

AN UNKNOWN DESTINY

*Terror, Psychotherapy, and Modern Initiation:
Readings in Nietzsche, Heidegger, Steiner*

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Foreword by Robert Sardello, Ph.D.

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Foreword

NEW PSYCHOLOGIES spring up nearly as fast as new model cars. Each of them bears pretty much the same assumptions. There is something from the past, not fully conscious, that must be dissolved, eliminated, eradicated, and maybe forgiven, if one is to feel comfortable within the world. Other forms of therapy—concern for the soul, connecting with archetypal realities, awakening a sense of Self—exist only at the outer margins of culture. The more common and more universal view of therapeutic psychology degrades the “Queen of Disciplines” into a primarily pragmatic technology oriented toward restoring individuals to being servants of the collective realm, the masses, the State. Radically put, Michael Gruber convincingly shows us that psychology has become the servant of terrorist structures of consciousness.

We are primarily aware of the physical dimensions of terrorism and are wholly oriented toward strategies of war against it: terrorism fighting terrorism. We remain totally unaware of how the dominant mode of spectator consciousness—in which we become onlookers not only on the world, but also on ourselves—turns destructive at a certain point in the evolution of consciousness because of the inevitable unfolding of the primacy of power and control. That point has forcefully arrived. We have become free and independent (or act as if we are) of the spiritual forces of nature and of the cosmos and seemingly become the creators of our own human destiny.

The formation of the egoic structure of consciousness is responsible for this illusion, an illusion that substitutes self-centeredness for individuality

of being. By this I mean the notion of having the right to be an independent entity rather than feeling the mysterious individuality of human life in its ongoing currents within the undisclosed mystery of Being. This illusion is upheld through all-pervasive intrinsic fear, which results in the construction both of a world of distractions to veil the fear and defenses that keep it from being exposed. As a consequence, a doubling of egoic consciousness has come about that has made it possible to manipulate fear as the instrument to perpetuate control within the system of this dominant structure of consciousness. The control comes about by turning everything—even intangible realities—into something to be commodified, placing it within an imagination of need and of scarcity that keeps attention occupied with the “outside” and the fantasy that inner peace is attained through outer satisfaction.

Michael Gruber shows us, in magnificent ways, that the only way through the age of terror is through taking up forms of modern initiatory practices. This path of knowledge is led, surprisingly, not by spiritual leaders and initiates, but is undertaken through self-initiation founded in the felt sense that soul and spirit must always be entered simultaneously and without detaching from the world. Spiritual practices alone lead to various sorts of mania, while soul practices alone lead to self-absorption. In our time, spirituality and psychology must merge into a creative synthesis of spiritual psychology if we are to break through into new structures of consciousness.

Spiritually oriented psychology frees us from an obsessive, singular view toward the past, which can serve only to keep the focus on what is done, completed, and perpetuates a closed system, unable to find the truly new. Such spiritual psychology is a creative rather than a destructive explosion, opening the closed system of consciousness into the emergence, within ongoing life, of the practical workings of divine forces that compose both the world and the human being, both intrinsically one and expressed in a world-individual polarity. What we find in the world is always ourselves, spiritually displayed, and what we find individually is always the world in its signification.

Psychotherapy, understood in its most radical sense as the practice of the “Queen of Disciplines” concerns initiation, an insight that leads this

book into extraordinary places. Psychotherapy, as intimated by Gruber, may be the only contemporary venue available for initiation. It is primarily a prototypical action between people, in which the vertical imagination that has characterized spiritual practices of the past is now found in the “between.” This implies a revolution in the initiatory process, one in which the “gods” are no longer situated in the vertical “above” or “below.” The gods have not completely disappeared, but now persist in the soul/spirit field between people. As long as this shift goes unrecognized, however, people still rely on dead religions for the shell of spiritual experience or on outmoded, atavistic kinds of spiritual practices that, at best, can take one only into a memory of the spiritual worlds, not its living presence all around us.

The trouble, of course, is that psychology is completely contaminated and can only impotently touch the outer surface of what is now available as soul/spirit experience. Indeed, psychology does not even recognize the autonomy of spirit experience and, at best, in a few of the depth psychologies, classifies spirit experience as a variety of soul or psychic experience, depriving it of the reality of imaginal realms and presences that are autonomous from human-being, but only disclosed and opened through human heart-presence. That is to say, psychology can, when it stretches real hard, understand human beings as having spiritual experiences, but it does not have the proper tools to understand what it is to be a spiritual human being and not simply a human being doing spiritual things.

In *An Unknown Destiny*, Gruber has written the prototypical book that gives us the basic new tools to undergo and recognize that humanity is passing through an as-yet unrecognized initiatory shift of being. It is extremely important to notice—well, one cannot help but notice—that this book is written in such a way that the whole of it is in every part; it all occurs simultaneously and it is only due to the limitations of having to put it into standard linear language, that it unfolds page by page. When reading this book it is important to feel that we have been invited into the intensity of meditative consciousness. While the form of the writing takes us through essentials of the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Steiner, it is no mere exposition of or commentary on what these individuals thought and did. The writing is already within a new mode or octave

of consciousness. Having to struggle within this new form brings about at least the beginning of the formation of new capacities. It is a book to undergo rather than simply to read. It is a book to bear, as in bearing a new child.

I have never been particularly fond of Nietzsche, probably because I saw many of my fellow students, years ago, taken, fascinated, even entranced, with his passion, but with no way to let that passion open into something creative. At last that view changes here. A central effect of Gruber's creative approach to Nietzsche, is to demonstrate, not simply talk about, the fact that it is necessary to throw oneself across the threshold into initiatory realms, into the completely unknown. Initiatory experience cannot be planned; one cannot, in advance, know where one is going or what will happen. Even more, this chopping off of one's purposive, calculating head must be done with the greatest enthusiasm possible. Still, why choose Nietzsche to exemplify this necessity? Part of the answer lies in suggesting that Nietzsche's program for abandoning our mental structures is exactly what is needed to enter the unknown and to develop the capacity of letting life unfold from the unknown, unknowingly, and with the fullest attention.

A further response lies in Zarathustra, Nietzsche's Zarathustra. Living intimately within the soul-being of Nietzsche was—no, is—the paradigm of fully bodied imaginal consciousness. And Zarathustra is additionally paradigmatic of present-day initiate consciousness, which includes an awareness of the massive tendency always to reduce the human being and world-being to the reductive “nothing-but” category of material processes, wholly subject to the intense cleverness of sub- and unconscious presences that seem deep and mysterious—even the realm of the gods—but are in fact hell-bent on making hell seem as if it were paradise.

The entry point and wholeness of the initiation of humanity is to be found in developing the capacity of imaginal consciousness. This book is written wholly from within imaginal consciousness. Michael Gruber tells us from the outset that a different and wholly unfamiliar structure of thinking is needed to enter into the next stage of consciousness and that this structure is “heart-thinking,” which gives access to the imaginal realms. Here, then, is the key to the whole of what this book is about and

the reason why it is not possible to read this work without undergoing inner change.

Heart-thinking consists of taking in, in a completely receptive manner, what is before one—sensory experience, or ideas, or images and even dreams—not mentally, but through reaching out through the heart to feel their presence as the interiority of Being, and even as the traces of spirit presences. Feeling is something active. It is not simply the inner reaction to something. We feel—as in “to reach out and touch.” The interior heart region is the only bodily region capable of this reaching out to touch that is accompanied with a particular kind of consciousness—the consciousness of the inner presence of the inner qualities of what we attend to. What we attend to in this manner echoes within us. Then it fades gradually, like the afterimage of a candle. The fading, however, is not the disappearance of what was received; rather, what was received now finds its way into the larger cosmos; it finds its connection with spiritual presences. Then, the Whole is felt as inner resonance and can be expressed as intuitive insights. This way of knowing is a new yoga; it is what Rudolf Steiner called “the new yoga of Light.” It is our access to imaginal consciousness; it is the way through dualistic, separative consciousness.

The complete sense of what imaginal consciousness consists of has many dimensions. The dimension that is most clearly demonstrated in this writing is that this new form is a new orientation—one which is “situative” rather than “situated.” Rather than speaking of something as if it is already formed and completed, as we do when stringing thoughts together, this mode of consciousness enters the unknown in the deepest of Silence, and waits with full attention until something wants to be said. It is a thinking-together with spiritual presences. We feel, then, something coming-into-being, situating, rather than as already here to be described as a dead corpse. We always feel such situative thinking as inspired, brilliant, new, creative. And true. Such is the way of this book.

Central to imaginal consciousness, and thus to Zarathustra—and through him, Nietzsche—is the complete engagement of the gods, of God, with the human. God seeks to be known, longs to be known by human beings, for this is the way God knows God. The engagement

between the gods and humans is a kind of play in which one becomes the other, and the un-manifest continually becomes manifest. None of this vast complex unity is available to usual consciousness. Entry is gained through attending to the longing of the heart, gradually recognizing that this longing is not ours, not our wanting to fulfill some need or desire, but is the presence of God's longing for us. Developing the capacity to follow the presence of longing into new forms of consciousness requires becoming present to the creative capacity of attention. Attention is not just noticing something, letting something get hold of our attention; rather it is the creative, generative spiritual organ through which the presence of the workings of forces beyond us can be felt as intimately engaged with us. Through developing attentive presence, transformations of the heart ensue, reconfiguring the whole we are and are within.

Equally central to being present to the imaginal is that we run into the opposing forces of darkness, those necessary beings that are impediments to smooth sailing in imaginal realms when that sailing is also world-oriented. One would think that having discovered heart-thinking, where even thinking itself is felt as a cooperative endeavor with spiritual presences, would open a new and beautiful world. It does, but that does not rid either us or the world of the impulses of revenge, violence, cleverness, and forgetfulness that now dominate earthly materialistic consciousness. Now, however, the context is quite different. At least potentially, a modicum of freedom is present in which it becomes possible to attain a creative presence with these delicious darkneses. Nietzsche, in the end, however, may well have been swallowed by them through the fatal wound of his own hubris or *amor fati*. Thus, something more is needed than the leap into engagement.

Although Nietzsche participated deeply in the felt realization that consciousness itself is formed of and by love—and in the living of *amor fati*—he still manifests a certain thrashing about. There is still present in him a blending of love and passion, and a felt-sense of presences without the capacity of truly allowing and perceiving their autonomy within a unity of consciousness. Rudolf Steiner, the second presiding genius engaged by Michael Gruber, had enormous respect for Nietzsche and even wrote a book about him, *Nietzsche: Fighter for Freedom*. Steiner

recognized in Nietzsche the beginnings of heart-thinking. Thus, it is not surprising to find these two, Nietzsche and Steiner, side by side in this book. The chapters on Steiner are a remarkable synthesis of Steiner's enormous gifts to the world; while the sections on psychotherapy are of particular importance in recognizing psychotherapy as a modern initiation practice.

The kind of therapy suggested in the Steiner section of this writing is an excursion across the border into the land of the unknown. What a therapist needs to develop far more than any theoretical knowledge or techniques is the capacity of complete surrender. Surrender does not just happen. It is not just a kind of giving up, or letting go. Rather, it is an active process, a conscious process of yielding into an unknown that is something more than an absence, a void, but is an opening to a resonating presence of a field that encompasses both therapist and patient. Some depth psychologists are familiar with this field and have written and theorized about it as the "interactive field." Michael Gruber adds significantly to our knowledge of this realm, first by noting that being within this field of the "third" requires a pouring of all of attention into the field so that nothing is left as observer or even as witness. Further, this yielding into the field that has captured the patient in overwhelming ways—that simultaneously threaten and announce freedom of being—is nothing less than an excursion into the land of death without a map. It is entirely reminiscent of descriptions of spiritual awakening and its attending dangers.

A brilliant sketch of the new territory of therapeutic initiation is given that, in its detail, shows that initiatory experiences, which are now happening spontaneously to many people, are typically put under the old classification of psychological illnesses. They are not psychological illness at all. They are spiritual rumblings that can happen within the emotional body, or the life body, or in the realms of character, wishes, desires, longing. Most significantly they are something that at once announces and thwarts the awaking possibility of developing the capacity of creative generation of oneself as world-relation at each moment. That is, what is now increasingly coming about in the world is the possibility to apprehend every moment as our coming-into-being rather than

as “having” an identity, which may be threatened by the press of past difficulties.

The pathologies of new consciousness, a consciousness sensitive to and capable of receiving impressions from creative spiritual presences as well as destructive ones, are pathologies or sufferings of becoming rather than of having-been. Scratching around to locate the origin of such suffering in the past—and even in the archetypal rather than the prototypal imagination—serves only to feed the darkness. Obsessions with death and dying, chronic fatigue, attention deficit “disorders,” terror of fragmentation, dissociating, certain kinds of delusion, and most significantly because it is now epidemic, bi-polar disorder, are illnesses that have to do with the real, substantial time stream from the future; illnesses of *potentia*, of coming-to be. Simply to be removed from the soul’s be-coming due to living within a culture of the past, which is now “egotized,” is already an illness. In addition, because there exists absolutely nothing in the culture that prepares and strengthens the heart forces for the influx of the coming-to-be, shatterings of the soul occur, due to the overwhelming experiences of this initiatory threshold that is now upon humanity. This book is utterly groundbreaking and courageous in bringing these new pathologies to light. Furthermore, these new sufferings require completely new senses of the practice of psychotherapy and the training of therapists. As long as therapists are educated in old ways, the revelations of these sufferings remain closed.

An additional factor enters when experiences of suffering related to being overwhelmed in the dimension of coming-to-be occur within a culture dominated by technicity and materialism. Under these conditions, these experiences often do not show up as sufferings at all, but rather as the capacity to inflict suffering, especially terrorizing trauma, on others without any feeling or comprehension of the moral depravity involved. This tricky situation is due to the process of doubling. Doubling was first recognized as a pathology by Robert Jay Lifton, though there are many precedents of the phenomenon in literature, such as the writing of Guy de Maupassant. I have traced out this heritage in my book, *Freeing the Soul from Fear*. Nowadays, however, what was an unusual phenomenon of seeing oneself before oneself—doing things that one would never do

(Jekyll and Hyde, is an example of this phenomenon)—has taken a further step in development.

The individual spirit being of a person can be doubled by a force that looks, acts like, and seems to be one's spirit being. But it is taken over by cleverness and power. We see the phenomenon everywhere in corporate culture and in politics. It is a spiritual pathology, intensely difficult to break through because those bearing it are, within this culture, the highly successful. This book provides a first step in working with this illness in an extremely clear picturing of the various forms of doubling. This first step is thus to become aware of the phenomenon, to realize that there is an inherent incredible cleverness to doubling that cannot be countered, and then to be able to enter into a heart field with one who is experiencing the malady. Being within the field of the heart allows the phenomenon to open up in an attitude of wonder, and also involves including others who are connected with the individual be a part of the therapeutic work, and letting the field go into the laconic presence of death.

Modern therapeutic initiate consciousness does not take place inwardly, separated from the world. One way to grasp the overall structure of this book and why it is written the way it is—as a creative synthesis of the three figures of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Steiner—is to see that, by entering their spiritual imaginations, we come to Wholeness. With Nietzsche, as presented here, we have the dimension of individual initiation as it can take place in the midst of a dead culture that refuses to recognize that it is dead and thus perpetuates destruction. The other polarity of individual initiation is world initiation. The earth, in its union with the human, has to be understood, felt, and experienced as not only living, but as conscious. The human being in this sense of the unity of earth-human is something entirely different than consciousness of earth. This unity is the dimension of being most clearly spoken by Heidegger; it is the aspect of the human world he was most concerned with. And in this context, it is Rudolf Steiner who seems to hold the polarity together in one unity, the unity of I-World.

As a way of helping to clarify the bridging capacity of Rudolf Steiner, we may note that his detailed esoteric description of the evolution of the world never separates the evolution of the earth from the evolution of

the human being. It is not the usual picture of evolution, which acts as if the earth were finished and completed before the ape-to-become human mysteriously emerges from the protein soup—a fiction of science that does not recognize its fictionalizing.

Rudolf Steiner had capacities of clairvoyantly thinking with evolution, of re-living the entire process of evolution. To give one example of the polarity of person-world evolution, consider how Steiner speaks of the relation of gemstones to the human being. Gemstones came into being on the earth at the same time as the human was evolving into a sensory being. An intimate connection thus exists between gemstones and the human senses. According to Steiner, gems, when they were still fluid in form, were the presences of angelic beings, who participated in earth evolution to assure that as the human senses formed they would not become so completely earth-bound that humans would completely lose the capacity to experience something of the spiritual field through the senses. They represent a sacrifice of angelic beings, who now, in a way, remain here, as frozen memories of spirit activity. This may sound far-fetched, unless entered into as an imaginal picture, something like a myth—not myth as fiction, but myth as something that never really happened, but is always happening.

There is still a great inability to see and to feel the intimate ongoing connection between the earth and humans. Certainly, there is now the recognition that we can and are harming the earth, but we still live in a dualistic imagination, thinking and living as if the earth were other than us, rather than a polarity of human-world. Heidegger, I think it would be accurate to say, expresses at least part of this polarity-of-unity with the term “Being,” though Being of course is even more than this. Heidegger, throughout his philosophy, decries the forgetfulness of Being. Michael Gruber, I think, intuitively sees that going to Heidegger brings out what may be more difficult to understand in Steiner; just as he goes to Nietzsche to bring out and emphasize and re-awaken the pull-to-freedom, which is the center of Steiner’s work, but exists in a more pressing sense in Nietzsche.

Any spiritual psychology focusing on the human being without being able to develop a comprehensive imagination that includes the earth is

doomed not only to failure, but operates out of the old consciousness that will be swallowed by darkness. Eckhart Tolle, for example, operates out of this kind of dualistic consciousness while trying to put forth a concern for the earth. As a consequence, what he says results in a kind of new age egoism. This evaluation does not intend any judgment of Tolle *per se*, but rather indicates the necessity of finding the way through terrorist structures of consciousness, no matter how appealing and “life-renewing” they might appear on the surface. Sadly, one of the great harbingers of terrorist structures of consciousness is to be found in much spiritual work and writing—that is, in spirituality of the type that has not found the way through dualistic consciousness and sees spirituality as something essentially private, inward, self-developmental, and, with world difficulties now so pressing, tries to add on to an egoistic mode of operation a concern for the world.

The chapter in this book on Heidegger is thus pivotal. The healing of the world cannot, as Gruber clearly states, be a matter of old consciousness with new content. We must develop the capacity to “think Being.” “Being” sounds like a terribly abstract, philosophical term, not connected with experience. In fact, like true thinking it is an experience unavailable to anyone unable to get beyond the “me”—or even the “we.” Thinking Being is an experience available meditatively, and is a “thinkingly” clear felt sense of the animated unity and complexity of all that is, directly apprehended. It is the return of the living sense of Mystery, something to behold, rather than something to be utilized. It is something to be listened to from within as a formative force. Doing so brings about a form of consciousness characterized by a different structure of thinking—meditative rather than calculative thinking. It is a structure of thinking that thinks along with the things of the world, rather than about them, allowing them to disclose their own meaning and purpose. This meaning and purpose is conveyed within a field of unity with the individual, as a felt imaginal presence. It is not something that can be apprehended through usual knowing, nor spoken in usual language, and it does not follow the laws of our logic. Thus, Heidegger devotes much of his writing on Being to the mystery of the poetic language that simultaneously reveals and conceals, and is essential to the primary creative act of dwelling.

The new initiatory therapy lives and breathes within this context of Mystery. It makes possible being completely and lovingly with someone within a field of un-knowing and wonder—not waiting for something to happen that will “solve” the mystery, uncover the hidden background from the past, but becoming available for disclosures that do not make logical sense, and are, rather, felt presences of the unfolding of an individual life in moments of harmony with that of others and the earth. In these moments, individual healing cannot be separated from the healing of the earth.

Because there is an aura of mystery and discovery that surrounds even present forms of therapy, most therapists are more than likely unaware that they function within a kind of calculative thinking. Working with feelings or dreams or images does not move one away from this disposition of thinking. Images, for example, are treated as “things” to be looked at, as ways in which the psyche reveals itself rather than as worlds to be entered together by therapist and patient, worlds that cannot be cognitively known and worlds that are far from personal and even far from the presence of archetypal worlds. The challenge of this book is to radicalize therapy, to see that all of psychology to this point has been nothing more than a preparatory and transitional discipline, a training of consciousness for modern initiation, which now takes place with others, rather than through one’s solitary meditative practices. I hope that at least a few therapists will feel the truth of what Michael Gruber has written and take up the magnificent work that he proposes.

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