



FIGURE 2. *The Psychospiritual Journey of the Dying Process*

ungentle tossing about of the identity during the time Washburn refers to as "regression in service of transcendence." Chaos continues until the moment the ego's presumed sovereignty is surrendered.

*Surrender* is a deep phase. Psychospiritual, rather than purely psychological, in nature, it is the period of the self's naked immersion and healing in the power of the Ground of Being, or Spirit. It can perhaps best be described as that moment when awareness, assailed by the overwhelming power of the Ground of Being, recognizes the Ground as its own Essential Nature. In surrender, one opens to Reality, to one's deeper Being.

*Transcendence* is that phase that goes deeply into expanded, enveloping states of spiritual integration. It corresponds to the period Washburn refers to as "regeneration in Spirit" as well as to the expansion of consciousness Wilber refers to as transpersonal

forty, fifty pounds or more. Who was it that went out and bought those clothes?"<sup>8</sup>

When terminal illness brings us to a Karnofsky level of 50 percent, we usually begin to recognize that we can no longer fulfill the imagined reality of who we thought we were. We no longer have our "stance" in the world. Our capacity for denial can be powerful, however. We do appear to be an eleventh-hour organism. Many of us carry the difficult intensity of Chaos, prior to Surrender, far closer to the moment of death itself and, therefore, to lower percentages on the Karnofsky scale, like my friend with the failing kidneys. As physical decline begins to gather speed and Karnofsky levels plummet from 40 to 30 percent, where we, typically, become incontinent of bowel and bladder, most people begin to ask themselves, "Where is the 'me' who had all those faces, all those cherished parts to play, all those ways of navigating the world? Who am I now?"

No matter how long we try to stave it off, in the process of dying we will experience Chaos.

The Ars Moriendi, "Art of Dying," literature, which arose at the end of the Middle Ages in Christian Europe, speaks to this onslaught of Chaos. This literature presents more than arbitrary and imagined constructs. It offers surprisingly accurate experiential maps of the psychospiritual process of dying.<sup>9</sup> This wisdom offered cartographies to guide the dying through the sequential changes in consciousness occurring during this critical period of transition and transformation.

The most relevant aspects of that literature to this discussion have to do with what were conceptualized as the "five major attacks of the devil." We can, from the perspective of transpersonal psychology, conceptualize these "attacks of the devil" as "revelations of self." Each attack of the devil can be seen as a highlighting of previously unrecognized and repressed parts of the self. The experiencing and owning of those parts lead inevitably to deeper and expanded levels of consciousness, through the integration of shadow with persona.

We can, in fact, equate each "attack of the devil," with a level of consciousness of the mental ego outlined on the Sufi cartography. At the level of Belief, impatience and irritability assaulted

the robotic, unexamined quality of that level of consciousness. At the level of Social Contract, it was conceived that the devil attacked with greed, avarice, and other worldly concerns and attachments. At the level of consciousness referred to as Ego Saint, it was conceived that the devil attacked with conceit, vanity, and pride. At the painfully morose level of Philosopher Charlatan, the devil was thought to attack through serious doubts of one's faith. And, at the level of consciousness of the wrenching state of Disillusionment, the devil was conceived to attack with deeply disturbing desperation and agonizing qualms of conscience.

In this literature, the "attacks of the devil" engender Chaos. They do this in their demand for self-examination and self-reflection. They force the experience of the depth of one's own wounds. The "attacks of the devil" expose to full view and full experience the structure of the mental ego. In so doing, they bring the soul of the dying person to the forefront of consciousness, preparing him or her for the threshold of Surrender, where the soul delivers itself for transformation. This threshold state is called liminality in the Cluniac monastic tradition of the "Art of Dying." Liminality was conceived of as a sacred condition both in and out of time.<sup>10</sup> In our own dying, we will be brought to this threshold state by Chaos. Liminality corresponds to the Nearing Death Experience—a period of accelerated, sequential transformations into transpersonal realms prior to death.

Through our deep, intense, and unmediated experiences of the emotions of Chaos, we begin to recognize that all of the guilt and regret and nostalgia we feel is a state of being that is lost in the past. All the longing and sadness and fear is a state of being that is lost in the future. The Chaos experienced by the mental ego in the first phase of the dying process is the chaos of trying to escape the present moment.

The Sufi tradition is filled with stories. Most of the stories are about "the fool," presumably in the hope that some of us will recognize ourselves. One such story is about a fool who bumped into Death on the streets of Mecca one day. Death registered a look of surprise and the fool's blood went cold. Securing a sleek stallion, the fool fled for his life; he rode faster than the wind, covering more distance than ever had been covered before in a