the way of the left-hand path," as it's called. That's the one that the cup represents and this is the moment of that crisis. Then hope resumes, the flower of life, at the thirty-fifth year. And then violence, authority against yourself to keep this now disintegrating body on the rails. Because the mind is full of the identification, but the consciousness is there. There is in fact an increase in the experience of that identity with others. But one hangs on, and finally there comes at the end of the fruit with *Sapientia*—Wisdom. Not a bad cycle.

So each of the crises involves a death and resurrection motif—a dying to something: a passing—and they are critical moments in a lifetime.

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Ixion: Greek mythological character. King of the Lapithae in Thessaly, father of Pirithius; for an insult to Juno he was hurled down to Tartarus, and bound to a perpetually revolving wheel.