THE GESTALT REVOLUTION AND THE NOMINALIST REVOLUTION: THE HERE AND NOW THERE AND THEN

FRITZ'S REVOLUTION

In "Gestalt Therapy Verbatim", Fritz Perls writes:

As you know, there is a rebellion on in the United States. We discover that producing things, and living for things, and the exchange of things, is not the ultimate meaning of life. We discover that the meaning of life is that it is to be lived, and it is not to be treaded and conceptualized and squeezed into a pattern of systems. We realize that manipulation and control are not the ultimate joy of life. But we must also realize that so far we only have a rebellion. We don't have a revolution yet. There is still much of substance missing. There is a race on between fascism and humanism. At this moment it seems to me that the race is about lost to the fascists... There is only one way through: to become real, to learn to take a stand, to develop one's center, to understand the basis of existentialism: a rose is a rose is a rose. I am what I am, and at this moment I cannot possibly be different from what I am. That is what this book is about. I give you the Gestalt prayer, maybe as a direction. The prayer in Gestalt Therapy is:

I do my thing, and you do your thing.
I am not in this world to live up to your expectations
And you are not in this world to live up to mine.
You are you and I am I,
And if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.
If not, it can't be helped.

Fritz copyrighted "Gestalt Therapy Verbatim" in 1969, and Fritz died in 1970. This passage from the prologue of his book which just have cited was one of his last messages to us. Now the message of this essay of mine, which I am writing in 2006, is that the core of truth in Fritz's Gestalt Prayer is also the core of truth which underlied another revolution, the Nominalist Revolution of the 14th Century which historians attribute primarily to William of Ockham (1290-1349). Why is the parallel important? Because by studying the two systems side by side we can deepen our understanding of the theory and practice of Gestalt dreamwork.
Fritz did not say his message once. He kept saying it again,

_"I want to talk about the present development of humanistic psychology. I took us a long to debunk the whole Freudian crap."

and again.

_A thousand plastic flowers_

_Don't make a desert bloom._

_A thousand empty faces_

_Don't fill and empty room._

**WILLIAM OF OCKHAM'S REVOLUTION**

Here is a bit of William of Ockham's biography, from Copleston's "History of Philosophy", 3:44, which will help us place Ockham's Nominalist Revolution in its historical context.

At the beginning of December 1327 Michael of Cesena, the Franciscan General, arrived at Avignon, whither Pope John XXII had summoned him, to answer for his attacks on the papal Constitutions concerning "evangelical poverty". At the instance of the General, Ockham interested himself in the poverty dispute, and in May 1328 Michael of Cesena, who had just been re-elected General of the Franciscans, fled from Avignon, taking with him Bonagratoria of Bergamo, Francis of Ascoli and William of Ockham. In June the pope excommunicated the four fugitives, who joined the Emperor Ludwig of Bavaria at Pisa and went with him to Munich. Thus there began Ockham's participation in the struggle between emperor and pope, a struggle in which the emperor was also assisted by Marsilius of Padua. While some of Ockham's polemics against John XXII and his successors, Benedict XII and Clement VI, concerned theological matters, the chief point of the whole dispute was, of course, the right relation of the secular to the ecclesiastical power.

From this brief account two dichotomies are clear: Franciscans versus the pope, and secular power versus ecclesiastical power. Furthermore, we learn that we are dealing with intricate theological matters that in those days were considered to be of such great import that they involved popes and emperors.

Now, I am not a theologian or a priest or a rabbi, nor am I particularly interested in politics or history. I am not even a philosopher, though at the moment I find myself writing essays on philosophy. In fact, I am not even a "therapist", since I have not dedicated my life to healing all and sundry. I am of the "I am I" category which Fritz mentions in his Gestalt Prayer, or what they used to label a G. D. I. ("god-damned independent") back on the quad in the '60's. I am interested in this parallel of Fritz and
Ockham because my own quest in my life and my work impels me to seek out relevant sources to back up my own projects, projects which happen to include matters therapeutic, but also matters spiritual and artistic.

WHAT IS NOMINALISM?

All right, that is some background material. Let's move on to a brief explanation of the title of this essay: "The Gestalt Revolution and the Nominalist Revolution: The Here and Now There and Then". First of all, what is "nominalism"? Whatever it is, it is crucial for my own work, since I keep finding the ideas of that school of thought wherever my intellectual, therapeutic, spiritual and artistic adventures take me. For example, in his excellent account of the life and work of Walter Benjamin, Richard Wolin quotes Theodore Adorno:


Following Adorno's hint, I opened up Copleston's "History of Philosophy", Volume 3, and found a nice summary of "nominalism" in the context of the work of William of Ockham. With my mini-version of Ockhamism in hand, I then set out to look for parallels between Ockham's nominalism and the other figures I am dealing with, namely Fritz the therapist, Paracelsus the alchemist, Walter Benjamin the literary critic and Nachman of Breslav the hassidic rebbe (pronounced in English "reb'-ee"). The parallels I found are to me compelling.

Here are some tidbits: Nachman of Breslav is the founder of the Breslaver Hassidim, and Breslavers are to Chabbadnik Hassidim as Dominican Catholics are to Franciscan Catholics. Remember, Ockham was a Franciscan Catholic. The popes tended, on the other hand, to ally with the Dominican Catholics and follow St. Thomas and Duns Scotis - with both of whom Ockham took issue. Going back further, Franciscans (and Breslavers) have affinities to Platonic mysticism, while Dominicans (and Chabbadniks) have affinities to Aristotelian rationalism. Remember, both St. Thomas and Chabad leaders learned from Maimonides, who brought Aristotle from the Arabs of Egypt to the Jews and Christians of 12th century Europe. Franciscans (and Breslavers), moreover, are pietists, preferring to rely on faith, emotions and an inner call. Dominicans (and Chabbadniks), on the other hand, are monists, preferring to rely on reason and group consensus, especially "reason" as it is defined by the leader sitting at the top of a pyramid of power politics. Hence, Franciscans oftentimes find that following the inner voice of conscience and emotions leads them right into a confrontation with the dominant theocracy. This takes us back to Ockham's struggle...
against the popes. More generally, nominalists (and I realize we still have not yet defined the term) tend to be anti-establishment figures, which takes us back to Fritz, Paracelsus, Benjamin - and Wepner. All of us, Ockham, Fritz, Paracelsus, Benjamin, Nachman of Breslav - and Wepner - have been outsiders, gazing in at "the establishment". All of us are of the "I am I" school, incorrigible GDI's. Of course, the Lord, so it is said, also belongs to the "I am I", or rather the "I am that I am" school. And so us nominalists prefer to regard ourselves as the original "inside" at which the anti-nominalists are gazing longingly - from the outside! But I am getting ahead of myself, first we want to be more clear about what is "nominalism".

The root, then, is "nomen", which means "name". Hence, we would expect that a movement called nominalism would place a high priority on "names" and "naming" things. But in fact the opposite is the case. For Ockham names are only names, or as he would say "terms" are merely general ways of describing relationships between things, while what is really real is our concrete, here and now experience of the things themselves. Or as Fritz would say (quoting Gertrude Stein) "a rose is a rose is a rose", and a rose is not merely

any of the genus Rosa of the family Rosaceae of usually prickly shrubs with pinnate leaves and showy flowers, having five petals in he wild state but being often double or partly double under cultivation. Miriam Webster's "Collegiate Dictionary", 10th Edition.

Likewise, the "empty faces" whose presence will never fill the room are those without centers, those whose sense of who they are is determined by general abstract labels, terms and names, imposed on them by the world. Who they are depends on who has the power to define reality, as wrote R. D. Laing. The empty faces which Fritz is bemoaning are those who are not yet "I am I", and perhaps never will be "I am I", which to a nominalist means never to be at all.

Now above I put Walter Benjamin in the same box as Fritz and William of Ockham. Adorno also labeled Benjamin a nominalist. Therefore, we have a problem here, since Benjamin, along with many theologians such as Johann Georg Hamann and Nachman of Breslav, uses "naming" in exactly the opposite sense which I just described. For Benjamin a name is not just a term which labels an item. For him "The Name" is the name of The Lord, and naming things is giving an account of ultimate reality, analogous to The Lord creating the universe at the time of Genesis. See Benjamin's essay, "On Language As Such And The Language Of Man". In Benjamin's sense, what Fritz calls "the awareness continuum" also is giving an account of ultimate reality, since each item the Gestalt protagonist "names" is thereby a new creation in the bubble world of awareness points, or "gestalts", which make up his here and now experience. The contact boundary is ultimate reality for Gestaltists, and enumerating ("naming") the contact boundary is creating a new world, a lacuna of ultimate reality midst an alien otherness imposed by "them", by the Matrix, by the empty faces.

Historically, the extreme version of this rather paranoid point of view is Gnosticism,
which built up a vast mythology about the empty faces, about those who are mere tools of "the Archons". The Archons are macrocosmic powers, Big Ideas or Big Demons invading our microcosm of small ideas or small demons. See Hans Jonas, "The Gnostic Religion" for more details. Also, see Gershom Scholem, "Origins of the Kabbalah" for an in depth analysis of Gnostic contributions to Jewish mysticism. This present essay deals not with untamed Gnostic ideas, but with the more subdued version which has found its way into Western mainstream religion and philosophy. The nominalism of Fritz is, after all, an accepted school of therapy. Franciscan and Breslav theologies are perhaps marginal but nothing to panic over. Even Tevyeh in "The Fiddler On The Roof" is a nominalist, talking to G-d as he stands by his non-functional milk wagon on the side of the road and far from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Likewise, Walter Benjamin's literary theories are providing a good living for large numbers of stuffy professors of this and that all over the world, in spite of the fact that Benjamin himself could not get a job in any university to which he applied. Finally, the recipes of Paracelsus' alchemy laboratory are safely tucked away somewhere in the darkest recesses of the university library, and as far as I know nobody (except Gestalt Therapists) is conjuring up homunculi these days.

As I have already confessed, I am not a philosopher, and this essay is not intended to be the last word on nominalism. But at least for now we may conclude that "nominalism" foregrounds language, names and naming as worthy of much attention for those concerned with getting to the root of reality itself - whatever that may be. And historically William of Ockham is perhaps the first prominent figure who culled previous sources and synthesized his findings into a coherent body of ideas which philosophers label "nominalism". Therefore, I feel justified in using my digest of Copleston's digest of Ockhamism as a launching pad for my attempt to relate Fritz to the nominalist tradition.

OCKHAM, ARISTOTLE AND REALISM

Here is what Copleston has to say about William of Ockham's credentials as a nominalist.

There is no adequate reason for challenging Ockham's reputation as the fountainhead of the terminist or nominalist movement. Nor is there, I think, any cogent reason for representing Ockham as a mere Aristotelian (or, if preferred, as a mere would-be Aristotelian). He certainly tried to overthrow Scotist realism with the help of the Aristotelian logic and theory of knowledge, and further he regarded all realism as a perversion of true Aristotelianism, but he also endeavored to rectify the theories of Aristotle which excluded any admission of the liberty and omnipotence of G-d.

Copleston here helps us reconcile Aristotelian and Platonic elements in Ockham. By the 14th Century St. Thomas and Duns Scotis already had thoroughly integrated Aristotle into the neo-Platonic Christian tradition that preceded them. The Franciscan
movement was not immune to that influence, but still kept its position as the neo-
Platonic side of medieval Christianity. Analogously in Judaism, Nachman of Breslav
shared with the Lubavitchers the tradition of Torah and Maimonides, i.e., Aristotle, in
spite of his neo-Platonic and gnostic propensities.

By the way, I hope that Orthodox Jews will not read into my need to clarify the logical
underpinnings of these sects any kind of surrender to "goyishkeit" (non-Jewish
religion). In fact, the opposite is the case. My pure Yiddish soul sees itself as using
nominalist methodology to plow through piles of rebbe flavored "aboutism" and get
back to "the good old days" of Judaism. Perhaps today's Young Israel synagogue
movement potentially occupies an analogous place in certain communities. If the
situation in Miami where I live is typical, we have a single large "pure" Orthodox Young
Israel synagogue which is relatively open to a free exchange of ideas within the
constraints of basic required rituals, and this synagogue is surrounded by a swarm of
tiny Chabad synagogues that dispense hassidic ideas as holy writ backed up by a
little too much authoritarianism for my comfort. True, there are many Chabad
community synagogues, each with its own rabbi, but the Chabad party line emanates
from Brooklyn, rather than from heaven or the religious texts themselves. Hence,"learning" at their classes too often means "sit down, be quiet, and listen to what The
Rebbe says about this, and about that, and about everything". My alienated
perspective in this regard makes me, I suppose, a 21st Century Ockhamist, while it
makes of Fritz a 20th Century Paracelsean alchemist. Here is how Copleston puts it.

Ockham regarded all "realism" as a perversion of true Aristotelianism. [His aim was] to
purge Christian theology and philosophy of all traces of Greek necessitarianism,
particularly of the theory of essences, which in his opinion endangered the Christian
doctrines of the divine liberty and omnipotence. Ockham was a Franciscan and a
theologian; he should not be interpreted as though he were a modern radical
empiricist.

Given that since Maimonides a certain amount of Aristotle is part of the Judeo-
Christian tradition overall, then in this respect Fritz is a "modern radical empiricist",
since on the surface he seems to leave G-d out of the equation altogether. Perhaps
Ockham, Fritz and I share the label "anti-realists", in the sense that Ockham was
battling against a thousand years of neo-Platonic tradition which tended to solidify
mystical Platonic Ideas into intellectual dogma and rationalist systems of theology.
Those who erred in the direction of attributing too much conventional, systematic
reality to Platonic Ideas were labeled Ultra-Realists or Moderate Realists. Their critics
felt that by composing systems the Realists had taken the emphasis away from G-d
and the things themselves, and put it too much onto terminology ("names") that merely
talked about the things and about the relations between the things. "Anti-realists",
on the other hand, maintain that all this verbiage should not be allowed to come between
man and his direct experience of both G-d and the things themselves. This is the basic
position of pietism, though ironically today's "pietist" Breslaver Hassidic movement
also suffers from institutionalization into a "moderate realist" camp. This is less of a
problem than the "Ultra-Realism" of Chabadniks, for whom the words of The Rebbe
have the standing of otherworldly Platonic Ideas. Unfortunately, the Breslavers today translating Nachman's works into English certainly are not interested in hearing about how Gestalt Therapy theory and practice can make Nachman's writings less untouchable holy writ and more a workbook outlining a technology of the sacred. The Conservative and Reform movements, on the other hand, are so intent on conserving and reforming, respectively, that when it comes to profound delvings into the nature of reality from a Jewish point of view they neither know nor want to know. On the other hand, there are no "other hands", and that leaves us nominalists, as usual, singing solo against a cacophonous choir or, like Tevyeh, doing a monologue by the side of the road.

FRITZ'S RAZOR

Now I want to get specific about parallels between Fritz's nominalism and Ockham's nominalism. Ockham's purging of mere terms about relationships between realities from our experience of the realities themselves earned Ockham the reputation of being a sort of holy barber wielding "Ockham's razor". In his crusade to prune the Platonic Ideas down to a manageable size, Ockham operated according "the principle of economy", according to which what can be debunked as extraneous double-talk, should be debunked. In the same sense we can regard Fritz as a modern day nominalist barber wielding "Fritz's razor" in the name of the principle of "no elephantshit, please!" I already have cited his call to arms. Here is a reprise of the tune.

I want to talk about the present development of humanistic psychology. I took us a long to debunk the whole Freudian crap.

Subject to Fritz's razor, then, is first of all the "Freudian crap" with its pantheon of reified abstractions, such as "ego", "id", and "superego". Next under the barber's knife comes all "aboutism", such as the "becauses" by which we build up the illusion of being know-it-alls. Then barber Fritz clips off all the manipulative, infantile "games people play" and the accompanying scripts we internalize as the price of growing up absurd in an insane society. Fritz said,

Most other therapies try to adjust the person to society. This was maybe not too bad in previous years when society was relatively stable, but now with the rapid changes going on, it is getting more and more difficult to adjust to society. Also, more and more people are not willing to adjust to society. They think that this society stinks, or have other objections. I consider that the basic personality in our time is a neurotic personality. This is a preconceived idea of mine, because I believe we are living in an insane society and that you only have the choice either to participate in this collective psychosis or to take risks and become healthy and perhaps also crucified. If you are centered in yourself, then you don't adjust any more. Then whatever happens becomes a passing parade and you assimilate, you understand, you are related to
whatever happens. GTV 32

In "Gestalt Therapy Verbatim" Fritz is quite thorough in analyzing every word and strategem of the clowns in the pantheon of a 20th Century neurotic. These include, for example, such phrases as the topdog's classic "but I only do it for your own good!", and the underdog's typical manipulative response, "I'll try!" All these non-realities, all these terms and habits without a specific concrete here and now reference, fall under the blade of Fritz's razor.

**GESTALT NOMINALISM**

Once the nominalist barber has done his work, he looks around to see what is left of the world. What is left, according to Fritz, is (1) the contact boundary which is all the reality there is, and (2) the coming solution which though not quite of this world is not in heaven or G-d either, heaven and G-d having already been shaved away by Fritz's razor. But Fritz is a careless barber. Due to some oversight he leaves room for Aristotle's "final cause" in his system. That is to say, Fritz's "coming solution" resides somewhere in the "now" moments, in a tiny corner which theologians would call "the messianic now". Paradoxically, however, for Fritz the messianic now turns out to be a huge space, especially after Fritz gets through stuffing into it most of the hair which he just got through shaving off the divine countenance. Fritz has his own jargon, but with a bit of help from our sources we can put Humpty-Dumpty (nominalist theology) back together again inside Gestalt Therapy. The heavens, the angels, the demons and even G-d Himself, they all have a place in Fritz's 20th Century nominalism. Fritz ends up occupying a position very close to that of William of Ockham himself. For example, we can note the analogous manner is which both Ockham and Fritz repackaged the Platonic ideas. First Ockham.

Ockham makes it clear that in his opinion the theory of ideas in G-d is simply a piece of anthropomorphism. His predecessors talk as though the distinction of ideas in G-d were prior to the production of creatures. Moreover, they postulate in G-d ideas of universals, which as a matter of fact do not correspond to any reality. But according to Ockham it is unnecessary to postulate such ideas in G-d to explain either His production of or His knowledge of creatures. But this does not mean that he was prepared to declare that St. Augustine was in error or that there was no acceptable interpretation of the theory [of divine ideas]. Ockham asserts, for instance, that there is an infinite number of distinct ideas; and this assertion appears at first hearing to be in obvious contradiction with his condemnation of any ascription of distinct ideas to G-d. The creature itself is the idea. "The ideas are not in G-d subjectively and really; but they are in Him only objectively, that is, as certain things which are known by Him, for the ideas are the things themselves which are producible by G-d. In other words, it is quite sufficient to postulate G-d on the one hand and creatures on the other hand; the creatures as known by G-d are the "ideas" and there are no other ideas. The creature as known from eternity by G-d can be considered as the pattern or exemplar of the
creature as actually existent. But if creatures themselves are the ideas, it follows that "there are distinct ideas of all makable things, as the things themselves are distinct from one another". And thus there are distinct ideas of all the essential and integral parts of producible things, like matter and form. On the other hand, if the ideas are the creatures themselves, it follows that the ideas are of individual things, "since individual things alone are producible outside (the mind) and no others". There are, for example, no divine ideas of genera, for he divine ideas are creatures makable by G-d, and genera cannot be produced as real existents. It follows, too, that there are not ideas of negations, privations, evil, guilt and the like, since these are not and cannot be distinct things. But, as G-d can produce an infinity of creatures, we must say that there is an infinite number of ideas. He is willing to speak of distinct ideas and of these ideas as patterns or exemplars of creation. On the other hand, using the principle of economy and determined to get rid of anything which might seem to come between the omnipotent Creator and the creature so as to govern the divine will, he pruned the theory of all Platonism and identified the ideas with creatures themselves as producible by G-d and as known by G-d from eternity as producible. From the philosophical point of view he fitted the theory to his general philosophy by eliminating universal ideas, while from the theological point of view he safeguarded, as he thought, the divine omnipotence and eliminated what he considered to be the contamination of Greek metaphysics. [Once Ockham had eliminated the universal divine ideas] his version of the theory of ideas was then consistent with his general principle that there are only individual existents and with his constant attempt to get rid of any other factors which could be got rid of.

This, then, is what Ockham did to the theory of divine idea, using his razor. The ideas are no longer in the heavens since the heavens as an abstract theory have been shaved away. Sure, there still are heavens. After all this is the 14th Century. But the only way to "know" they are there is to believe they are there as a matter of faith. The ideas have been relocated down here as the creatures themselves. There are an infinite number of individual creatures, each of which is known to G-d objectively as a separate idea. There is an idea or pattern of each of the things that G-d can produce, and the idea is the creature itself from G-d's point of view. The general, abstract terms that used to clutter up the world under the heading of Platonic ideas, all the aboutist confusions, where are they now? Ockham tells us that "the creature as known from eternity by G-d can be considered as the pattern or exemplar of the creature as actually existent." The general ideas, in other words, are tucked away in "eternity" where they serve as the pattern of the actual creature. And where is "eternity"? In the messianic now, of course. Once you get there (if you get there) the moment of peak experience has no before and after. It just is, so it is "eternal"! This yields a dualistic, Platonic universe, with the Microcosm down here and the Macrocosm up there. Down here, that which is a real creature is that which G-d regards as an idea, a pattern, a principle of organization, an organism, in other words a "gestalt". In the Macrocosm, up there, are the general ideas, the organic principles which are the grandpappies of the ideas down here in the Microcosm. The parrot gestalt or awareness moment, for example, is down here so long as G-d sees the parrot during His awareness continuum and thereby creates him here, while the more encompassing idea of "avian
animal" is up there, if not in the mind of G-d at least as something objective with which G-d can be in touch in his own manner.

All this should be beginning to sound familiar. Just scratch out "G-d" and put in gestalt client. Just scratch out "creatures" and "patterns" and put in "gestalts". Just scratch out "eternity" and put in "the coming solution". Just scratch out the Macrocosm and put in "what is possible". Voila! Instant gestalt nominalism! Says Fritz,

Learning is nothing but to discover that something is possible. To teach means to show a person that something is possible. What we are after is the maturation of the person, removing the blocks that prevent a person from standing on his own feet. We try to help him make the transition from environmental support to self support. And basically we do it by finding the impasse. The impasse occurs originally when a child cannot get the support from the environment, but cannot yet provide its own support. At that moment of impasse, the child starts to mobilize the environment by playing phony roles, playing stupid, playing helpless, playing weak, flattering and all the roles that we use in order to manipulate our environment.

Do you get it? When you do a gestalt session as the client you are the G-d of a gestalt universe. Each contact experience you describe congeals into a gestalt, a pattern, what Ockham labels a "creature", i.e., some entity you create with your logical powers. Which logical power are you using here, deduction or induction? Answer: induction. In what sense? In the sense that each pattern you grasp is a collection of innumerable micro-gestalts into a single dominant gestalt, a gathering of chaotically distributed micro-organisms into a single organism. This is the creative aggression that Fritz writes about in "Ego, Hunger and Aggression" and "Gestalt Therapy". You are burning up energy waging war against entropy, against dis-organization.

Next, where in your gestalt universe is the "eternity", in which you store the patterns for the creatures you create down here in your awareness bubble? Answer: in the "coming solution", of course, which is your Aristotelian final cause or entelechy. By "identifying with the coming solution" (Aristotle's "final cause" acting as a magnet pulling you forward) you make a leap of faith from good contact to perfect contact, to perfection, to what Plato called "the good" and what others call "G-d". In this sense, discovering the presence of G-d in your life is discovering the best of all possible contact boundaries that you can come up with. To do so you need to leap from the Microcosm of what is down here to the Macrocosm of what is possible in your wildest dreams. Your contact boundary maxes out, you cease identifying with being a Microcosm with small ideas, and you begin identifying with being a Macrocosm with Big Ideas. Of course, with Fritz running the show you are not "actually" in 7th heaven but only "possibly" in 7th heaven. You just discovered that it is possible for you somehow to be in 7th heaven. This is what another nominalist, Leibniz, labeled "the best of all possible worlds". "The coming solution" is "the best of all possible worlds". Learning is discovering. And once you start on the journey, it seems to you as though there are no limits to what you can discover - so long as you stick to what is possible! Just try to fly out the window instead of identifying with the idea of flying and with the
image of Peter Pan and you will see the difference. Fritz says:

Now there is no such a thing as total integration. Integration is never completed; maturation is never completed. There's always something to be integrated; always something to be learned. There's always a possibility of richer maturation - of taking more and more responsibility for yourself and for your life. Of course, taking responsibility for your life and being rich in experience and ability is identical. And this is what I hope to do here in this short seminar - to make you understand how much you gain by taking responsibility for every emotion, every movement you make, every thought you have - and shed responsibility for anybody else. The world is not there for your expectation, nor do you have to live for the expectation of the world. GTV 69

Fritz here is preaching to you that you must keep your gestalt work "clean". Stick to the here and now possibilities of the things themselves, the Big Ideas of the Macrocosm, and avoid the "expectations", the elephantshit, the aboutism, the general ideas about relationships between things. Be a good nominalist and stay with your concrete here and now experience. The world is not there for your expectations, i.e., for generalized fantasies which are not grounded in your total being. Likewise, steer clear of what you imagine the world expects of you. You are not living to fulfill those general ideas about relationships between things either.

GESTALT NOMINALIST DIALECTICS

Each moment of awareness creates a gestalt, a pattern a creature, an organism, an "X". A second moment of awareness creates a second creature, a "Y", as well as a third creature that encompasses the first two different ones in an integration, a "Z". This is dialectical logic at work concretely in the here and now: the thesis (your first awareness moment), the antithesis (your second awareness moment, which is different from the first one), and the synthesis which moves you one notch up the Jacob's Ladder of logical inductions. Copleston cites the following from one of Ockham's sources, Peter of Spain.

Dialectic is the arts of arts and the science of sciences which opens the way to the knowledge of the principles of all methods. Dialectic is carried on only by means of language, and that language involves the use of words. One must begin, then, by considering the word, first as a physical entity, secondly as a significant term.

Is this not what you are doing in your "nominalist" gestalt session, with your awareness continuum and your dreamwork dialogues? You begin with the mere physical sentence, "I am aware of . . .", and eventually - if you work truthfully - your dreamwork session comes to signify not just your little dreamwork bubble of contact boundary and self-interruptions but by means of the higher and higher envelopes you occupy with inductive reasoning you may arrive at a moment of insight into the Macrocosm itself. At that moment, the messianic now, your physical nature is merely a transparent sign, a
low level gestalt which signifies the higher level gestalts that pass through you as their medium. Gestalt therapy is dialectical logic done concretely in the here and now, rather than as an abstract intellectual exercise. Gestalt therapy is "concrete dialectics". Reading "Gestalt Therapy Verbatim" is abstract dialects. Doing your own session is concrete dialectics. Fritz also said,

*Responsibility means simply to be willing to say "I am I" and "I am what I am". I'm Popeye, he sailor man."* GTV 70

By which he meant that with each new awareness comes a new "I am aware of . . .", a new moment of "I am I", or "I am that I am", in the sense that you are at that moment the deity of your own Genesis. Each time you do the three stages of the dialectic you move up, you ascend towards the possibility of total maturity, total response-ability. You are the alchemical magician, the priest-physician, guiding your organism towards a full ripening. You are on the way to transforming clay, carbon and hydrogen and nitrogen, protoplasm, into spiritualized gold.

**LEIBNIZ'S THEORY OF MONADOLOGY**

In the 17th Century, three hundred years deeper into the nominalist tradition than William of Ockham, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz repackaged Oakhamism. He called it Monadology. The creatures (gestalts) became the "monads", a label that foregrounds the fact that each one is a mini-universe, a oneness, from the phenomenological point of view. The contact boundary of awareness, the here and now concrete experience, now finds itself relabeled "the best of all possible worlds", in the sense that "the good" of Platonic tradition is what is contactful, and "the best" is what is most contactful. Leibniz also called the contact boundary the "pre-established harmony". Ascending Jacob's Ladder of inductions once again maximizes the encompassing powers of gestalts. Low level monads coalesce under the rule of dominant monads, which themselves integrate into the grand monadology which is the nation state. Leibniz had high hopes of transforming 17th Century Europe into a gestalt commune, an ideal village which would give body to G-d's pre-established harmony. the state would seek to emulate the realm of pure ideas in the Macrocosm. The nominalist foundation remains. Each monad is a world unto itself, one of G-d's creatures, without relation to the others, except by its participation in the divine pre-established harmony, "the good" which is the best of all possible contact boundary arrangements. Fritz's gestalt commune in Vancouver had similar aspirations, with "the coming solution" standing in for "the best of all possible worlds".

In order for a monadology to work there can be no contaminating unaffiliated creatures or gestalts gumming up the machinery. There is G-d and there are the creatures (the gestalts) and nothing else. No confused ideas which are self-interruptions of the monads are allowed. The threat is that if some monads do introject a demon in the manner that normal cells are invaded by HIV virus, then those cells have their normal
loyalty to the monadology as a whole subverted. They now serve an alien Archon. The virus DNA is a Big Idea from outside the organic system. A monadology, being a nominalist universe, assumes an omnipotent G-d and totally dependent creatures. It is a totally authoritarian universe, quite appropriate for 17th Century European monarchies. Here is how Ockham put it.

Ockham’s tendency, then, was to split up the world, as it were, into " absolutes". That is to say, his tendency was to split up the world into distinct entities, each of which depends on G-d but between which there is no necessary connection: the order of the world is not logically prior to the divine choice. That G-d is omnipotent was for Ockham not a truth which can be philosophically proved: it is known only by faith. His tendency as a thinker with marked theological preoccupations [impelled him] to break through, as it were, the purely philosophic and natural order and to subordinate it to the divine liberty and omnipotence, to break through supposedly necessary connections which might seem to limit in some way the divine omnipotence. On the supposition that G-d has chosen a world order, that order remains stable. But the choice of the order is in no way necessary; it is the effect of the divine choice and of the divine choice alone. If the order of the world is entirely contingent on the divine choice, it is obviously impossible to deduce it a priori. If we want to know what it is, we must examine what it is in fact.

**KING FRITZ CHALLENGED**

This assumption of divine omnipotence is one of the hidden nominalist assumptions of Gestalt Therapy. A client who does not comply with King Fritz's nominalist agenda sabotages the process in a profound philosophical sense. As the servant of "the coming solution" (of the Macrocosm of Big Ideas and of the nominalist G-d), Fritz cannot allow that to happen. In "Gestalt Therapy Verbatim" there is a classic case where one of Fritz's pilgrims challenges His Majesty's nominalist authoritarianism.

J: O.K. I'll try. I still think you're a little bit hostile, but I'll try.
F: Say this to Fritz. Put Fritz on the chair. Say "Fritz, you seem to be a little bit hostile."
J: Fritz, you seem to be a little bit hostile. Not just a little bit, a lot.
F: Play Fritz.
J: Play Fritz. Get off my platform. Get off my platform, you goddamned intruder for trying to act like a human being. For trying to say what you're thinking yourself, for trying to act real, for trying to act like a real person. Get off my platform, you don't belong up here because you're nobody. I'm somebody. I'm G-d. You're nobody. You're a goddamned nothing, you don't . . .
F: Say the same sentence to the audience. "I'm G-d."
J: They do exist, though.
F: Say the same sentence to the audience.
J: I am G-d. You don't exist.
F: That's not what you said.
J: I forgot what I said.
F: So please get off the platform.
J: That's the most hostile goddamn thing I've ever heard. Why won't you let me work this out?
F: Because you're sabotaging every step.
J: I've only - you've hardly given me a chance at all. I've said two things.
F: Yah.
J: And you immediately want to flush me down the toilet. Now, why? I don't think that's fair.
F: That's right. I'm not fair. I'm working. You notice that anybody who brings even a little bit of good will along, how much then is happening. But with all the saboteurs and poisoners, and so on, I am not going to show any patience. If you want to control me, make a fool out of me - sabotage and destroy what we are trying to do here, I am not a part of that. If you want to play games, go to a psychoanalyst and lie there on his couch for years, decades and centuries.

And later in the same session:

F: Could you go on a little bit with your mud-slinging. I like that.
J: You seem more human at this moment. It's harder to sling mud at you now that you seem human, than when you wouldn't let me stay up on your stand.
F: (sarcastically) How cooperative can you get? (laughter)
J: You want me to sling a little mud at you, huh? O.K., I think you're a goddamned, I think you're competitive, too! You want to be G-d, you want to show off your whole production to this group here. I'm not convinced that this is better than analysis, or individual private confidential psychotherapy. You know, maybe you're just a goddamned big pompous ass who is satisfying his own omnipotence by being up here!
GTV 220-223

In keeping with his nominalist agenda, Fritz demands faith, so that the divine omnipotence of "the coming solution" can break through. William of Ockham also relied on faith as his tool to combat aboutist cogitations.

[Ockham's] tendency as a thinker with marked theological preoccupations [impelled him] to break through, as it were, the purely philosophic and natural order and to subordinate it to the divine liberty and omnipotence, to break through supposedly necessary connections which might seem to limit in some way the divine omnipotence.

Client John, in the case just cited, is the alien archon, the invading virus DNA that Fritz, as servant of the Macrocosm, must neutralize if the process is to unfold. John is exactly what he says he is, another human being, a creature in the eyes of G-d and in the eyes of the audience. He is a monadology in his own right, and vaguely he senses what is going on. To John, Fritz is the archon, the invading virus DNA, while to Fritz, John is the archon, the invading virus DNA. In this duel to the death (of ego), Fritz with his reputation and a large audience backing him up musters enough power to be able to
define the reality of the situation. John submits his own monadology to entropy, to disintegration, and thereby enables the Macrocosmic repackaged Platonic ideas which are implicit in "the coming solution" to do their alchemical magic of re-integration.

Though alchemy is not the focus of this essay, we have here is a good opportunity to point out how nominalist philosophy is a support for alchemy in the work of the 16th Century Paracelsus. Let's look at John's transformation again, this time from the perspective of alchemy. We observe that John's initial monadology is dis-integrated by the ongoing dialectic, which Ockham would say is the omnipotence of G-d breaking through "supposedly necessary connections", profane elements which limit that omnipotence. Alchemists look for analogies of natural phenomena to spiritual ideas. In this case, death of ego, a psychological death of one point of view and birth of another point of view, is likened by Paracelsus to the putrefaction of matter which mysteriously gives birth to new life in the form of, say, maggots and fungi. Another analogy for death and rebirth is the putrefaction of a seed in the ground, an event which is necessary for the seed to sprout into a new plant. Stretching the analogy one step further, Paracelsus comes up with a recipe for creating an artificial man in a test tube by fermenting semen for 40 days.

The secret of how to make the "homunculus" was known to the "Wunderleut" (Miracle Men) of old who were themselves begotten by the process. It shall remain secret to the end of days, when everything will be manifest. A recipe is given, however. It prescribes: let a man's semen putrefy in a sealed vessel for 40 days at the highest possible temperature - until some movement can be seen. It will then resemble a human shape, but be transparent and without a "body". It now needs feeding daily with the "arcanum of human blood, for 40 weeks, after which it will develop into a real human child with all its limbs, only smaller.

Fritz here can be likened to an alchemist who uses the omnipotence of G-d, which he focuses by means of the Gestalt process to a white heat. Fritz's aim is to dis-integrate "John as monad" and reintegrate him using the upwards arrow on the right of the concrete dialectic, the magical powers of logical induction. Since John's own manipulative tools, his "games" or "supposedly necessary connections", have been neutralized earlier in the session, John is totally available for the magic. Originally Fritz called his new procedure "concentration therapy", and also the word "gestalt" implies organizing matter and energy into a concentrated pattern. If we realize that from a nominalist point of view it is the divine omnipotence which is being concentrated, then perhaps Fritz's original name was more appropriate. As the process goes on John as seed discovers that it is possible to germinate and sprout forth new life. This sprouting is the "movement" which, according to the recipe for a homunculus, is to be expected after 40 days of undergoing concrete dialectics. Next, John needs to be "fed" by means of ongoing experiences of good contact, since it is the contact boundary which is "food" in the sense that through it John employs creative aggression to assimilate the assimilable novelties. In future Gestalt sessions, the rhythm of contact and withdrawal would provide a steady supply of new ideas (arcanum) from the fertile void (the Macrocosm). And so after perhaps 40 weeks of Gestalt work Fritz as Magus would
expect that John "feels like a new man"! I wonder if the number 40 is intended to imply an analogy to the 40 days of rain that led to the dis-integration of the created world, which then gave Noah and all the creatures on the ark an opportunity to rebirth the world.

**OCKHAM'S THEORY OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Ockham's theory of psychology, i.e., of the psyche or soul, is that of Aristotle. Here is Aristotle's theory of the three types of soul, the vegetative, the animal and the human.

*The different types of soul form a series of such a kind that the higher presupposes the lower but not vice versa. The lowest form of soul is the nutritive or vegetative soul, which exercises the activities of assimilation and reproduction. It is found not only in plants but also animals; yet it can exist by itself, as it does in plants. In order that any living thing should continue to exist, these functions are necessary; they are found, therefore, in all living things, but in plants they are found alone, without the higher activities of soul. For plants sensation is not necessary, for they do not move but draw their nourishment automatically. (The same holds good, indeed, of motionless animals.) But animals endowed with the power of movement must have sensation, for it would be useless for them to move after their food, if they could not recognize it when they found it.*

*Animals, then, possess the higher form of soul, the sensitive soul, which exercises the three powers of sense-perception, desire and local motion. Imagination follows on the sensitive faculty, and memory is a further development of this. Just as Aristotle has pointed out the necessity of nutrition for the preservation of life at all, so he shows the necessity of touch in order that an animal should be able to distinguish its food, at least when it is in contact with it. Taste, whereby that which is food attracts the animal, and what is not food repels it, is also necessary. The other senses, though not strictly necessary, are for the well-being of the animal.*

*Higher in the scale than the merely animal soul is the human soul. This soul unites in itself the powers of the lower souls (vegetative and animal souls), but it has a peculiar advantage in the possession of nous. The latter is active in two ways, as the power of scientific thought (logos) and as the power of deliberation (practical knowledge). The former has truth as its object, truth for its own sake, while the latter aims at truth, not for its own sake but for practical and prudential purposes . . . Actual knowledge is identical with its object; potential knowledge is prior in time in the individual, but in general it is not temporally prior; but nous does at one time function and at another not . . . Without the active reason nothing thinks. Copleston 328-330*

In the above account, it is important to notice the first sentence, which gives us the clue we need to decode the verbal description into the underlying concrete dialectics.

*The different types of soul form a series of such a kind that the higher presupposes the*
lower but not vice versa.

Induction requires a previous deduction, so that the step of induction can integrate the two opposite elements of the antithesis into a new higher synthesis. This fact gives us the positions of the three souls in the concrete dialectic. The vegetative soul is concerned with deduction and creation on the left side of the dialectic, i.e., differentiation of the contact boundary into all the separate awareness moments. The animal soul deals with induction and the rhythm of contact and withdrawal on the right side of the dialectic. Animals have the potential for movement, in Aristotle's sense of the term, i.e., logical movement around the circle. That is what enables us to work with the two hotseats when we work on impasses and to arrive at new ideas. At the end of the process, the human soul deals with what Aristotle labels the "active intellect" or "nous". This is Aristotle's "final cause", which is the Gestaltist's "coming solution". By identifying with his human soul, the Gestalt client hopes to be transported, again magically, from his the fertile void of his Microcosm to the new ideas of the Macrocosm. Thus, in Aristotle's theory of the three souls we see that the entire concrete dialectic is laid out in the most obvious manner.

Here is Ockham's version of the same theory of the three souls, according to Copleston's interpretation.

But though Ockham accepted on faith the existence of an immaterial and incorruptible form in man, he was not prepared to say that this form informs matter directly. The function of matter is to support a form; and it is clear that the matter of the human body has a form. But the corruptibility of the human body shows that it is not an incorruptible form which informs matter immediately. "I say that one must postulate in man another form in addition to the intellectual soul, namely a sensitive form, on which a natural agent can act by way of corruption and production." This sensitive form or soul is distinct from man's intellectual soul and, unless G-d wills otherwise, it perishes with the body. There is only one sensitive form in an animal or in a man; but it is extended in such a way that one part of the sensitive soul perfects one part of matter, while another part of the same soul perfects another part of matter." Thus the part of the sensitive soul which perfects the organ of sight is the power of seeing, while the part which perfects the organ of hearing is the power of hearing. In this sense, then, we can speak of sensitive powers which are really distinct from one another. But if we mean by "powers" forms which are the eliciting principles of the various acts of sensation, there is no need to postulate really distinct powers corresponding to the various organs of sense: the principle of economy can be applied. The one eliciting principle is the sensitive form or soul itself, which is extended throughout the body and works through the different sense organs.

Ockham clearly maintained the existence in man of three distinct forms. He argues not only that the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul are distinct in man, but also that the sensitive soul and the form of corporeity are really distinct both in men and brutes. In maintaining the existence of a form of corporeity in man Ockham was continuing the Franciscan tradition. In saying that there is in man a form of corporeity and in
maintaining that the intellectual soul does not inform prime matter directly Ockham was continuing, then, a traditional position, in favor of which he rejected that of St. Thomas. Moreover, though he maintained the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms, he did not deny that man, taken in his totality, is a unity. "There is only one total being of man, but several partial beings". Nor did he deny that the intellectual soul is the form of the body, though he did not think that this can be proved philosophically. It must be remembered that for Ockham a real distinction meant a distinction between things which can be separated, at least by the divine power. [Hence] Ockham's doctrine of the real distinction between the sensitive and rational souls in man makes it harder to safeguard the unity of man.

This is Aristote's psychology imported wholesale into nominalism by Ockham and into Gestalt Therapy by Perls, Hefferline and Goodman in their book "Gestalt Therapy". The "sensitive" or "animal" soul is the contactful element, the Gestaltists "contact boundary" which generates our sense of everyday reality on the level of unclouded awareness. Clouded awareness, such as awareness of our liver functioning is usually an operation of our vegetative soul, "the form of corporeity". This soul is labeled "confluence" in Gestalt theory, in the sense that when it is foregrounded in our experience we are "flowing with" (con+fluere) the unaware physiology or habits - habits such as the manipulative infantile "games people play". This contact boundary usually functions as a whole, when we do things holistically, such as going for a swim. However, the contact boundary can be experienced as separate parts, say, at the moment a Gestalt client suddenly regains the capacity to use his eyes. Before there was a hole, and now he has eyes that can see, for example, different colors. Applying his principle of economy Ockham lumps all the confluent elements together as our corporal or vegetative soul. Finally, the gap between work on the contact boundary and emerging "coming solution" is the Platonic dualist aspect of nominalist theory. The moment of waking up from our illusions is Platonic anamnesis or recollection of prior more general encompassing ways of functioning. This is a function of our human soul, in contrast to the usual everyday way we use our memory as animal (sensitive) souls.

**MOTION, PLACE AND TIME IN NATURE**

In his understanding of nature, Ockham believed he was returning directly to Aristotle as his the source. He applied his razor to neo-Platonic and what he regarded as incorrect so-called Aristotelian theories, both of which, he believed, interfere with G-d's omnipotence and the creature's total dependence. Here is Copleston's summary of Ockham on motion, place and time in nature.

*If it were not for the use of abstract words like "motion", "simutaneity", "succession", etc., the problems connected with the nature of motion would not create such difficulty for people. In the case of quantitative change it is obvious, says Ockham, that nothing is involved save "permanent things". As to local motion, nothing need be postulated except a body and its place, that is, its local situation. To be moved locally "is first to*
have one place, and afterwards, without any other thing being postulated, to have another place, without any intervening state of rest . . . and to proceed thus continuously . . . And consequently the whole nature of motion can be saved (explained) by this without anything else but the fact that a body is successively in distinct places and is not at rest in any of them."

The principle of economy was invoked too in Ockham's treatment of place and time. Expounding the Aristotelian definitions, he insists that place is not a thing distinct from the surface or surfaces of the body or bodies in regard to which a certain thing is said to be in a place; and he insists that time is not a thing distinct from motion. "I say that neither time nor any "successivum" denotes a thing, either absolute or relative, distinct from permanent things; and this is what the Philosopher (Aristotle) means." In whichever of the possible senses one understands "time", it is not a thing in addition to motion. "Primarily and principally "time" signifies the same as motion", although it connotes both the soul and an act of the soul, by which it (the soul or mind) knows the before and after of that motion. And so, presupposing what has been said about motion, and (presupposing) that the statements are understood, it can be said that "time" signifies motion directly and the soul or an act of the soul directly; and on this account it signifies directly the before and after in motion." As Ockham expressly says that the meaning of Aristotle in the whole of this chapter about time is, in brief, this, that "time" does not denote any distinct thing outside the soul beyond what "motion" signifies, and as this is what he himself held, it follows that in so far as one can distinguish time from motion it is mental, or, as Ockham would say, a "term" or "name".

Ockham claims that he is being true to Aristotle with regard to motion, place and time, all of which Aristotle deals with in his philosophy of nature. Let us see if he is right about this. Also, by turning to The Philosopher himself perhaps we can get a better understanding of Ockham's point of view. Again I will rely on Copleston, Volume 1, pp. 320-331.

Nowadays when people say they want to go to the mountains or the beach to enjoy "nature" we assume that what they have in mind is to go from inside some stuffy house "outside" to some place not so stuffy. Correct? But even a quick glance at what Aristotle has to say about nature shows us that for him nature is not "outside" at all, but "inside". In fact, his idea of "nature" turns out to be the Gestaltist's experience of the contact boundary, all of which occurs inside our own head, albeit while making use of what is "out there" as a sort of projection screen, what Aristotle calls a "tabla rasa" or "passive intellect". Copleston distinguishes Aristotle's phenomenological idea of nature from our own by using a capital "N".

[Aristotle] regards Nature as the totality of natural objects which are capable of initiating change and of bringing it to an end, of objects which have an inner tendency to change. Artificial objects, a bed for instance, have not the power of self-movement. The "simple" bodies of which the bed is composed have this power of initiating change or movement, but they do so as natural bodies, not as components of a bed as such. This position has, of course, to be qualified by the doctrine that the passage of lifeless
bodies from a state of rest to a state of movement must be initiated by an external agent."
Copleston, p. 320

This is another source of the notion of "contact boundary" which we find in "Gestalt Therapy", by Perls, Hefferline and Goodman. These authors quote Aristotle as saying that when we look at a tree somehow our eyes reach out and the tree reaches back at us. One aspect of our human soul, our "active intellect", is the external agent initiating the movement, and the tree, when regarded in the light of awareness (rather than aboutism) is enabled simultaneously to return the kindness by glancing back at us as another aspect of our human soul, our "passive intellect". In that manner the tree initiates the movement of the concrete dialectic from its side. The tree brings the dialectic to an "end" when it participates in the "coming solution" at the other end of the dialectical process. That is what Aristotle labels "Nature" and the Gestaltists label "contact". In this sense all nature is alive, a vast organism or monad or gestalt. The "external agent" is the person who says "I am aware of that tree." Contacting "that tree" causes that tree to pass from non-awareness to awareness, from confluence to contact, from lifeless to live - in the specific sense in which Aristotle and the Gestaltists use the word "life". If the person doing the awareness continuum is me, then, employing my creative aggression, I just have incorporating "that tree" (Aristotle's "assimilable novelty") into my own living contact boundary, much in the manner that an amoeba incorporates a tasty bacteria for dinner. If I keep going with other objects for a while I create a world or monad or strong gestalt of contactful points, a bubble of awareness, my own private universe. If I do several cycles of the rhythm of contact and withdrawal, going from outer zone awareness of the environment to inner zone awareness of my body and fantasies, then gradually I build up a living tapestry, a magic carpet, as it were, a river of phenomenological experience which takes on its own special kind of "life". This magical life which just have created, as an extension of G-d's omnipotence, is the "concrete dialectic". I now can float on that river down/up to G-d or the Unmoved Mover if I wish to do so. Every contact point is a concrete "creature" (Ockham) or "gestalt" (Fritz), and the uni-verse of a gezillion gestalts or monads lives up to its root (versere = to turn) by moving in a continuous counterclockwise manner around the circle of dialectical logic. (See the diagram of Aristotelian dialectic below.) One turn (uni-verse) around the circle represents one dialectical "beat" of the rhythm of contact and withdrawal. Aristotle uses the example of somebody in a boat floating down a river to symbolize the river of life itself.

*The whole river, according to Aristotle, is the place of the boat and whoever is in the boat, on the ground that the whole river is a rest. Everything in the physical universe is thus in a place, while the universe itself is not. Since, therefore, motion occurs through change of place, the universe itself cannot move forwards, but only by turning.*
Copleston, p. 321
Let me repeat this citation, adding my own dialectical decoding.

*The whole river (of awareness), according to Aristotle, is the place of the boat and whoever is in the boat (me and my awareness continuum), on the ground that the*
whole river (the dialectical logic as a whole) is a rest. Everything in the physical universe (my here and now awareness continuum) is thus in a place (in a place somewhere on the circle of dialectical positions, i.e., "thesis", "antithesis" or "synthesis"), while the universe itself is not. Since, therefore, motion occurs through change of place (moving around the circle of dialectical positions), the universe itself cannot move forwards, but only by turning (on its own circumference around its own center).

Take a look now below at my own cryptogram by which I seek to illustrate the above "concrete dialect", the dialectical river of life. The arrows indicate its counterclockwise direction, beginning with deduction on the left (creation, differentiation of the creatures, gestalts, monads), and concluding with induction on the right (maturation by discovering envelopes of greater and greater possibilities for integration). Kabbalists, by the way, may take note that the flow is from "binah" (creation of the creatures at 11:00) through the Garden of Eden (9:00) down into "malchut", the fallen state, at 6:00, and through the process of redemption (3:00) back to origin, "chochmah" at 1:00 and G-d at 12:00. The clock times are inserted here only to locate the points on the circle, with no profound meaning intended.

**BASIC DIALECTIC**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{thesis} & = X \\
\text{synthesis} & = X / -X \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{antithesis} & = 0 \\
\text{thesis} & = Y \\
\downarrow & \\
\text{antithesis} & = X / -X \\
\uparrow & \\
\text{thesis} & = X / -X \\
\end{align*}
\]

For the case of Aristotle and the Aristotelians we merely change the labels.

**ARISTOTLE, MAIMONIDES, ST. THOMAS DIALECTIC**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ACTIVE INTELLECT} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{(deduction)} & \\
\downarrow & \text{Y} \leftarrow 0 \\
\uparrow & \text{(induction)} \\
& \text{X} / -X \\
\text{PASSIVE INTELLECT}
\end{align*}
\]
Returning to Aristotle's account of Nature above, what about the "bed", which is an "artificial object". How shall we interpret that, in the light of my model? We can get a clue from Ockham's nominalism. Ockham would have us shear away everything except G-d and the creatures. If when I do my Gestalt work we can say that I am seeking to emulate The Lord's creation of the creatures (the gestalts, the ideas), then a bed the way Aristotle is using the image here, is made up of an vast number of mini-gestalts, or monads, encompassed within a higher order structure such that when I think "about" a bed without actual looking at this bed or an image of a bed I already have, according to Ockham and Fritz, fallen out of Paradise and into the hell of aboutism. The word "bed" in that case falls from the exalted Adamic functioning of naming the creatures of the universe to the fallen function of talking about a relationship between those creatures. In other words, the word "bed" becomes merely a "term", a "name" in the sense of a label or neon sign pinned onto the creatures. The label is abstract, it is not a part of the "concrete dialectic" which is what Aristotle and Ockham (and Fritz) call "life". It is dead form, rather than live form.

The "simple" bodies of which the bed is composed have this power of initiating change or movement, but they do so as natural bodies, not as components of a bed as such.

We now can appreciate that "motion" for Aristotle is not what we had in mind when we opened the philosophy book. The motion of a bird flying by, for example, would not in itself fit easily into the above dialectical circle of Aristotelian motion, unless that bird flying by happened to be a seagull flying by at the end of Chekhov's play, "The Seagull", in which case - to an involved audience member, that is - the image would symbolize the entire tragic action of the play which just ended on the stage. In that particular case the complete tragic action which unfolded during the 90 minute tragedy onstage was one turn around the circle of concrete dialectic. Here is Copleston's summary of the categories that Aristotle uses to describe motion in the broadest sense.

Movement in the wider sense is divided into coming to be and passing away on the one hand, and "kinesis", or movement in the narrower sense on the other. Kinesis is to be divided into its three kinds - qualitative movement, quantitative movement and local movement. GTV 321

We do not need to delve into the types of "kinetic" movement in detail here. It is enough to realize that movement around the circle of the dialectic is about logical movement, the "coming to be and passing away" of the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis by means of deduction and induction. During Gestalt Therapy what passes away are the "games people play" and what comes to be, overall, is "the coming solution", Aristotle's "final cause" or "entelechy". This coming to be of "the coming solution" for Gestaltists describes what for nominalist theologians like Ockham is the manner in which G-d "breaks through supposedly necessary connections which might seem to limit in some way the divine omnipotence", all this happening in "the messianic now".

[Ockham's] tendency as a thinker with marked theological preoccupations [impelled
him] to break through, as it were, the purely philosophic and natural order and to subordinate it to the divine liberty and omnipotence, to break through supposedly necessary connections which might seem to limit in some way the divine omnipotence.

This "messianic now" label which I just used is not one that either Aristotle or Ockham would have used. Let me justify my use of the term by referring to Aristotle's theory of Time (note the capital "T"). Here is Copleston on Aristotle's theory of Time.

*Only things which are in movement or at rest in such a way that they are capable of movement are in time . . . Time, then, is that aspect or element of change or movement which makes it possible for the mind to recognize a plurality of phases . . . In the continuum there are no actual parts, but only potential parts. These are brought into actual existence when some event breaks up the continuum. So with time or duration. The "nows" within duration are brought into actual existence by a mind which distinguishes the "nows" within that duration.* Copleston 322

Again we have the account of a process that only makes sense in the context of concrete dialectical functioning. Imagine an ongoing awareness continuum of "now" awarenesses, "that tree", "this mountain", etc., As the Gestalt protagonist works his way around the circle of dialectical of dialectical logic, from cliches to games to unfinished business and on towards the coming solution, he is in continuous "movement" logically, until he arrives at an impasse. But so long as he is working well the impasse is a "fertile void" within which new possibilities flash in and out of his mind and body experience. At these moments he is "at rest in such a way that he is capable of movement", so long he continues to "identify with the coming solution". Thus Time (in contrast with clock time) is the phenomenological experience of concrete dialectic, the "nows" of the circle of dialectical logic that I indicated above with numbers, such as 9:00 for creation and 6:00 for the impasse.

But what about "messianic time", the moment at which the divine omnipotence, it is said, breaks through and makes of the fragmented creature a single integrated organism, an actualized uni-verse. For Aristotle, for Ockham and for Fritz this is the moment of authentic action or truth. How does Aristotle conceptualize this "messianic now" of "the coming solution"? For Aristotle the capacity for this experience is what distinguishes us as human beings. Let's look again at Aristotle's notion of the human soul and "nous".

*Higher in the scale than the merely animal soul is the human soul. This soul unites in itself the powers of the lower souls (vegetative and animal souls), but it has a peculiar advantage in the possession of nous. The latter is active in two ways, as the power of scientific thought (logos) and as the power of deliberation (practical knowledge). The former has truth as its object, truth for its own sake, while the latter aims at truth, not for its own sake but for practical and prudential purposes . . . Actual knowledge is identical with its object; potential knowledge is prior in time in the individual, but in general it is not temporally prior; but nous does at one time function and at another not . . . Without the active reason nothing thinks.* Copleston 328-330
The key sentence in this account is, "actual knowledge is identical with its object". "Actual" implies committed authentic action happening here and now, "saying it with your whole body" in Gestalt talk. At the moment of peak experience there is a total integration of the knower, the known and the knowing. Refer again to the cryptogram of "the Aristotle dialectic" above. (1) The knower is he who deductively is choosing the action, following the downward arrow on the left. (2) The known is all the gestalts of the contact boundary which converge inductively into oneness within the knower, as suggested by the ascending arrow on the right. (3) And the knowing is the "active intellect" or new idea which is capable of combining deduction and induction in organic whole. Aristotle says that the active intellect comes "from outside", and so I put it on top of the circle in my diagram. Kabbalists invoke the metaphor of G-d "riding the aravot", where the Hebrew word "aravot" refers to the outermost heaven. G-d then controls the system from outside. This is reminiscent of the notion of anamnesis, recollection of pure ideas, also "from outside" which Aristotle learned from his teacher Plato. Copleston points out that Aristotle's "active intellect" has been the subject of many different interpretations throughout the history of philosophy. Certainly the integration of gestalts, from the Aristotelian side of the tradition, combined with the anamnesis of pure ideas in the fertile void from the Platonic side of the tradition would be a reasonable attempt to explain the essentially unexplainable peak experiences which oftentimes accompany well done Gestalt sessions. Likewise, such a combination of elements could go far in justifying Ockham's contention that at these moments G-d re-establishes His omnipotence and liberty (by induction) vis-a-vis the creatures which He created by deduction, differentiation into gestalts, monads.