

Transpersonal Theory: Two Basic Paradigms

WE SHALL BEGIN BY formulating and contrasting two basic transpersonal paradigms, the *dynamic-dialectical* paradigm and the *structural-hierarchical* paradigm. The dynamic-dialectical paradigm, introduced in a preliminary way in the introduction, is the paradigm on which the ideas of this book are based. The discussion of the dynamic-dialectical paradigm that follows can therefore serve as a condensed preview of the perspective to be developed in later chapters. Although the dynamic-dialectical paradigm derives originally from Jung, the ensuing formulation of this paradigm is my own and is not intended to be an exposition of Jung's or anyone else's views.

The version of the structural-hierarchical paradigm to be presented here, on the other hand, is closely geared to an already existing formulation, namely, that of Ken Wilber.¹ Wilber is presently a leading figure in the transpersonal field. His work is distinctive in its coherent integration of extremely diverse psychological and spiritual sources within a single theoretical structure: the structural-hierarchical paradigm. This paradigm is one that, in its basic conception, combines structurally oriented psychology (in particular of the Piagetian, cognitive-developmental, type) with hierarchically oriented metaphysics (especially in Indian—for example, Buddhist and Vedantic—variations). This combination is in itself a powerful one, and Wilber presents it in a lucid and forceful way.

As transpersonal paradigms, both the dynamic-dialectical and the structural-hierarchical paradigms divide human development along

triphasic (preegoic, egoic, transegoic) lines. In doing so, however, they have very different conceptions of the psychic constitution that underlies the stages of triphasic development. Consequently, they also have very different conceptions of how these stages are related to each other.

The dynamic-dialectical paradigm is based on a bipolar conception of the psyche, and it sees triphasic development as proceeding by way of a dialectical interplay between the two psychic poles. One of these poles is the seat of the ego, the other the seat of the Dynamic Ground. The dialectical interplay between the two psychic poles is therefore a dialectical interplay between the ego and the Dynamic Ground. Specifically, it is an interplay according to which (1) the ego initially emerges from the Ground (the preegoic or body-egoic stage); (2) the ego asserts its independence and develops itself in repressive disconnection from the Ground (the egoic or mental-egoic stage); (3) the ego undergoes a regressive return to the Ground (regression in the service of transcendence); (4) the ego, in touch with the Ground, is spiritually transformed by the power of the Ground (regeneration in spirit); and, finally, (5) the ego is "wedded" to the Ground in a higher ego-Ground synthesis (the transegoic stage). The dialectic of dynamic-dialectical development is thus a departure-and-higher-return, negation-and-higher-integration interplay between the ego and the Dynamic Ground.

The structural-hierarchical paradigm, in contrast, is based on a multitiered structural conception of the psyche, and it sees triphasic development as proceeding by way of a level-by-level movement through ascending structural tiers. At first the structures of the lowest level are developed; then the structures of the next higher level are developed, incorporating and reorganizing within themselves the structures of the preceding level; then the structures of the next higher level are developed, incorporating and reorganizing within themselves the structures of the preceding two levels. And so the process unfolds, level by level, each level at once developing its own structures and incorporating and reorganizing within itself the structures of the preceding levels. Development proceeds in this fashion in principle until the structures of the highest level have been developed and, thereby, complete psychic differentiation and integration have been accomplished. According to Wilber, the psyche is complexly layered, consisting of ten or eleven structural levels depending on how they are counted (see tables 1.4 and 1.5). For the structural-hierarchical paradigm, then, the triphasic framework divides human development only into its most basic stages, as each of the triphasic stages spans several psychic levels.

Although both of the transpersonal paradigms here under consideration divide development along broad triphasic lines, they diverge considerably in their interpretations of what triphasic development is really about. The dynamic-dialectical paradigm interprets triphasic development as a dialectically spiraling movement of departure, return, and higher synthesis played out between the ego and Dynamic Ground. The structural-hierarchical paradigm, in contrast, interprets triphasic development as a step-by-step climb up a psychic ladder.

THE DYNAMIC-DIALECTICAL PARADIGM

In presenting the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, the main ideas to be covered are (1) the bipolar constitution of the psyche, (2) the dialectical interplay between the two psychic poles, and (3) unfolding selfhood according to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm.

THE BIPOLAR CONSTITUTION OF THE PSYCHE

As set forth in table 1.1, the bipolar conception divides the psyche into egoic and nonegoic poles. The egoic pole is the seat of the ego, of ego functions (reality testing, self-control, reflective self-awareness, operational cognition), and of personal, that is, biographical, experience. In contrast, the nonegoic pole is the seat of the Dynamic Ground (libido, psychic energy, numinous power or spirit), of somatic, instinctual, affective, and creative-imaginal potentials, and of collective (inherited) memories, complexes, and archetypes. The egoic pole, which will also be called the *mental-egoic* pole, is the seat of rational cognition and volition, discursive thought and deliberative will. In contrast, the nonegoic pole, which will also be called the *physicodynamic* pole, is the source of upwelling dynamism, spontaneous impulse, feeling, and creatively forged images. The bipolar structure, then, encompasses many of the most basic dualities of life: form and dynamism, mind and body, thought and feeling, logic and creativity, self-control and spontaneity.

The bipolar structure is implicit in classical psychoanalysis in the structural (id-ego-superego) model of the psyche. Although the structural model divides the psyche into three tiers, it is more fundamentally a division of the psyche into two poles. For the superego is a subsystem of the ego, and therefore the id-ego-superego tripartite division is more basically an id-ego bipolar division. Conceived in this simplified structural way, the Freudian ego clearly corresponds to the egoic pole of the bipolar structure of table 1.1; the description of the egoic pole in table

TABLE 1.1
The Bipolar Structure of the Psyche

Nonegoic or Physicodynamic Pole	Egoic or Mental-Egoic Pole
Dynamic Ground: dynamism, libido, energy, spirit Somatic, sensual experience Instinctuality Affect, emotion Imaginal, autosymbolic cognition Collective memories, complexes, archetypes	Ego as organizing and controlling center of consciousness Reflective self-awareness Impulse control Self-control, deliberative will Operational cognition Personal, biographical experience

1.1 is a straightforward description of the ego as conceived by psychoanalysis. Less clearly, but still quite evidently, the Freudian id corresponds to the nonegoic pole of the bipolar structure. For the id as conceived by classical psychoanalysis is the seat of psychic energy (libido, aggressive energy), bodily experience (infantile polymorphous sensuality), instinctual drives (sexual and aggressive drives), affect or emotion (sublimated instinctual drives), imaginal, autosymbolic cognition (the primary process), and collective memories and complexes (the killing of the primal father, the Oedipus complex).

The correspondence of the Freudian id with the nonegoic pole of the bipolar structure is less clear than the correspondence of the Freudian ego with the egoic pole because the id is a one-sidedly preegoic, or subegoic, interpretation of the nonegoic pole. Table 1.1 describes the nonegoic pole in neutral terms, leaving it unspecified whether that pole is to be interpreted in a lower or higher, preegoic or transegoic, manner. The Freudian conception of the id, however, clearly interprets the nonegoic pole as a psychic realm or system of a lower, preegoic status. The id is inherently unconscious; its dynamism consists solely of sexual and aggressive energies; its bodily experience is conceived as infantile polymorphous "perversity"; its affective expressions are transformations of the sexual and aggressive drives; its imaginal, autosymbolic cognition is the creative but prelogical primary process; and its collective memories and complexes are exclusively archaic or infantile in character. Freud, then, in effect reduces the nonegoic pole of the bipolar structure to the preegoic level, which means that the psychoanalytic id-ego duality can more accurately be said to be a preegoic-egoic than a nonegoic-egoic bipolar structure.

Turning to Jung's theory, the bipolar structure is reflected in the fundamental division between the ego and the collective unconscious

(or objective psyche). The Jungian ego corresponds unproblematically to the egoic pole of the bipolar structure. The Jungian ego is the center of consciousness and the agency responsible for reality testing, logical thinking, and rational exercise of will. And the Jungian collective unconscious corresponds to the nonegoic pole of the bipolar structure. For the collective unconscious is the seat or source of psychic energy, instinctual life, feelings, and archetypes and creative images. The collective unconscious as conceived by Jung matches almost all of the features of the nonegoic pole as set forth in table 1.1.

The Jungian collective unconscious more accurately represents the nonegoic pole of the bipolar structure than does the Freudian id, for the collective unconscious as conceived by Jung is by no means exclusively preegoic in nature. Jung describes the collective unconscious as having both "pre-" and "trans-" expressions. For instance, he holds that psychic energy is not just sexual or aggressive drive energy, as Freud held, but is rather an energy that empowers all modes of experience—even spiritual experience—without being inherently of the nature of any particular mode of experience. He interprets instinctuality in an inclusive sense that covers not only primitive "pre-" instincts governing basic life needs such as food, safety, and reproduction but also higher "trans-" instincts guiding the process of individuation. He interprets feelings nonreductionistically to include both lower (infantile or malevolent) feelings associated with the shadow and higher numinous feelings associated with spiritual development. He interprets the imaginal or autosymbolic process as the source not only of fantasies and dreams of a prelogical (archaic or infantile) sort but also of mythic symbols of a genuinely transcendental stature. And he interprets collective memories and complexes in terms of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, which include both "pre-" archetypes reflecting our phylogenetic past and "trans-" archetypes reflecting our spiritual future.

Although Jung's conception of the nonegoic pole is not one-sidedly negative like Freud's, it is still problematic. For although Jung acknowledges both "pre-" and "trans-" expressions of the collective unconscious, he frequently leaves it unclear—as Wilber (1980b) has observed—whether these expressions are to be understood in a constitutional sense (as expressions of basic, permanent psychic sources or structures) or in a developmental sense (as stage-specific phenomena). "Pre-" and "trans-" expressions of the collective unconscious, I suggest, are properly understood in a developmental sense as stage-specific expressions of the nonegoic pole of the psyche, which itself is properly understood in a constitutional rather than a developmental sense. Jung makes no clear distinctions of this sort, and therefore his notion of the collective uncon-

scious, although not reductionistically one-sided like Freud's notion of the id, is still far from an adequate conception of the nonegoic pole. Jung's conception of the collective unconscious, I suggest, confuses a number of developmental and constitutional matters.

A psychic duality that should be distinguished from the bipolar structure is a duality that Deikman (1971) has designated the *bimodal* structure of consciousness. The two modes of the bimodal structure are engaged activity (active mode) and open receptivity (receptive mode). The primary features of these modes are outlined in table 1.2.

The bimodal structure belongs to the egoic side of the bipolar structure: it is the ego or egoic pole of the psyche that has two basic modes, active and receptive. It is the ego that either asserts itself by exercising ego functions (active mode) or "lets go" and opens itself to nonegoic influences (receptive mode). These two modes of the ego reflect the ego's status as one end of a bipole, as something that is at once individuated and part of a larger whole. For as one end of a bipole, the ego has two stances it can adopt: it can either assert itself in its status as an individuated existent or it can surrender itself in its status as a part of a larger whole. In adopting the former stance, the ego takes initiative and exercises its own functions; in adopting the latter stance, the ego relinquishes hold of itself and allows itself to be influenced by nonegoic or psychodynamic potentials: dynamism, instinctual impulses, affect, the creative process, collective cognitions and complexes. Or in bimodal terms, in adopting the former stance, the ego functions in the active mode; in adopting the latter stance, it "switches off" the active mode and enters the receptive mode.

A qualification is in order: in saying that the ego can switch back and forth between the active and receptive modes, I do not mean to suggest that these two modes are necessarily mutually exclusive. It must be left open as a possibility that the ego, in a completely integrated psyche,

TABLE 1.2
The Bimodal Structure of Consciousness

Receptive Mode	Active Mode
Receptive openness Ego yields to experience. Infusion, absorption, merger, fusion	Active engagement Ego centered in itself. Ego autonomy, self-possession, independence

can exercise ego functions effectively while at the same time being open to the full range of nonegoic potentials. Such bimodal integration, I shall propose, is indeed possible, but only on the basis of a more fundamental bipolar integration. The ego, as we shall see, can indeed be open to the nonegoic pole without loss of its own functions, but only if it is first both fully developed and harmoniously rooted in the nonegoic pole.

In sum, the dynamic-dialectical paradigm sees the psyche as being bipolar in its basic constitution. The distinction between the ego and the Dynamic Ground is at the same time a distinction between egoic and nonegoic poles of the psyche, the egoic pole being the seat of the ego and ego functions and the nonegoic pole being the seat of the Dynamic Ground and associated nonegoic or physiodynamic potentials. In dividing the psyche in this bipolar manner, the dynamic-dialectical paradigm at the same time divides the ego, or the egoic pole of the psyche, in a bimodal manner. The ego can either assert itself within the limits of its semi-independence (active mode) or it can open itself to nonegoic potentials (receptive mode). If the ego opens itself to nonegoic potentials, it allows itself to be affected in a variety of ways. For example, the ego might be (1) entranced, absorbed, infused, inflated, or inspired by the power of the Dynamic Ground, (2) played upon by erotogenic or sensual sensations, (3) moved by instinctual urgings, (4) uplifted or overswept by feelings, (5) made witness to vivid images, or (6) brought under the influence of collective memories, archetypes, or complexes. In the dynamic-dialectical view, the ego, in entering the receptive mode, opens itself to the diverse potentials of the nonegoic pole and is affected accordingly.

THE DIALECTICAL INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE TWO PSYCHIC POLES

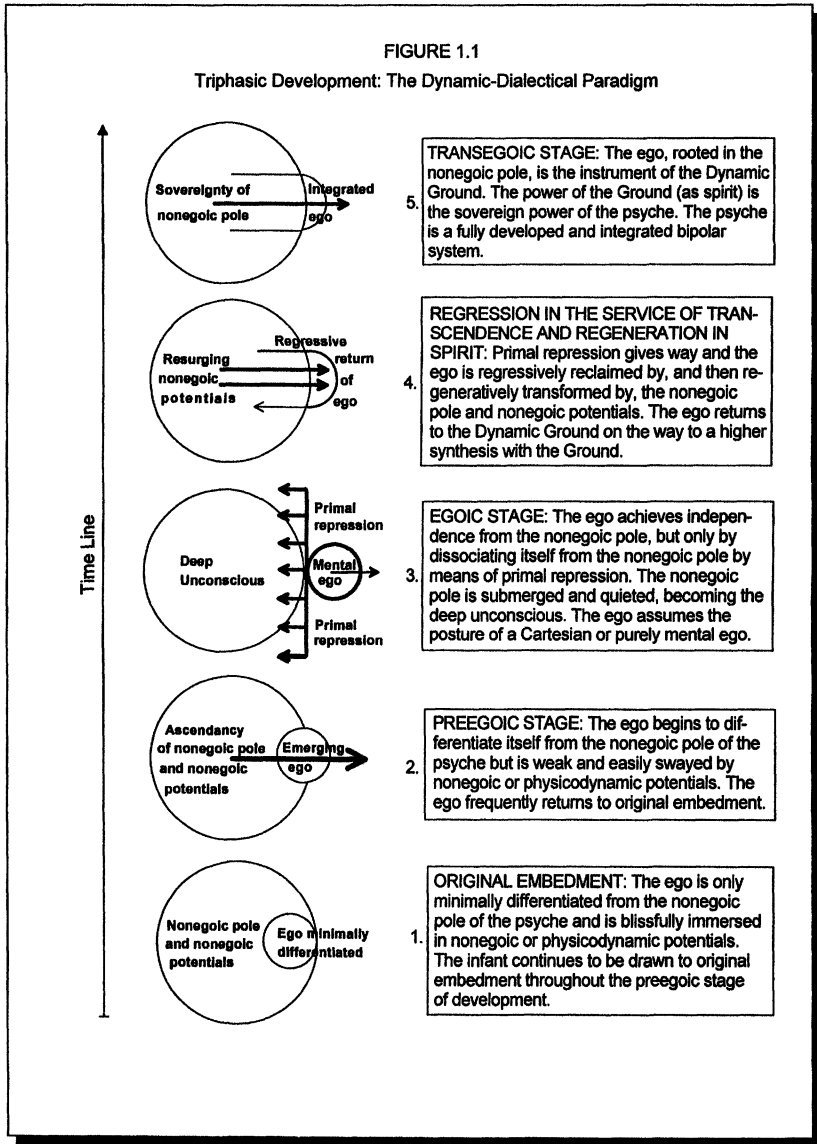
The dynamic-dialectical paradigm holds that triphasic development is governed by a dialectical interplay between the two poles of the bipolar structure, as schematized in figure 1.1.

In this bipolar dialectic, life begins with the egoic pole only minimally active: the ego is only minimally differentiated from the Dynamic Ground. Psychoanalysts have debated for many years whether an ego and object relations exist at birth. The current consensus is that the neonate does have an active ego (or self) and is involved in object relations to a significant degree.² Acknowledging this very likely fact, it remains true that the ego is at first only *minimally* active. The ego during the first months of life, although almost surely not absent, nonetheless exists for the most part only as a potentiality for further development. The ego at

this point is for the most part an ego germ not yet differentiated from the Dynamic Ground. This initial condition of ego-Ground merger I shall call *original embedment*.

The egoic pole of the psyche, as can be seen from figure 1.1, is soon significantly differentiated from the nonegoic pole and begins to participate in a lifelong developmental interaction with the nonegoic pole. Human development very soon becomes an interplay between the ego and the Dynamic Ground. If human development is an interplay between the two poles of the bipolar structure, however, it is by no means always a balanced or harmonious interplay. On the contrary, according to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, the two psychic poles are never in a state of parity, and they are harmoniously related only at the very beginning and end of human development, in the first year and a half of the preegoic (or body-egoic) stage and in the transegoic stage of development. Throughout most of human development, the two psychic poles are neither equal nor balanced in their relation to each other.

The preegoic stage—which succeeds original embedment after the first weeks of life—is a stage during which the nonegoic pole prevails over the egoic pole. During this stage physiodynamic potentials have a strong and frequently overpowering influence on a weak and undeveloped ego. The egoic (or mental-egoic) stage, in turn, is a period during which the nonegoic ascendancy of the preegoic stage is brought to an end and the ego assumes a one-sided control of consciousness. The egoic pole frees itself from the direct influence of the nonegoic pole, but only by repressing the nonegoic pole and banishing physiodynamic potentials from consciousness. The egoic stage is for this reason one that is unbalanced in the direction of the ego. The egoic pole is developed and functions to a significant extent independently of the nonegoic pole, which is submerged and becomes the deep unconscious. Finally, in the transition to the transegoic stage this egoic one-sidedness of the egoic stage is brought to an end and the nonegoic pole of the psyche once again gains ascendancy. During the transitional stages of regression in the service of transcendence and regeneration in spirit, the egoic pole loses its independence and comes once again under the direct influence of the nonegoic pole. The ego, no longer repressively insulated from the nonegoic pole, is regressively reclaimed and then regeneratively transformed by nonegoic potentials and by the power of the Dynamic Ground in particular. This regressive-regenerative transformation reroots the ego in the Dynamic Ground and culminates in bipo-



lar integration. The ego is in this way finally brought into a harmonious relationship with the Dynamic Ground, and the transegoic stage commences.

This harmony of transegoic integration, however, is not a harmony of equals. It is a state of interpolar balance but not of interpolar parity.

For according to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, the two psychic poles are inherently unequal: the nonegoic pole is superior in both power and authority. This superiority is evident whenever the egoic pole is open to the nonegoic pole, as is the case in both the preegoic and transegoic stages. In the preegoic stage, as just noted, the nonegoic pole has a strong and frequently overpowering influence on a fledgling ego; and in the integrated stage the nonegoic pole, without any longer overpowering the ego, still possesses primacy in that it empowers, grounds, and guides the ego. Accordingly, transegoic bipolar integration is an integration in which the ego is once again the lesser of two psychic poles. It is an integration in which the ego accedes not only to the actual felt power but also to the legitimate supremacy of the Dynamic Ground. Transegoic integration is an integration in which the nonegoic pole, without being dominant, is nonetheless sovereign and in which the egoic pole, without being subjugated, is nonetheless subject.

Given that, in the dynamic-dialectical view, the three stages of triphasic development reflect reversals in which psychic pole has ascendancy, it follows that the transitions between these stages are developmental intervals during which these reversals occur. During the transition from the preegoic to the egoic stage the original ascendancy of the nonegoic pole is brought to an end and the ego achieves a one-sided control of consciousness. And during the transition from the egoic stage to the transegoic stage this egoic one-sidedness is in its turn brought to an end and the nonegoic pole becomes ascendant once again, this time in a harmoniously integrated way, in a way that empowers rather than overpowers the ego.

The shift from nonegoic ascendancy to egoic one-sidedness that occurs during the transition to the egoic stage is predicated on a repressive separation of the ego from the nonegoic potentials of life. Following Freud, I shall call the repression that occurs at this point *primal repression*. Freud maintained as early as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) that the secondary process cannot accommodate primary-process materials and, therefore, that a repressive elimination of these materials from awareness occurs as soon as the system of consciousness is formed. Freud (1911b) later termed this initial, infantile form of repression primal repression. After he introduced the (id-ego-super-ego) structural model (1923), Freud explained primal repression in terms of the ego's emergence from the id. Instinctual impulses of the id, Freud explained (1926, 1933), overwhelm the fledgling ego, triggering severe anxiety. The immature ego is unable to deal with these impulses in any way other than by repressing them and thereby keeping them contained within the id. Freud (1926) stated that this original

and basic repression likely occurs before the end of the oedipal period. The resolution of oedipal conflicts and the emergence of the superego, however, reinforce the id-ego separation initiated by primal repression.³

In adopting Freud's notion of primal repression, I depart slightly from Freud by adding an object-relational account of primal repression to his primarily psychodynamic account. In chapter 2 I propose that the ego, in emerging from the Dynamic Ground, experiences nonegoic potentials as elements or aspects of the primary libidinal object: the primary caregiver—or rather, in Jungian terminology, the Great Mother, the primary caregiver as empowered and magnified by nonegoic potentials. Accordingly, the crisis that, according to Freud, the ego experiences in relation to id impulses—that is, in relation to nonegoic or psychodynamic potentials—is not just an intrapsychic affair; it is part of a larger crisis that the ego experiences in relation to the Great Mother. And, in corresponding fashion, the repressive act by which the ego finally separates itself from nonegoic potentials is not just an intrapsychic act; it is at the same time an interpersonal act by which the ego separates itself from the Great Mother.

The young child, I shall propose, has no choice but finally to separate itself from the inner-outer, intrapsychic-interpersonal, Ground-caregiver Great Mother. It accomplishes this separation by severing any remaining ties of symbiotic merger or union with the primary caregiver and, as the inner side of this very act, by repressing the nonegoic pole of the psyche. This response, primal repression, initially emerges at about the beginning of the third year, near the end of what Margaret Mahler (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman 1975) calls the *rapprochement subphase* of the separation-individuation process. This initial response, however, is not final. The child continues to crave intimate union with the Great Mother—both interpersonal merger with the primary caregiver and intrapsychic merger with the Dynamic Ground (reembedding). Primal repression, then, is at first only a tentative and halting separation of the ego from the Great Mother. It does not become final—as Freud suggests—until the end of the oedipal period. In chapter 2 I shall argue that primal repression does not become decisive and irreversible until the oedipal father enters the scene and forces the child's hand by making the child's choice for or against the Great Mother at the same time a choice against or for the father. The resolution of the Oedipus complex, predicated on a capitulation to the father and on emulation of him as model of egoic independence, finalizes the child's separation from the Great Mother in both her inner and outer

dimensions. The resolution of the Oedipus complex, that is, finalizes primal repression and consolidates it as a psychic structure.

Primal repression has both positive and negative consequences. Its primary positive consequence is that it frees the developing ego from the strong and frequently overpowering influence of the Great Mother and thereby confers upon the ego the self-possession needed for its continued development. Primal repression is at the basis of both latency and libidinal object constancy, both of which, according to psychoanalysis, are necessary conditions for continued ego development. Primal repression is at the basis of latency because the inner side of this act submerges and therefore quiets nonegoic potentials. And primal repression is at the basis of libidinal object constancy because the final severing of symbiotic ties with the primary caregiver gives the child the emotional distance needed to relate to the caregiver, and therefore to others generally, in a stable and consistent manner. Primal repression both calms the ego's intrapsychic experience and stabilizes the ego's primary relationships. Such calm and stability are necessary for continued ego development, and therefore primal repression serves a positive developmental end.

The primary negative consequence of primal repression is that in protecting the ego from nonegoic and interpersonal influences it also *closes* the ego to these influences and thereby disconnects the ego from the original bases of its being. It requires the ego to forfeit both radical nonegoic spontaneity and unconditional interpersonal intimacy. These sacrifices are developmentally necessary, but they are sacrifices—immense sacrifices—nonetheless. The ego is free to develop, but only because it has disconnected itself from the nonegoic pole of the psyche, which is submerged and becomes the deep unconscious, and because it has withdrawn from its primary other and therefore from others generally, who become “merely other.” The egoic stage is for these reasons a stage not only of freedom from overawing nonegoic and interpersonal influences but also of egoic-nonegoic and self-other dualism.

The egoic stage as here described lasts from the beginning of latency throughout much of the rest of life. In classical psychoanalysis, of course, the egoic stage is the final and highest stage of development. The egoic-nonegoic dualism of the stage is, for psychoanalysis, a permanent psychic structure. Jungian psychology, on the other hand, acknowledges transegoic possibilities beyond the egoic stage. According to Jung, there is a tendency at midlife or later for egoic-nonegoic dualism to give way and for the ego to undergo a reversal (an *enantiodromia*) in its relation to the nonegoic sphere. Jung believed that this reversal is a natural part of the movement of life, the first half of which is devoted to ego development and the second half of which is devoted

to a return of the ego to its underlying source in the collective unconscious or objective psyche.

The dynamic-dialectical view presented here is close to Jung on this issue, holding that the ego, once mature, may be drawn back toward the nonegoic pole of the psyche. Around midlife, according to the dynamic-dialectical view, primal repression may begin to dissolve, reopening the ego to nonegoic life. When such a reopening occurs, the ego is exposed to the power of the Dynamic Ground and to other nonegoic potentials and is drawn into the nonegoic sphere. The ego, drawn toward the Ground, undergoes a *regressus ad originem*. It returns to the deepest inner source of its being.

The dynamic-dialectical paradigm conceives of this return of the ego to the Ground not only as a regression to origins but also as a potentially redemptive process.⁴ The return is conceived as the first phase of a transformation that, in reopening the egoic pole to the nonegoic pole, leads ultimately to a dialectical synthesis of these poles. That is, the return is seen as the first phase of a two-phase, return-then-higher-synthesis spiral. Jung recognized this phase of development, which, following Leo Frobenius (1904), he referred to as the "night sea journey," the period during which the sun (ego) descends into the sea and is devoured by a water monster, a whale or dragon, only later to be reborn for the dawn of a new day. In Jung's interpretation of the night sea journey, the sun's descent beneath the sea is the ego's descent into the collective unconscious, wherein the ego is engulfed only to be reborn in a new empowered and transfigured form. In other mythic or symbolic expressions, this regressive return is depicted as the odyssey of a hero into the underworld, as the journey of a saint into the lower regions of hell, as the awakening of the "serpent power" *kundalini*, and as the alchemical reduction of base metal into prime matter. In the terms of St. John of the Cross, this descent into the deep is the dark night of spirit, which is the most difficult phase of the dark night of the soul. Drawing on psychoanalytic terminology, I shall call the ego's regressive return to the nonegoic sphere, and to the Dynamic Ground in particular, *regression in the service of transcendence*.

Once the ego has returned to the Ground, the second, redemptive phase of the return-then-higher-synthesis process begins. At this point descent gives way to ascent, darkness to light, regression to regeneration. Having weathered the resurgence of nonegoic potentials, the ego here ceases being overpowered by these potentials and begins being empowered by them instead. The difficulties experienced during the regression to the Ground abate, and the ego, now rooted in the Ground, begins to be infused and redemptively transformed by the power of the

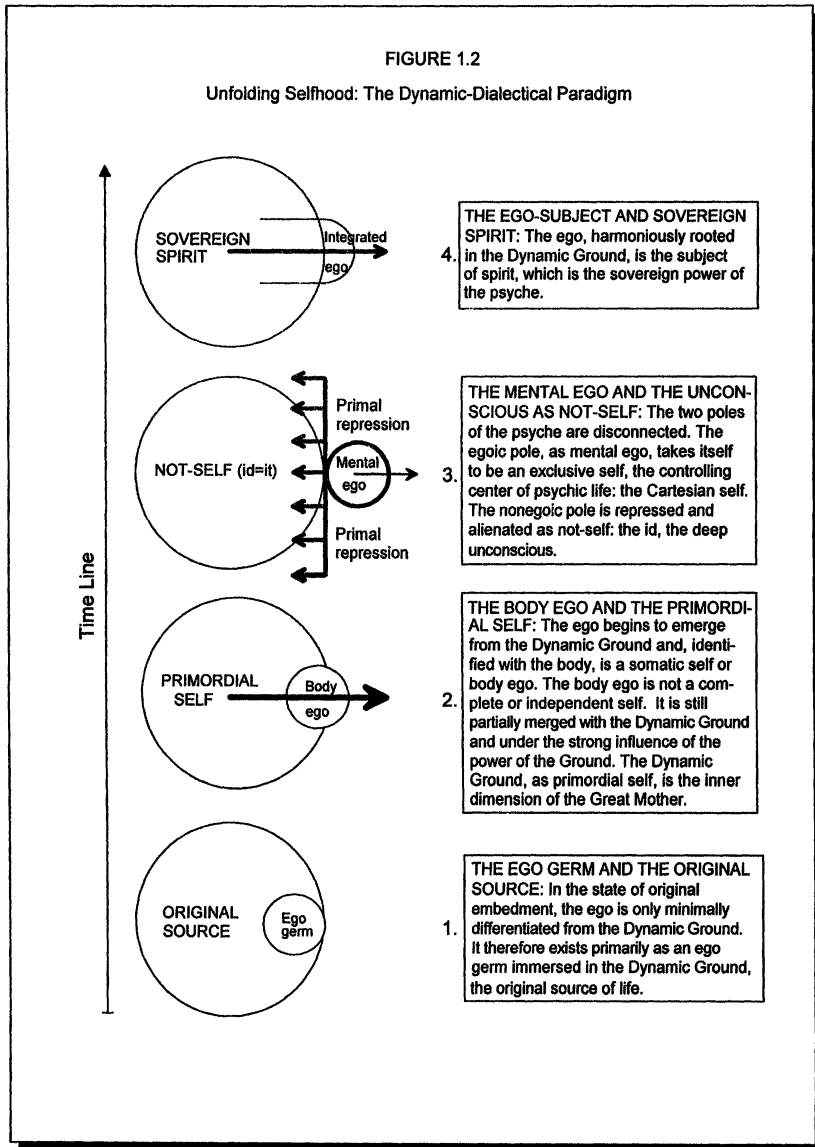
Ground. This redemptive transformation of the ego has been described in many ways; for example, as the liberation of the sun from the belly of the sea monster, as the triumphant return of the hero or saint from infernal regions, as the awakening of the *chakras* by ascending *kundalini*, as a purgative transformation of the soul, as a spiritual betrothal presaging full spiritual union, and as the alchemical transubstantiation of base metal into gold. Using traditional terminology, I shall call this higher rebirth and redemptive transformation of the ego *regeneration in spirit*.

According to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, the goal aimed at by regeneration in spirit is a condition of fully actualized and integrated bipolarity. This condition is one in which the two poles of the psyche finally become a true two-in-one; it is a condition in which ego functions and nonegoic potentials at last function harmoniously and on a higher plane. Bipolar integration is a *coincidentia oppositorum* that transcends all of the elements that enter into it. The stipulation needs to be added, however, that integration, as a higher unity of opposites, is not a unity of equals. For, again, in the integrated psyche the nonegoic pole has primacy; the egoic pole accedes to the nonegoic pole as a superior power and authority. The egoic pole is an instrument of the nonegoic pole; the ego is a servant of the power of the Ground as spirit.

UNFOLDING SELFHOOD ACCORDING TO THE DYNAMIC-DIALECTICAL PARADIGM

The bipolar dialectic is at the same time a dialectic of unfolding selfhood. The dialectical interplay between the two poles of the psyche is a dialectic of selfhood because each of the two psychic poles is in a sense a self, the nonegoic pole being the original, deeper, and (potentially) higher self and the egoic pole being a secondary but still essential self. Each of these two selves, like its corresponding pole, is incomplete without the other and is fully itself only in harmonious integration with the other. Accordingly, the dialectical process that leads ultimately to bipolar integration also leads to an integrated duality of selfhood, as represented in figure 1.2.

Dynamic-dialectical development begins with original embedment: the egoic pole is at first only minimally differentiated from the nonegoic pole. The ego is at first essentially an ego germ gestating within the Dynamic Ground, which at this point is the original source of life prior to the articulation of selfhood. This initial condition of merger, however, lasts for only a short time, because the egoic pole develops rapidly and is soon significantly differentiated from the non-



egoic pole. As the ego emerges and begins to grow, the virtually undivided state of original embedment is split into a lopsided duality; it is split into a primitive Ground-dominant bipole. This primitive Ground-dominant bipole is at the same time a primitive Ground-dominant dyadic self.

The ego at this point is only in the process of being individuated and is still to a large extent enfolded in the Dynamic Ground. The Ground, as inner core of the Great Mother, remains the principal reality in the ego's life, not only as the original source from which the ego has sprung but also, now, as the primordial self with which the ego is partially merged and to which it returns again and again to reexperience the bliss of original embedment. Partially merged with the Ground as primordial self, the ego during the preegoic stage has only incomplete self-boundaries. The ego at this point does have a differentiated sense of itself as a *bodily self* or *body ego*, but this sense is vague and shifting, because no clear line has yet been drawn separating the ego from the Dynamic Ground—or from the outer correlate of the Ground, the primary caregiver.

The strong and frequently overpowering influence that the Ground has on the ego comes to an end only when the ego finally perpetrates the act of primal repression and thereby divorces itself from its nonegoic origins. Primal repression marks the transition to the egoic stage. In embarking upon this transition, the ego asserts its independence, but only by dissociating itself from the nonegoic pole, which is submerged beneath consciousness and negatively interpreted as the id or not-self. According to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, then, the ego becomes an independent self only by assuming the posture of an exclusive self, a self that is no longer identified with or tied to physicyodynamic life. The ego severs its connection with the primordial self and takes on airs of being the only self. It fancies itself to be a self-subsistent mental self that is the exclusive owner and controller of psychic life. The egoic stage of development is therefore a period during which the ego ceases being a body ego still partially merged with the Ground and becomes a purely mental ego that, disjoined from the Ground, acts as if it were a completely independent and autonomous self.

At first, during the latency period, the mental ego does not yet clearly conceive of itself as a mental ego. Limited to concrete operational thought, the latency child is still prone to think of itself in concrete material terms. Accordingly, although the ego of the latency period no longer identifies with the body, it nonetheless does not yet conceive of itself as a purely psychomental or Cartesian subject. Rather, it conceives of itself, vaguely and confusedly, as a *something* inside the head—some object or substance, perhaps the brain itself. Not until adolescence does the mental ego begin to be reflectively aware of itself as a purely psychomental subject or Cartesian ego. This Cartesian self-reflection of adolescence is a source of both certainty and anxiety, certainty because it confirms the fact that the mental ego exists (*cogito ergo*

sum) and anxiety because the mental ego confirmed by Cartesian self-reflection is never directly intuited by means of Cartesian self-reflection. The mental ego of adolescence is therefore a self-certain *absence*, an ego certain *that* it exists but completely unsure of *what*, if anything, it is.

The anxiety of Cartesian self-reflection is a primary motivating cause of the adolescent and young-adult pursuit of identity. The mental ego that is absent to itself in introspection needs to give its existence some kind of recognizable form. It responds to this need by fashioning an identity, which, recognized by others, confers upon the mental ego a sense of worldly being. The mental ego in adolescence experiments with identity possibilities without committing itself to any of them; then, in the transition to early adulthood, it commits itself to a long-term identity project. The forging and defense of ego identity, of being-in-the-world, is one of the main developmental tasks of early adulthood.

The mental ego's assumption that it is a Cartesian subject completely independent of psychodynamic life is false. It is false because the mental ego, as a specific developmental expression of the egoic pole of the psyche, remains one end of a bipole. Even in its stance of independence, the mental ego remains internally connected to and dependent for its very being upon the nonegoic pole of the psyche. Consequently, despite its seeming self-sufficiency, the mental ego is vulnerable to feeling unwhole, to sensing that it is somehow out of touch with a deep and vital part of itself. This feeling of unwholeness typically does not begin to plague the mental ego in a serious way until after it has completed the developmental tasks of the first half of adult life. Once these tasks have been completed, however, the mental ego frequently becomes prone to feelings of emptiness and incompleteness. At midlife or later, the mental ego frequently becomes susceptible to feeling that its stance of independence may be only a false pose and that its worldly identity may be only an inauthentic mask hiding a buried, "true" self.

Although the mental ego's stance of independence can lead to these disturbing feelings, it is not for that reason a posture that is easily let go. On the contrary, it is a posture that, according to the dynamic-dialectical paradigm, is deeply entrenched and extremely difficult to surmount. The undoing of the ego's stance of independence requires an undoing of primal repression. Primal repression, however, rarely gives way, and therefore movement beyond the egoic stage into transegoic realms is an infrequent occurrence.

In those instances when primal repression is undone, however, the mental ego's stance of independence is undermined and the mental ego

is set on the course of regression in the service of transcendence. No longer supported by the false ground of primal repression, the mental ego comes into direct contact with the Dynamic Ground, which reclaims the mental ego and disabuses it of its pretension of being an independent, incorporeal substance. The mental ego facing this situation has no choice but to confess the falseness of its posture of self-sufficiency and to yield to the superior power and authority of the Dynamic Ground. No longer undergirded by primal repression, the mental ego loses its self-possession; it is drawn out of its own sphere and begins the odyssey of return to the Dynamic Ground, the power of which is the ego's higher self.

The ego's return to the Ground involves a regression: regression in the service of transcendence. The undoing of primal repression reopens the ego to nonegoic potentials, which spring to life in dramatic fashion. The ego experiences the return of the repressed. In particular, the power of the Ground reawakens and challenges the ego's hold on consciousness. From the dynamic-dialectical perspective, then, the ego's return to the Ground involves a regression that brings the ego into contact with powerful derepressing forces.

This regression-derepression process continues until the power of the Ground and other nonegoic potentials have fully reasserted themselves and the ego has finally overcome its resistance to these potentials. At this point the transition from regression to regeneration occurs: the power of the Ground ceases posing a threat to the ego and begins to support and heal the ego. The ego here realizes that the power of the Ground is not an alien invading force but is rather a spiritual power that is both superior and essential to the ego. The ego, having been regressed to the Ground, here begins to undergo a regenerative transformation that brings it into harmony with the Ground and that in general brings the egoic pole of the psyche into harmony with the nonegoic pole. This regeneration process leads ultimately to a complete union of the two psychic poles, a union that is at the same time a wedding of the ego (as lesser self) to spirit (as greater self). Full self-realization conceived in dynamic-dialectical terms is, accordingly, a condition of perfected ego-Ground, self-Self bipolarity: the two psychic poles function as one and the two selves that correspond to these poles are joined as one. The ego, as subject, becomes the instrument of sovereign spirit.

Table 1.3 reviews and summarizes the dynamic-dialectical conception of human development.

TABLE 1.3
The Dynamic-Dialectical Paradigm

Time Line ↑	<p>INTEGRATION</p> <p>The two poles of the psyche are harmoniously united and their potentials and functions are effectively integrated. The two poles begin functioning as a true bipolar system, a coincidence of opposites. The power of the Ground, as spirit, is the sovereign power of the psyche.</p>
	<p>REGENERATION IN SPIRIT</p> <p>The ego, having yielded to the Dynamic Ground, now begins to be empowered rather than overpowered by nonegoic potentials. The ego begins to be regenerated by the power of the Ground as spirit.</p>
	<p>REGRESSION IN THE SERVICE OF TRANSCENDENCE</p> <p>Primal repression gives way and the ego is regressively reclaimed by the Dynamic Ground. The ego is unseated as the central power of consciousness and challenged by awakening nonegoic potentials. The ego undergoes a regression to origins.</p>
	<p>EGOIC OR MENTAL-EGOIC STAGE</p> <p>The ego develops its own functions in relative independence from the nonegoic pole, which underlies the ego as the deep unconscious. The nonegoic pole is not-self or id; the egoic pole is a mental ego or Cartesian self.</p>
	<p>PRIMAL REPRESSION</p> <p>The ego finally wins its independence from nonegoic potentials, but only by repressively disconnecting itself from the nonegoic pole, which is submerged and becomes the deep unconscious.</p>
	<p>PREEGOIC OR BODY-EGOIC STAGE</p> <p>The preegoic stage is a period during which the ego is progressively differentiated from the Great Mother but is still under the sway of nonegoic potentials. The nonegoic pole is the primordial self; the egoic pole is a bodily self or body ego.</p>
	<p>ORIGINAL EMBEDMENT</p> <p>The ego at birth is only minimally differentiated from the Dynamic Ground and exists as an ego germ immersed in the Ground, which here is the original source of life prior to selfhood. Original embedment is a blissful condition to which the ego frequently returns throughout the preoedipal period.</p>

THE STRUCTURAL-HIERARCHICAL PARADIGM

The structural-hierarchical paradigm differs from the dynamic-dialectical paradigm both in its conception of the psychic constitution and in its conception of how the stages of development are related to each other. Moreover, as a consequence of these differences, the structural-

hierarchical paradigm has a very different conception of unfolding selfhood as well. The structural-hierarchical paradigm shares with the dynamic-dialectical paradigm the triphasic or transpersonal perspective. Beyond this point of agreement, however, it has little in common with the dynamic-dialectical view.

The account of the structural-hierarchical paradigm presented here is based on the work of Ken Wilber, who first formulated this paradigm in *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (1977). Wilber has since reformulated the paradigm in a number of different places (1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1981b, 1990; Wilber et al. 1986). The ensuing exposition draws on all of these sources but especially on the statement of the paradigm in the collection of papers published under the title *Eye to Eye* (1990).

THE HIERARCHIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PSYCHE

The structural-hierarchical paradigm conceives of the psyche as a hierarchy of structural levels, each higher level of which surpasses the ones below it in representing both greater psychic differentiation and greater psychic integration. Each higher level represents greater differentiation in that once a higher level emerges, the structures of that level are articulated and added to the structures of the levels beneath it. And each higher level represents greater integration in that each such level has a significant degree of access to and command over the structures of lower levels and therefore effectively integrates those structures within itself.

Wilber holds that each level of the psychic hierarchy is distinguished by a set of basic or defining structures (functions, potentials, capabilities, predispositions). These basic structures, in being inherent to a level of the psychic hierarchy, are thereby inherent to the psyche itself. They are deep structures that are part of the psyche's original endowment and that, as such, are transcultural, universal to human experience. As deep structures, these basic structures are to be distinguished from surface structures, which are the merely contingent ways in which the psyche's basic structures happen to be expressed and implemented in life. Whereas basic structures are the innate underlying patterns of life, surface structures are the particular social and thematic manifestations of those patterns. Unlike basic structures, which are original and universal, surface structures are derivative and variable, differing widely in cultural form and focus.

According to the structural-hierarchical paradigm, the levels of the psychic hierarchy are related in the following fundamental ways: (1) lower levels support and subserve higher levels, and (2) higher levels

subsume and control lower levels. Lower levels support and subserve higher levels because the structures of lower levels are necessary foundations upon which the structures of higher levels are built. Lower levels are more than foundations, however; they are also integral parts of higher levels. Higher levels subsume the structures of lower levels, utilizing them as elements or modules of higher-level functions. In subsuming lower levels in this way, higher levels reorganize lower levels and exercise control over them. Lower levels retain a significant degree of autonomy, but to a significant degree their functioning is subject to the control of the higher level under which they are subsumed. This model is clearly organic and holistic. The levels of the structural-hierarchical paradigm are related in ways that are similar to the ways in which the levels of an organic hierarchy—such as the hierarchy of cell, organ, and organ system—are related.

Given that higher psychic levels incorporate lower levels, it follows that the highest active psychic level is in effect the whole of the psyche. That is, each level (except the lowest) is not only a single psychic tier but also a multitiered totality including within itself all lower levels. The structural-hierarchical paradigm therefore conceives of the psyche not just as a hierarchy but more specifically as a hierarchy that is organized in a top-down fashion. Each level of the hierarchy retains a significant degree of autonomy, and the top-down organization of the hierarchy in no way precludes bottom-up causality; nevertheless, the point remains that the psyche is a hierarchy the highest active level of which superintends the whole. The highest active level is the seat of psychic agency.

Wilber's account of the principal psychic levels and their corresponding basic structures is summarized in table 1.4. As can be seen from table 1.4, Wilber divides the psyche into many levels and groups these levels within the three stages of the triphasic framework. In making the triphasic division, Wilber extends Piaget's distinction between sensorimotor and preoperational levels of cognition on the one hand and operational levels on the other by adding several transoperational levels. Wilber also extends Piaget's thought by conceiving of psychic levels not only as levels of cognitive attainment but also as levels of instinctual, affective, or spiritual expression.

Extending the Piagetian perspective in these ways, Wilber describes the three levels of triphasic development as follows: The pre-egoic levels, up to and including the phantasmic level (representational mind being a transitional level), correspond to the infantile rudiments of life: sensorimotor and preoperational cognition, instinctually governed dynamism and affect. The egoic levels, up to and including

TABLE 1.4
Wilber's Hierarchical Psyche*

	Psychic Level	Basic Structures
Transegoic Levels	ULTIMATE UNITY	Complete psychic integration and coincidence of individual with reality. Unity beyond all division and duality.
	CAUSAL (35 years and up)**	Unitive consciousness; contemplation of unity of human and divine; radiant absorption in the godhead.
	SUBTLE (28 years and up)**	Paranormal psychic abilities; archetypal, visionary intuition; spontaneous devotional and altruistic feelings.
	VISION LOGIC (21 years and up)**	Holistic-synthetic thinking; mind-body, thought-feeling integration; existential wholeness and authenticity.
Egoic Levels	REFLEXIVE-FORMAL MIND (11 to 15 years)**	Formal operational (Piaget) or secondary-process (Freud) cognition: abstract, analytical, inferential, hypothetical thinking. Self-consciousness combined with ability to assume perspective of others.
	RULE-ROLE MIND (6 to 8 years)**	Concrete operational thinking (Piaget); initial command of basic laws of the logic of classes and propositions. Ability to assume role but not perspective of others.
	REPRESENTATIONAL MIND (15 months to 2 years)**	Preoperational thinking (Piaget); rudimentary conceptual thought. Narcissistic; inability to assume role of others.
Preegoic Levels	PHANTASMIC (6 months to 12 months)**	Primitive imaginal or "picture" thinking.
	EMOTIONAL-SEXUAL (1 month to 6 months)**	Basic organismic dynamism (bioenergy, libido, <i>prana</i>) and its basic instinctual modes of expression.
	SENSORIPERCEPTUAL (Prenatal to 3 months)**	Simple sensorimotor skills (Piaget).
	PHYSICAL (Prenatal)**	Basic physical substratum of organism.

* Reconstructed from table by Wilber (1990, p. 285).

** Wilber's estimate of ages at which levels are developmentally achieved.

reflexive-formal mind (vision logic being a transitional level), correspond to the spectrum of operational competencies: concrete and formal operational cognition, rational control of feelings, and rule-governed action. Finally, the transegoic levels, up to and including ultimate unity,⁵ correspond to possibilities of life beyond the spectrum of operational competencies: visionary and mystical cognition, devotional and altruistic feeling. In sum, Wilber conceives of the psychic hierarchy as being at once complexly multitiered and yet fundamentally triphasic in its constitutional organization.

DEVELOPMENT FROM LOWER TO HIGHER LEVELS

According to the structural-hierarchical paradigm, all of the levels of the psychic hierarchy are implicitly or potentially present at the outset of development. The explicit or actual emergence of the levels of the hierarchy, however, occurs only over time, starting with the lowest level and proceeding one level at a time to each higher level. The psychic hierarchy is therefore not only a constitutional hierarchy but also a developmental hierarchy. Wilber holds that typical human development proceeds through the initial levels of the psychic hierarchy up to the level of reflexive-formal mind, or in some cases to the level of vision logic. In exceptional cases, however, Wilber says, human development, starting at the lowest or physical level, proceeds all the way to the highest transpersonal level, ultimate unity.

In holding that lower levels are prerequisites of higher levels, the structural-hierarchical paradigm also holds that no stages can be skipped as development proceeds up the psychic hierarchy: a higher level cannot be attained until the basic structures of the level below it have emerged and been established. Or as Wilber states this point, *transformation* to a new level cannot occur until the *translations* (the basic structural procedures and manipulations) of the immediately preceding level have been mastered. A developmental transformation occurring before such mastery would be dangerously premature: lacking the requisite foundations, it would likely fail.

In addition to not skipping levels, normal structural-hierarchical development does not abandon levels. Because lower levels serve as functional components of higher levels, movement to higher levels normally assimilates rather than alienates lower levels. For this reason developmental transformation or transcendence is normally of an incorporative rather than dissociative sort. It would be an exception to the rule if some part of a lower level were alienated or repressed. More-

over, if such an exception were to occur, the higher level attained would be deficiently and precariously attained, because it would be missing an ingredient necessary to its proper functioning.

Normal structural-hierarchical development, then, neither skips nor abandons psychic levels. It does not skip levels because each level of the psychic hierarchy is a prerequisite of the level above it. And it does not abandon levels because each level of the psychic hierarchy subsumes the level below it. Normal structural-hierarchical development moves according to a definite sequence of stages and in a direction of increasingly inclusive wholeness. Preceding stages lay the foundation for succeeding stages by articulating basic structures that are indispensable to succeeding stages. And succeeding stages preserve the fruits of preceding stages by reorganizing the basic structures of preceding stages within higher levels of psychic functioning.

Human development, according to the structural-hierarchical paradigm, is simply a sequential unfolding of the structural-hierarchical constitution of the psyche. The sequence of stages corresponds to the hierarchy of psychic levels, and the principal developmental relations that obtain between succeeding stages are temporal manifestations of the constitutional connections that obtain between adjacent levels.

UNFOLDING SELFHOOD ACCORDING TO THE STRUCTURAL-HIERARCHICAL PARADIGM

As each ascending hierarchical level is developmentally achieved, it becomes, according to the structural-hierarchical paradigm, not only a new center of psychic agency but also a new center of selfhood. The locus of selfhood changes with each change of psychic level; each change of psychic level reconstitutes the sense of self. Conceived in this fashion, the self is what Wilber (1981a, 1990) calls a *transition or replacement structure*.

Transition structures are structures that are not only level specific but also stage specific; they are structures that come into existence only when the basic structures of the psychic level to which they correspond are developmentally activated. Transition structures are not inherent to the psychic constitution; rather, they result from an organism's seeing or acting upon the world through the basic structures of a particular psychic level. Transition structures therefore exist only when the psychic level to which they correspond is the highest active level. Once this level is developmentally superseded, the transition structures that obtained during its ascendancy are dissolved and new transition structures, appropriate to living at the next higher level, come into being.