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Subject: Leuner's Method

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(Editor's note: It was assumed that the participants were familiar with at least the general outline of Leuner's method, such as is given in the article "Initiated Symbol Projection" by Dr. Swartley in the Appendix to Roberto Assagioli's book, Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques--see pp.287-303.)

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Dr. Swartley:

First, some personal reflections about Leuner as a person. I studied with him briefly during 1957; he was also here last year and worked one night with a group of us. He will be Visiting Professor at Yale during the Spring Semester.

In 1957 I judged him to be the brightest, relatively young, psycho-therapist I met or heard anything about in Germany - perhaps in Europe. I continue to believe that he will make as significant a contribution to the science of psychotherapy as anyone in his generation in Germany. Secondly, I would like to put his technique in some kind of perspective in the history of psychotherapy.

Leuner is certainly not the inventor of what he calls "Kathyme Bilderleben." "Kathyme" is a term coined by H.W. Maier and used by Ernest Kretschmer from the Greek roots "kata" (down) and "thymos" (soul). "Bilder" translates as symbol, "leben" as life. When I translated Leuner's article I thought of a variety of names in English and picked out "Initiated Symbol Projection" (abbreviated ISP) which I still consider the best description in English. Although Leuner did not invent ISP, he is the outstanding popularizer of the technique. In the last few years other people writing about the technique have used titles such as "Experiences with the Leuner method of psychotherapy."

Leuner is a relatively young man. He went to medical school during the war - and I heard stories about him going to classes between air raids, etc. His class was accelerated and placed in the army at the tail end of the war. He is a warm and open person in contrast to the typical German professor. I believe he has suffered in German academic politics because of both his warmth and his "un-Germanness," so I also feel that he is therefore becoming more consistent with the stereotype of a German professor.

His brilliance was recognized early. Ernest Kretschmer invited him to the University of Tübingen, but that required sacrificing his individuality to the Kretschmerian world view, which he was not willing to do. Later he was invited to describe his method to the Psychology Club in Zurich, the seat of "Jungian orthodoxy." He knew what they hoped to hear regarding the relationship between his method and Jung's technique of "Active Imagination" and related theories, but he chose to maintain his identity. A letter from a leading Jungian in reaction to this speech wrote him off as too unorthodox a Jungian for a close relationship.

He married an M.D., and after medical school and some time in a psychiatric hospital he went through a Freudian analysis for a couple of years. He absorbed much of the Freudian world-view but was not "converted". Then he went through a briefer Jungian analysis with Gustav Schmalz in Frankfurt. He taught first at the University of Marburg; then moved to the University of Göttingen, where he is the Director of the Psycho-Therapeutic Department of the University of Göttingen Hospital for Neurological and Psychiatric Diseases.

Now to touch on how he developed his method. Freudianism was officially suppressed during the Nazi era, and very little original happened in psychiatry during that era. All the new developments which had started just before the Nazi era were wiped out. So the dominant influences in German psychiatry immediately after the war, when Leuner was in training as a psychiatrist, were a few hangovers

from the pre-Nazi era: J.H. Schultz, Ernest Kretschmer. The only other large influence was American psychiatry - American influence dominated Germany immediately after the war in many spheres, including intellectual. Therefore, Leuner thinks in a way which is acceptable to the average American psychotherapist.

Freudianism has never really come back into the mainstream of German thinking. During the Nazi era some original work came from the German-speaking part of Switzerland: the Rorschach test, Binswanger's Existentialism, Jung's analysis of alchemy and Zordi's test and theories. Even today, the only strong stream in German psychotherapeutic thought that I am aware of are the various schools of existential therapy. The existentialists, however, have concentrated on philosophic orientation as opposed to method. So, at least to my knowledge, the only new psychotherapeutic method which is gaining popularity in Germany is what is coming to be called "The Leuner method."

Let me try to put Leuner's method in some kind of perspective. Just before the Nazi era, in the early 1930s, a number of new methods were developed relatively independently, although their developers were at least in intellectual contact with each other. The two from which Leuner took most were a German by the name of Carl Happich and a Frenchman, Robert Desoille.

Happich was an obscure Darmstadt psychiatrist who was involved with a liberal Christian group which held mountain retreats. His work had a distinctly religious orientation, and this comes through in his technique; as it does in one form or another with everyone who has developed similar methods. Happich wrote only one small book called An Introduction to Meditation (3rd Edition, Darmstadt: Roether, 1948) in which he outlined his method in the sketchiest terms. In the introduction to this book he states that a major influence while developing this method was the study of Buddhist methods of meditation, as they were described in books by various German scholars in that era. None of the scholars I have read - and I tried to track them all down - appear to have had any personal experience with a teacher of meditation ("guru").

Jung during the same years - the early 1930s - simultaneously pursued an interest in oriental methods (Chinese and Indian) and European alchemy. The oriental interest was sparked primarily by Jung's contact with Richard Wilhelm, the German orientalist. After much hesitation Jung wrote an introduction to Wilhelm's translation of The Secret of the Golden Flower. Jung also worked with another German orientalist, Heinrich Zimmer, who was chased out of Germany by the Nazis and died in New York. Jung also had some unfortunate experiences with theosophists. When the Nazi era came, the difficulty of contacting oriental scholars, plus some of Jung's prejudices, led him to concentrate on alchemy. There were many books to be read in Latin, readily available, which he always loved to do. So Jung switched about 1934 to alchemy and literally devoted the rest of his life to grinding out one book after another explaining alchemical symbolism.

Jung also experimented with a method called "Active Imagination." It is very similar to the Leuner method except that the therapist is not present during its use and, therefore, cannot participate in it in any direct way. Jung gave some of his patients symbols to meditate upon and asked them to report their experiences with them. He would react to their reports and then give them a new symbol to work with, but he did not participate during the actual fantasy.

In 1932, J.H. Schultz published his Autogenous Training, which is one of the methods which survived the Nazi era and achieved considerable popularity in Germany immediately after the War. Many therapists who use the Leuner or Desoille methods start with what Schultz calls the "lower stages" of Autogenic Training, to increase relaxation and suggestibility. Schultz's book has seen at least nine editions and has a chapter on the relationship between his method and Yoga, which the "editor" of the English edition thought he should leave out completely. For whatever reasons, Schultz did not develop what he termed the "higher stages" of his method.

In France, Robert Desoille developed his method which he calls "Directed Waking Dreams." His first book was published in 1938. By training he is an engineer, but in spite of this his method is still gaining popularity in France. Leuner took most from Desoille and Happich.

I want to add some reflections about why the method has not grown faster than it has; which is another way of saying "what are the conditions for its growth?" First, the method requires much more of the therapist than any other method I know - in a number of ways. It requires the therapist to enter into therapy in a way which is almost at the opposite end of a continuum from the classical Freudian method.

Secondly, it requires much more imagination or an imaginative creativity - a sort of "thinking on your feet" - than any other method I know. The therapist is required to react relatively quickly. (One of the saving graces of the method is that if you are wrong, the patient will tell you via his symbolic productions.) The therapist must be able to make decisions much quicker than in any other form of therapy I know about.

Lastly, the method apparently requires the therapist to have a relatively stable religious (or at least philosophical) "world view" from which to operate. A narrow type of Christian viewpoint seems to interfere with the full use of the method.

In conclusion I want to mention a review - in the latest issue of Psychedelic Review which I have here - of Leuner's second book Experimental Psychosis (on LSD). Quoting the reviewer: "It is the best single book that has been written in German...an English translation of this valuable and important book should be made without delay for not only could it be used as a guide to the German literature but it would also be useful for the practical suggestions on LSD as an aid to psychotherapy in the mental hospital setting...and for information on the range and content of reactions to be expected with different dosage levels and for the theoretical discussion of the analysis of the symbolic material...there is yet much to be learned about the most effective psychotherapeutic application of these drugs. This book is a significant contribution to that endeavor and perhaps will become a classic."

Leuner has pursued parallel studies with Initiated Symbol Projection and LSD; they are constantly stimulating each other. (Hilton: Is this - LSD - a new development with Leuner?) No, the two have been parallel almost from the beginning in his work way back in 1955. (Hilton: The reason I ask is that you did not make any mention of LSD in your exposition of his work.) I should have. (Winston: Is LSD available in Germany?) Yes, there is not the same hysterical reaction towards it over there!

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Dr. Cooper: The material I will present is taken from a series of cases illustrating the ISP experience and in the tape-recordings you will hear how the therapist participates.

Some patients were given the symbols to work on at home, and I will start by giving an example of this method. A young girl came to me because of weight reduction and other problems. During the course of treatment - and after we had worked with some of the other stages of the ISP method - I had her take a symbolic journey, an excursion to the center of the earth, which was done in her own time and not during the therapeutic hour. This is what she wrote of her experience:

EXCURSION TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

The trip to the center of the Earth began, as any trip might begin through the opening of a cave, except that this cave smelled almost perfume scented and almost irresistible - as a scent in a room which you must discover the source of or know no peace. And, indeed, the twelve of us were most anxious to see what the source or center of our Earth looked like.

We were full of anticipation and speculations as to whether the center was all brimstone and fire or a lost paradise - and although these speculations were made in jest, (for we were all considering this an excursion for amateur scientists), I was secretly hoping it would be a paradise.

We were told that the journey would take 18 hours of walking, 2 hours of swimming, and 3 hours of sleeping. The only part I found curious, as our guide explained this to us, was the 3 hours of sleeping. (Our guide was a youngish fellow with bronze hair and a perpetual surprised look about his face and a glowing complexion which made you welcome each new speech of his, if only for the chance to gaze on his ethereal face.)

I voiced my curiosity at the short sleeping time and asked if we were on a strict schedule.

"Actually," he explained with a glint dancing in his eyes "there's no need for taking longer than that time, and these three hours of sleep aren't really necessary if you look at the situation. You see, the air gets thinner as we descend and you feel quite light (sometimes even giddy) and willing to go on without trouble - but just before reaching the center we're to enter the source of this scent you must have noticed...only it will be twice as strong and actually overwhelming, and irresistible to succumb to - you feel as though you want to bathe in the scent, but being physically unable to do this, you close your mind to all but the odor - apparently the saturation point is reached after three hours, because I always have a bustling, excited group of people anxious to finish the trip about then."

I thought to myself that it sounded like returning to the womb or something - and added quizzically a very bad pun about "sweet dreams" and thereby deciding to keep my ears and eyes open and mouth shut!

By now we had reached a cavernous passageway and the young man suggested we synchronize our watches and continue to do so every fourth section we enter into

until we returned to the surface - explaining that the walls contained a small source of magnetic material which gave the watches rough going. His watch, he explained was demagnetized and therefore could be depended upon.

Looking around the cavern I was reminded of Carlsbad and was sure the beauty of this one was not surpassed by any other - why had it not been claimed as a natural wonder and asked if it was privately owned. It wasn't. Deposits both mushroomed from the floor and hung over head and my first impulse was to crack a piece off of a mushroom, but found it very unyielding. I was almost glad that I couldn't get a piece of the deposit because I felt I was tampering wantonly with Nature and wouldn't have any use for it two months from now when the conversation of my adventures "below" had died out.

The next section we entered was marked as a separation very gradually and only because it was almost entirely covered in a green substance - as opposed to the white and pink and grays and yellows of the preceding area. From a distance I thought that this coloring must be the result of some sort of fungi on the walls, but as we passed through I touched a section of wall and found the surface - aside from its ragged edges - without residue at all. Just then, as I pondered this strange phenomenon, the young man announced that we were entering under water and the green coloring was a result of centuries of water wastes being pressed into the formation of rock around us.

The cave narrowed down to a very small squarish tunnel which forced us all to our hands and knees and to replace our flash lights into our helmets. Entering into this tunnel I realized that I would no longer be of free-will to turn back.

"We are half way through," the guide announced. My hand slipped on some residue and the eerie feeling of it in this semi-darkness frightened me into the thought that I was on my way to hell or hell-freeze more merciful - although ultimately both feel the same to the nervous system. And who said it was for me to choose anyway - and who said I was going to hell - why were these thoughts plaguing me!? After all, we had been guaranteed a round trip, hadn't we? Placated, momentarily, with this thought - I resolved that this was only an excursion, and I was going to have fun. At the same moment I was glad to hear the voice of the guide ring above the sound of heavy breathing that was coming from all of us and reverberating from the stale dampness. The guide's voice sounded strange until I realized that he was whispering to save too much sound from echoing through the tunnel. He announced that we were approaching the end of the tunnel, and to begin putting about three feet distance between us and the people to the front and back...with great hustle and bustling we did this. As we were all getting in place he announced the rest of his instructions. There was a four foot drop into the next section and we should prepare ourselves for this little plunge.

The next section reminded me of a spectacular MGM set. There were hieroglyphics on the wall which the young man insisted the archaeologists were as yet unable to decipher because it was of an even earlier school than any of them had come into contact with...and the white circles which tattooed the place were the result of the many flash bulbs the scientists had employed in order to take back sections of the legend to their laboratories for further investigations and comparison with other hieroglyphics in their files and text books.

But, indeed, this cavern was sprawling into a gaping plateau. Feeling less than insignificant, the group set out on a foot tour to the, as yet, invisible end. We were to discover as we wandered, that the lack of comprehensive view of this place was due to the fact that we were transversing an incline that was to lead us even deeper in to our chosen labyrinth.

As we went on and on through this section I no longer found the walls as fascinating as my own thoughts, for I felt very, if not quite, lost - and that I must keep silent as to my own feelings for I felt the pinch of hysteria creeping up from the pit of my stomach. The silent communication the group maintained with this place was turning into an unbearable monster...the only human sound you could hear was the guide, and unless you pealed your ear, you missed his words which were lost almost immediately to the air and space.

No one spoke.

I felt lonely and desolate - uncomprehending and insignificant and rejected...and hated this place because my ego was completely without roots here - my human heart seemed to cease its rhythm, my human feet though moving in step, seemed to peddle an imaginary bicycle rather than push me on to another and then another step. I was crying silent tears, wanting desperately to make a sound so someone would know I was there - but all would have been lost to such a great void. I thought of the foolishness of these feelings - I thought how fruitless it was to be so many things to different people - my preoccupation with things earthly, and finding no capacity for handling things spiritual - of callousness, of emptiness. I had convinced myself that I would mortally die if I spent five more minutes in this chamber of horrors when we passed a rock behind which we were to make our exit.

As a group, we found ourselves at a large body of clear blue, inviting water. I threw down my pack, jumped out of my clothes and jumped into the water - relieved to have the feel of a familiar earth element to cover and bathe myself in. Splashing and bubbling in it and emitting a trail of air bubbles under water was reassuring, and I there regained my equilibrium. I pulled myself back on to the surrounding rock and observed many people joyously floundering in the water and for the first time it occurred to me that the last experience was not a singular one, but had had the same effect on many. But what of the ones who sat calmly on the bank or who were leisurely preparing for the impending swim - were they insensitive to what had just passed? Did they need no reassurance of their existence. Or had they used that suspended time to communicate with a god...a non-personal god. Had they utilized and even been thankful for the opportunity of that little time lacking all earthly concern?

The guide has gathered all of the group out of the water, and we were synchronizing our watches again. Surprise was voiced all around and the least startled was not I - for that "little time" spent in the after-room was not less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours! Three and one half hours spent concentrating on me. All that time lost...spent only worrying about my lack of identification - how humbled I felt - how resolute - how revolted I was at my own lack of spiritualism and self-knowledge - and yet, through my resolution, knowing that on the trip back I would undoubtedly go through the ordeal in just the same fashion.

I had expected the swim to be an exhausting one, but due to the air or the scent or some state of mind, it was a wonderful experience - almost the prize

for braving the ante-chamber. Under the water lay layers of plant life that distracted me so much that I couldn't resist pushing my small equipment raft as far ahead as possible and diving in and out of this colorful growth. The layers graduated from a flowery growth near the surface to a greenish, bluish yellow sea weed to various floating leaf-like and soft twig like forms - without diving equipment I never ventured lower than ten feet, but could see beyond that point still more striations and with the water actually seeming to change into rainbows; distinctly divided into layers. The curious thing, and it disturbed me somewhat, was that there were no fish of any kind - and I couldn't understand where the algae received its nourishment - unless this water was very rich in minerals and such - also, how could the few hundred torches on the walls emit so much light under this water!?

On the far bank we rested and ate our canned foods. No fire was made, and we were a very congenial group.

The next hour of our trip was spent walking down a great natural staircase that wound so many times, occasionally you were thrown involuntarily against the wall from the momentum; then sharply interrupting this pattern with a turn. We were all running - for the steps were wide - and every so many hundred steps my knees seemed to give way and I floated on - jerking physically into reality once again on about the fiftieth step. I wondered how we'd ever climb up them again!

At the bottom, breathless and excited, the group gathered to look on to our next area to be crossed. To each side were tremendous cataracts which seemed to go about two miles up and three-fourths that across. There was a natural bridge as wide as a narrow street spanning the flood these waterfalls made. We crossed it without waiting for further word from our guide, as we were still feeling the pushing surge of the descent of the stairs.

Calmed, and physically tired, I was amused by the hum in my mind which matched the sounds of the splashing cataracts and found thoughts laborious to push through this all absorbing noise.

The guide, and five of the men, rolled away a stone from the entrance to the next chamber. We entered into it and slipped sideways over a narrow ledge and then on to an incline which led into a very slick sided hilly valley consumed in fire. We followed the guide without hesitation through this valley with complete detachment of the deed we were accomplishing. Upon reaching the other end we all turned in stunned silence to review the former area, and I suddenly realized we had all been hypnotized by the hum of the cataracts to the point of delirium. We were momentarily completely without free-will - physical or mental. Only an instinct to be on with our trip.

I was thoughtful of what the effects of this journey would have upon return to the surface, but could just barely recall the feelings I had just had and wanted to ask someone near me how he was reacting to all this, but we had become such a serious and pensive group I remained unsollicitous. Surely, at least, I concluded, I will have aged several years, or, by consequence, I might have been doomed to live forever - like some character out of fiction who had pandered with things forbidden and unknown. How absurd my thoughts had become - things would be all too normal once back on the surface - and how could I even hope to share these experiences with people who hadn't made the same trip without being carted off,

accused of suffering from acute hallucinations. Would this group be bound together by this common experience? Would there be annual get togethers among us? I doubted it - I doubted there would be much memory of what we left behind - once again inebriated with the synthetic realities of the world with which we were all too familiar. Much too familiar.

But, onward!

We were synchronizing our watches again - I at least expected them to be melted...but nothing could surprise me now - well, at least whatever I expected to happen or not happen would not surprise me.

Still great in thought our group trudged on through two more chambers that would ultimately lead us to our destination. The former of the two was almost beyond my comprehension, for we had all joined hands and were walking quickly through a heavy pitch black downpour of rain that couldn't be felt by the skin, but to my mind I was sure we would all drown in it if we didn't find some shelter from it. I didn't realize we weren't wet until we entered the second area.

In it, I mused, the clouds for earth must be made. For there were suspended about the place at different elevations clouds the such like I hadn't seen since I was a child and would lie upon the grass on a clear Spring day - they conjured up a warmth and happiness which turned to a curious reprimand of my lack of interest in such simple things as clouds. All I looked at them these days for was to speculate on whether it would rain or not...seems as though I couldn't afford the time to investigate the images they created. But, here I did. As we walked through we disturbed the shape of the ones near the floor - and funnily enough they clinked like ice cubes as you waded through, and I was almost gleeful at this walk. I saw a stallion (the upper half) kicking into the "air". I saw a pussycat on his haunches as awaiting a little mouse to bring it amusement. There was a baby carriage with an attendant (nurse, mother), there was a man with a very fat jolly face and protruding ears - indeed one was even pointed! There was a treasure box, a rabbit, and a tree (like a pine tree) - but we were at the end, and the guide was encouraging us through the short tunnel into the final chamber. I truly was sad to leave this area, among all, and I felt the gravity of my years - both the sophistication and the actual years.

And here was our destination. The source of the scent - the alluring quality which had dedicated our instincts to the same end. There was no need to discover the specific source, for upon entering, you were overwhelmed by the velvet, downy, warm seductive fog that was not a fog, which encompassed you entirely - which smothered you with the physical and imagined manifestations of affection - and you floated - unnoticing of the actual substance of this euphoria. And you slept. Not a blinded unconscious sleep - but a very personal sleep - an all aware, but uncomprehending sleep. An embryonic, complete sleep.

- end -

Cooper:

That was one example of a woman doing the ISP on her own. My second example is of a taped session at the Westchester County Penitentiary, where I am stationed at the present time. We have large numbers of young men with criminal records of long duration, classically labeled as passive-aggressive personalities, with drug addiction, alcoholism, etc. This tape is of a man about 25 years of age

with a history of practically every type of violation; he has marked difficulties and goes into ungovernable rages.

(The tape was not of good quality but sufficient was audible to show how the boy was taken quickly - and with little affect - through the earlier symbolic situations of the field, the mountain, the forest and then into the cave which the therapist told him went down to the center of the earth. Excerpts follow of the most significant exchanges between the therapist and the patient. Ed.)

T: What is right in the center of the earth?

P: There is a sort of glow...it is a volcano.

T: How would you get rid of the volcano?

P: I would turn my back on it....

T: But you have to deal with it in some way, how can you prevent it erupting and doing damage?

P: I don't think you can, really...but I could plug it up with earth. (This volcano was clearly symbolic of the patient's own inner state - his ungovernable rages, etc. I allowed him to back away from the symbolic situation for the time being. JC.)

P: I am leaving there now; I am walking out of it.

T: All right then; now you come out into the forest and see a swampy area.... (Here the patient crossed through the swamp by breaking branches from trees and laying them down. He cleaned himself up and proceeded through the forest. Ed.)

T: In a little clearing you see a wise old man, sitting there, how would you describe him?

P: He has old clothes, a beard and gray hair - somebody I have never seen before.

T: He is very wise so you can ask him any questions that come to your mind.

P: Can I ask him about the swamp and the cave I have been in?

T: What do you imagine he would answer?

P: That filling in the volcano would not last....I plugged it up for only a while, until it builds up enough pressure and steam and then it will blow the rest of it.

(I did not press this point but took him on through the forest, for this was also a quick exploratory use of all the ISP symbols. The patient found a house and then a church, both of which he entered with no significant affect. I then led him back to the cave and the question of the volcano. JC.)

T: Coming back to the volcano you say that we cannot plug it up, but what can we do with it - we have to deal with it some way.

P: I cannot think of any answer (then after a long delay, Ed.). It is very hard for me to think. I guess the only way out is to keep filling it in, to keep it quiet for a while.

T: But suppose you allow it to blow up? Let it blow up -

(The next few minutes of the tape dealt with the lava rushing out, killing and maiming many persons; but encouraged by the therapist the patient cleaned up the mess, patched up the burns and eased the pain of those injured and buried the dead. Ed.)

T: So in your mind's eye you did actually see yourself doing something to help; so it does not seem to be so hard after all for it to explode?

P: Yes, but it's bad because if it didn't blow I wouldn't have to help nobody! You have to help people once they are caught in the explosion.

T: But there must be some other way in which you can deal with this volcano... could you not have it erupt somewhere else, possibly into the sea?

P: Yes, you could put another hole in the side of it like a pipeline, or steam fitting...and I could put an emergency valve on it. (T: Where would you put this valve and pipeline?) In some desolate place where it wouldn't hurt anyone.

T: Do you think you could put it out into the bottom of the ocean?

P: Yeah! Yeah!

T: All right then you have your safety valve in the cave and your pipeline, so let's go back out into the forest.

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Cooper: You can see from these excerpts the key points are his discovery of the volcano, the dialogue with the wise old man who told him his earth plug which covered the lava would not hold; his letting the volcano blow and finding he could do something to help those it hurt; and finally finding a solution by putting in a "safety valve" in the cave and running a "pipeline" into a remote part of the ocean where he felt that the pressure could be relieved if it did "blow" and would hurt no one.

His response since that time has been dramatic; the correction officers have noticed a marked change and the inmate is now working productively for the first time in his career. His case will be followed for a year.

You will note that the tape lasted 12 minutes and this was the actual time we took for this whole ISP experience.

Schutz: So with this man this was a kind of a preliminary run-through of everything in the ISP, and then you would come back later to particular situations?

Cooper: Yes, you come back later and check on the changes in the symbolic situations. I do not know of any "one shot" techniques - these are all part of an ongoing therapeutic process.

Schutz: So you watch to see which is most relevant?

Cooper: Yes, that's right. The first run-through provides leads as to what area should be covered more deeply later.

Loveless: I would like to ask a technical detail about the cave. You have them see an animal come out, and I wonder if there is a special reason for that. I have tried this, but I say "something will come out." And often it will be a flood of water, which turns out to be tears which they have held back for years; or a huge wind comes out, which is really a deep sigh that they have kept in for 20 years! So I wondered if there is a particular reason for you specifying an animal.

Cooper: No; and in view of your experience I will say "Let's see what comes out" in my next ISP case.

Swartley: Historically, Happich described using just four symbols: the meadow, the mountain, a church and a spring of water. Then Leuner worked with a psychologist by the name of H.J. Kornadt and they decided to create something like a set of Thematic Apperception or Rorschach plates. They experimented with many symbols and fixed on those which proved the most productive. They included in their series a figure emerging from a cave.

Cooper: Incidentally, the "journey into the 'heart'" (instead of the cave) is Robert Gerard's modification.

Schutz: How do you (Bill Swartley) differ from the way Jack Cooper uses it?

Swartley: The major difference is that I would not go nearly as fast - perhaps take a month seeing someone once a week to climb the mountain, whereas Jack took this man straight up.

Aaronson: I generally take whatever the presented complaint is and convert it into an image; then I will work in terms of that image. As an example: I had a patient with a sense of tension in his arms, so the reasonable thing was to have him visualize his arm with a door in it, and go in and find out what was there. His mother was there!

I had somebody else with just a feeling of depression. I had him concentrate on the feeling and told him that as he concentrated an image would replace the feeling. The image in this case was a large black mass; so I had him go through the mass to find out where it came from. The mass was caused by a praying mantis-like creature; it was coming out of a phonograph, so we turned off the phonograph - and the depression lifted.

What I want immediately in all these cases is a sense on their part that something positive is happening. This is how I essentially proceed. A large part of the time I use the heart; and also the brain - which I did with a couple of people who were highly intellectualized. It is very interesting that with the brain image you very often run into an area of defence; they will tell you: "No one else has ever been in here; get out!"

I often use the situation where imaginatively the patient is standing in front of a wall. In the wall is a door and on the door is written whatever it is that you want to look at. I tell him: "Open the door and go in and tell me what you find." But I do not ask for visualization - this is a different thing all together. Even with people who insist that they cannot visualize, they can fantasy; and eventually fantasy will take over. Also, an historical event is just as much a fantasy, as far as I am concerned.

Schutz: You do not use the fixed symbols then?

Aaronson: I use some of them; like the meadow - it is a nice opening gambit; and I like Desoille's sword and urn as openers.

Pinard: Which of these visualizations, or experiences, has proved the most dynamic in terms of catharsis, or disturbance or in terms of bringing about elation? Jack, as you were talking to your patient (on the tape) about the house and asking "What do you see?" I was putting myself in the place of the patient; and I saw a big house with many windows, looking very pleasant. Then as I approached the door I had a very dynamic and pleasant experience; but when you asked me to go into the house I found it a very dismal, dead, distressing house. Now that experience was so dynamic that practically all the other material presented was background for me from there on - I was still in that house! If I were the patient I would like to ask the psychiatrist to help me with this darned house!

Cooper: Right! Another patient of mine - an obsessive compulsive woman - at the bottom of the cave found an eye which greatly disturbed her. She decided to chop it into little pieces, but every time she chopped, more eyes would develop; so finally she had to put all the eyes together and then bring them out into the sunlight with the thought that the sun's rays would cause the eye to change. The eye became a mirror, which then became a boy who grew into a feeble minded lad who could earn a living by making shoes. All this took many sessions; but it was after this feeble minded figure became capable of earning a living for himself, that the patient was able to move out of the hospital.

Pinard: I noticed spots in the tape recording where the patient obviously became spontaneous in imagination. Why did you stop it there? (Cooper: I didn't) You allow him to go on as long as he remains spontaneous?

Cooper: The spontaneity is most dramatic; but sometimes the presence of the tape-recorder brings a change in the patient. There is so much more material without the tape recorder. I found that taking notes without the recorder helps.

Pinard: How do you evaluate this technique? What actually does the psychiatrist look for? Is he largely trying to diagnose the patient, or producing catharsis, etc.?

Cooper: I would say both. This tape that you heard of the lad - with the volcano - there is no question of his hostility; you know that you are dealing with the aggressive-hostile type of criminal psychopath. (Swartley: Periodic, mostly passivity.) Yes, mostly passivity with periodical outbursts of aggression: a passive-aggressive personality, whatever nomenclature you want to follow.

Pinard: Do you find that some images recur frequently in the patients?

Swartley: Do you mean recur in one patient or with different patients? (Pinard: with different patients.) In both these cases tonight, the 'wise old man' took a very similar form. Also both patients got a bear. Those symbols probably came from the 'archetypal level' of the patient's unconscious.

Pinard: Would it be valuable to acquire a list of general symbols and the likely meaning associated with those symbols?

Swartley: Exceedingly valuable. I have hundreds of notes to do this and Leuner made the preparation of a dictionary of archetypes a lifetime project. They are sufficiently universal that it could be done.

Cooper: (reading from his notes of cases) Here are two bears, one tiger, one baby. And here is another case where the patient could not see anything at all coming out of the cave. Here is another where a little baby came crawling out.

Swartley: Regarding your question about diagnosis versus therapy. I would summarize by saying that there is an initial diagnosis of which these tapes are a good example. But, if you are a therapist, it is hard to resist avoiding therapy while doing diagnosis.

Schutz: Suppose you get someone "hung up" in the house or in the cave and they are really disturbed. Do you just go on and leave them there?

Cooper: They will just block. One man saw a completely empty church and refused to do anything else with it, so there was no point in pressing it.

Schutz: What I mean is, when they do get involved and they are in the middle of the house, do you just skip and go on to the next symbol?

Swartley: If you have good rapport, your patients can sense how involved you want them to get.

Schutz: That is not my experience. Sometimes I give it to a group - just ask them to shut their eyes for three minutes - and some people get pretty disturbed - to the point where I feel that I have to work with them a little. Also I do not find that they know how deeply I want them to get into this.

Swartley: I had similar experiences with several people when I simply wanted to demonstrate the method, and said so clearly beforehand. Once at the University of Virginia I demonstrated this method to the psychiatric residents. I described it and then asked for volunteers. I told them I did not want to get into anything deep; it would be brief, and that I simply wanted to prove how easy it is to get imagery. But within five minutes the volunteer was "spewing his guts"; so much so I could hardly turn him off!

Schutz: So I am wondering if you have not to be always ready to accept such a possibility; so that to just do it only diagnostically does not seem to be a real possibility.

Cooper: It is the same with the TAT in which you try to hold as much as possible to a diagnostic pattern, but it will often extend into therapy. We are doing a series at the present time to determine how it works diagnostically.

Swartley: To summarize: first, you can use it as a diagnosis tool but you are tempted - and sometimes forced - during diagnosis to put it to therapeutic use. Always get them back to a safe place. Secondly, you can use ISP therapeutically. However, while you are focussing on therapy, you are constantly getting more diagnostic information. Thirdly, you can evaluate the therapeutic effect as you go along, by going back to an earlier symbol and asking "What does it look like now?" As the symbol changes you can literally see, measured in symbolic terms, the effect of the therapy.

Aaronson: Will you clarify something for me that intrigues me about the method - the lack of, say, intellectualization; the non-necessity for interpretation. But when you start talking about interpreting the change in the symbols and constantly being aware of the new diagnostic material, that seems sort of antithetical to the whole thrust of the therapy. If a symbol does come out, you have a method for exploring its meaning for the individual patient. It might be of some research interest to accumulate the frequency of a symbol; but the use of symbol frequencies therapeutically doesn't seem to me to be in the spirit of the whole approach. Is there something I am not understanding about it?

Cooper: We are attempting to research it, and Joe Potter at the Westchester County Penitentiary is interested and will see what he can do from a diagnostic standpoint. I prefer to think of it as predominantly a therapeutic tool.

Aaronson: One difference, I would like to suggest, in comparison with the TAT is that if you want to use it diagnostically you should have the persons keep their eyes open, then they cannot be captured. (Cooper: That is a trick I hadn't thought of.) I have used it a couple of times diagnostically when patients' eyes were open; and they can go and tell you a story, but they do not regress. But whenever we have had demonstrations, I have never had one where we did not start hitting some affect.

Hilton: Some people visualize better with their eyes open than shut.

Cooper: Yes, I have patients who get just as wrapt up with their eyes wide open. You have to use your judgment as you go along. As Bill pointed out, you participate; it's an involvement with the patient that keeps you on your toes constantly.

Pinard: Jack, have you any knowledge of how much this lady (the first patient who wrote out her journey to the center of the earth. Ed.) knew of psychology? (Cooper: She had none whatsoever, and had come entirely the other way; she had avoided any kind of psychological material, and had always had a sort of bias against it.) It may be my imagination, but I started thinking about regression - at one time she almost seemed to go through a birth trauma. (Cooper: She did!) And at another time she had Freud's oceanic feeling, this sort of heavenly-never-never-land experience. It almost seemed as if she knew a great deal of Freud and Rank and Jung.

Cooper: Yes, and if you see some of her other productions - it is a veritable encyclopedia of psycho-pathology! (What is her I.Q.?) About 110.

(Question, largely undecipherable, raised about the type, quality and effectiveness of the imagery, and the 'distance' between the person and his images. Ed.)

Swartley: If you draw a continuum from, say, the house image through to archetypal level images, such as the wise old man, my experience is that the further you are towards the archetypal end of that continuum, the more therapeutic the effect. Another point: the more difficult the situation encountered - if they succeed in meeting it - the greater are the therapeutic effects.

Leuner has called this a non-analytical method. As a generalization I would say that the patient does not have to analyze anything. The therapeutic effect comes during the symbolic experience. Afterwards you may polish the edges intellectually, but most of the therapy occurs on the symbolic level.

Cooper: Assagioli compares this process in the unconscious to a moving picture film which is developed inside and gradually comes out over a period of time. The images are projected out by the person. As you change the image a change will occur in the individual, and the less that they know about the process intellectually the better.

Swartley: As opposed to the patient, the therapist should have an intellectual familiarity with symbolism. While using the method, you wait until you get an emotional reaction. It is very easy to see - for instance, the volcano in Jack's case. You just work with symbols which evoke an emotional reaction and you don't have to think particularly about the diagnostic implications.

The therapist is required to act - to suggest, cajole and encourage. The better his intellectual base, the better his intellectual knowledge of the rules regarding what he should do, and when to do it - the better. The therapist cannot approach it as naively as the patient.

Loveless: What I am wondering about are the rules for the therapist, appraised in terms of the symbolic content, and if you get into anything like that. How is this technique used in relation to therapy in general? Is it used as a basic therapeutic technique or as an adjunct to whatever is your normal therapy? These people who wrote up the symbolic journey at home, did they also go through an analytic therapy while you were with them?

Cooper: One woman had nine sessions in all, and certainly in nine sessions you cannot complete an orthodox analytic procedure, yet the change and the improvement was amazing.

Swartley: I use it as often and as much as I can. It is my "big gun", and whenever I have any possibility of using it, I do so. So far I cannot use it all the time; I find some people are not ready for it; so we stick with dreams for a while or with realistic problems. But my whole pressure and direction is to get them to be able to use it, for when I can use it, the effect is most immediate. (Question: If you are using dreams then why can't you use this?) My normal method is to start with dreams; get them familiar with symbolism; then to take a dream which is unfinished - where they are running away from something - and use this method to finish it. When they have an unfinished dream and are able to finish it, the more difficulty they have in finishing it and succeed, the more the therapeutic effect.

Lazure: Has Leuner - or any of those people using this technique - evolved any new method or classification based on the type of reaction the patient might have?

Swartley: Not to my knowledge; and it might be antipathetic to the flexibility which is required. Flexibility is lost as soon as you start to classify, to abstract.

Cooper: The essence of it is to remain flexible and not to be tied to any particular system. It is very difficult to utilize this with the psychotic. One must work another way, and try to bring them to recognize reality situations. Have them look in store windows and visualize all the items. Have them listen to music and pick one instrument and follow it through - may be even learn to play an instrument. Then once they have shown some facility in this reality testing,