



Death Panels

Our Cultural Complex Around Death

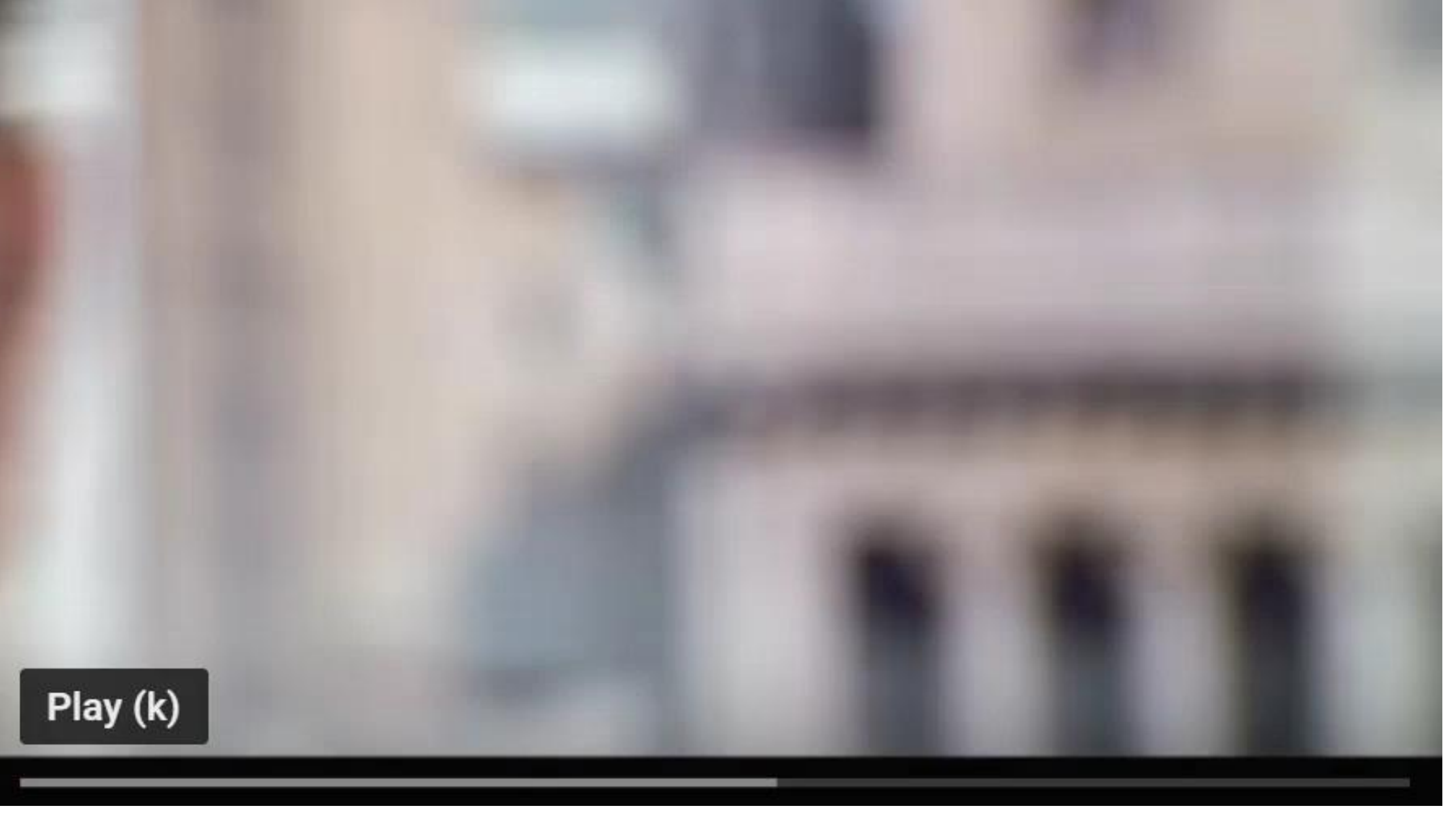


"There's no easy way I can tell you this, so I'm sending you to someone who can."

Dying in America

- “Witness the impact of the unfortunate (although purposeful) choice of words “death panels” during the heated debate surrounding the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in August of 2009. Those two words conveyed that the individual choice in how one faces dying and death could be supplanted by a distant and uncaring bureaucracy. While this fear was unfounded, its very presence and the ease with which it was evoked underscore the sensitivity of the topic for their personal mortality for many Americans, especially the elderly.”

Dying in America, Institute of Medicine, 2015

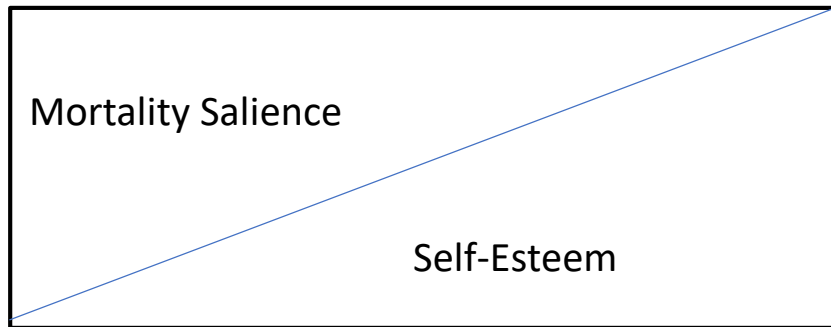


Play (k)

“...heroism is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death.”

The Denial of Death

“...the problem of heroics is the central one of human life, that it goes deeper into human nature than anything else because it is based on an organismic narcissism and a child's need for self-esteem as the condition for his life.”



The Denial of Death, Ernest Becker,
1973



The Winnowing Fan

- Tiresias's prediction
- “What winnowing fan is upon your shoulder?”
- The heroic attitude as Odysseus’s oar
- “Do you not know that your travels, your achievements and failures, the gains and losses to which your winged ship carried you were slowly forging for you a ‘winnowing fan’ ?

Helen Luke *Old Age*



Cultural Complex

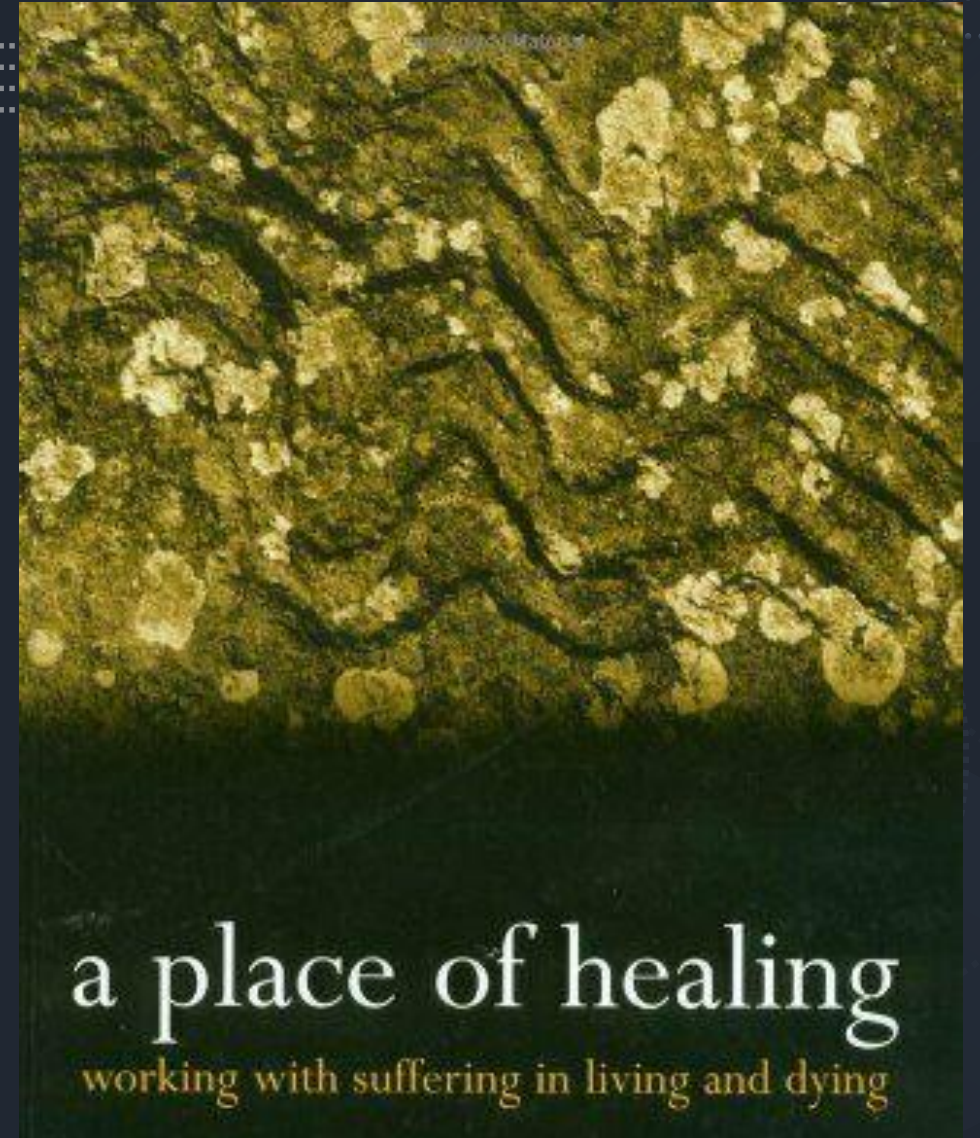
1. Traumatic injury to a vulnerable person, group of people, place, or value, that carries or stands for the group spirit.
2. Fear of annihilation of both the personal and group spirit by a “foreign other”
3. Emergence of avenging protector/persecutor defenses of the group spirit

Tom Singer, 2003, *Terror, Violence and the Impulse to Destroy*

‘Cultural Complexes and the Archetypal Defenses of the Group Spirit’

Hospice as Counter-Cultural

- Medical model perspective
- Hospice perspective
- Work of Michael Kearney MD





Grand Rounds



Play (k)



Transference

“Hence the sudden severance of the transference is always attended by extremely unpleasant and even dangerous consequences, because it maroons the patient in an impossibly unrelated situation”

Jung, 1954, CW v. 18, par 136

“The Therapeutic Value of Abreaction”

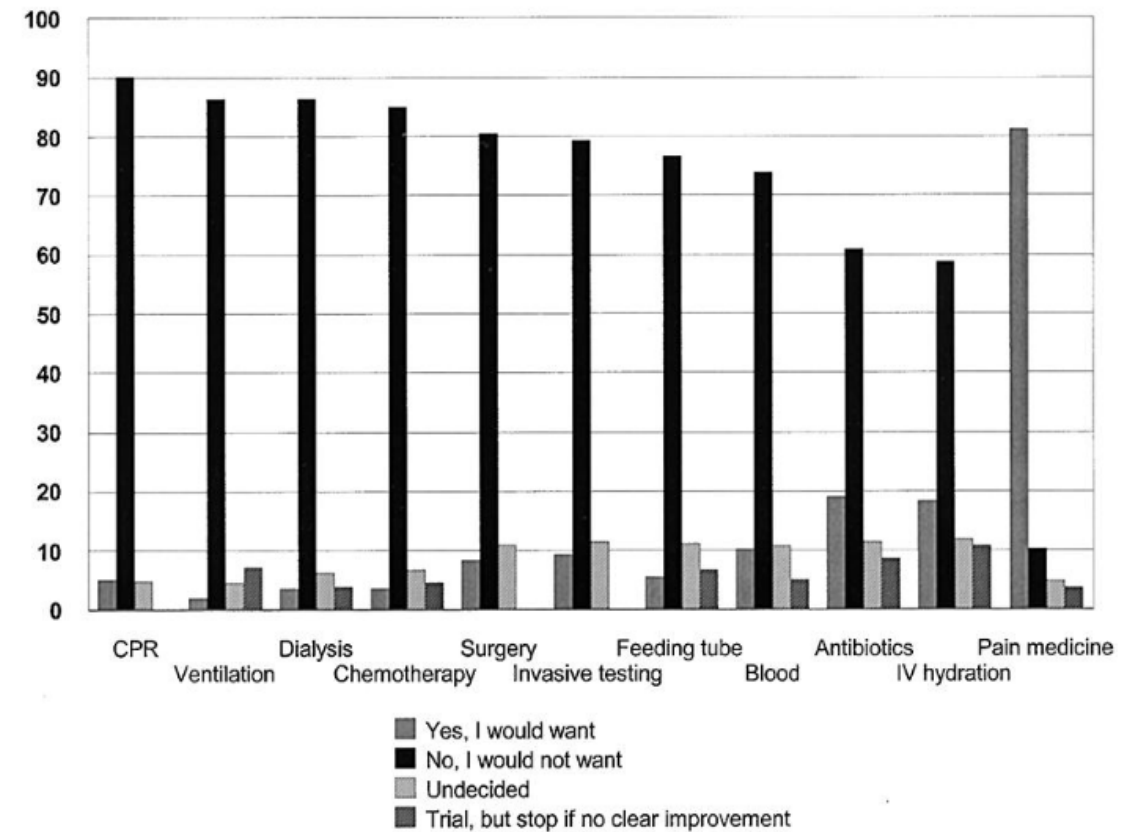


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What Would Doctors Do?



A chart of doctor responses from the Precursors Study:



<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/262588-bitter-end>



Medical Model (Dr. Posner)

- Prolonging life
- Heroic stance
- Directed thinking
- Death as failure
- Rational brain (left)
- Focus on data
- Change from the outside


Don't Go Back to the Library!



Part 2

Death Be Not Proud





Spirit of the Times and the Spirit of the Depths

- “The spirit of the time in me wanted to recognize the greatness and extent of the supreme meaning, but not its littleness. The spirit of the depths, however, conquered the arrogance, and I had to swallow the small as a means of healing the immortal in me.”

Jung, The Red Book (Reader's Edition) p.121, 2009



Godfather Death





Care of the Aged Dying and Dead

- Alfred Worcester, in 1935, published this, still in print, little book, imploring physicians to not defer this end of life care to nurses alone. Worcester as medical director of Harvard Medical School, saw physicians abdicating responsibility for dying and professed that, in fact, the physician has an important role in the care of the dying.



Healing Model (Susie)

- Prolonging life
- Heroic stance
- Directed thinking
- Death as failure
- Left hemisphere
- Focus on data and rational
- Change from the outside

Don't' Go Back to the Library!

Ray View All

Cast (26)

Trivia (7)

Wit



5:09 / 1:04:14 HD

A Movement of Archetypes

Spirit of the Times

- Prolonging life
- Heroic stance
- Directed thinking
- Death as failure
- Rational brain (left)
- Focus on data
- Change from the outside

Spirit of the Depths

- Promoting comfort
- Letting go of heroism
- Fantasy thinking
- Death as a goal
- Emotional brain (L/R)
- Focus on personal experience/narrative
- Change from the inside

Integration of Shadow







Part 3

The Popsicle





Humiliation

Nor Hall's quote

“The way out of the labyrinth is to keep one hand on the cold, damp, shuddering wall of your humiliation.”

(Lyn Cowan in *Masochism*, 1982)

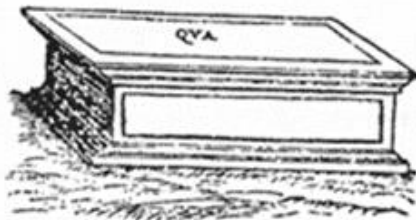
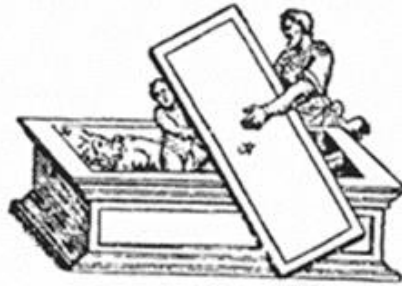
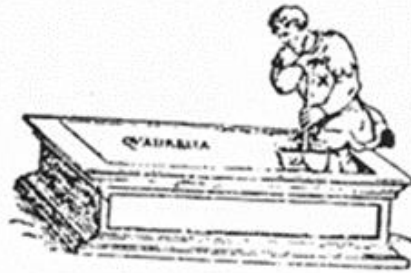
Alchemy





Alchemy

“The king is killed when he shows signs of impotence, or when failure of the crops arouses doubts as to his efficacy. Therefore he is killed in order to improve the condition of his people...” (Jung, 1942,1954) (CW 11, par. 407)



- Therapus, J.L., edited by Grossinger, R. (1979,1992)
- 'The Form and Method of Perfecting Base Metals'.
- *The Alchemical Tradition in the Late Twentieth Century*
- Berkeley: North Atlantic Books





Recollection

“It is an act of self-recollection, a gathering together of what is scattered , of all things in us that have never properly related, and a coming to terms with oneself with a view to achieving full consciousness. (Unconscious self-sacrifice is merely an accident , not a moral act.) Self-recollection, however, is the hardest and most repellant thing there is for man, who is predominantly unconscious. *Human nature has an invincible dread of becoming more conscious of itself.*”

(Jung, CW 11, par 400)



Elizabeth Kübler-Ross

- Advocate for the dying against the patriarchal attitude of medicine
- One heroic attitude was replaced by another
- Instead of death being the adversary, the medical model (physician) became the adversary
- Doubt was inserted into the physician-patient relationship hence the emergence of the fear of “death panels”



Symbols

Healing Model (Susie)

- Promoting comfort
- Letting go of heroism
- Fantasy thinking
- Death as a goal
- Emotional brain (L/R)
- Focus on personal experience/narrative
- Change from the inside



“Don’t Go Back
to the Library”

Spirit of the Times

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Initiation

- Separation (pre-liminal)
- Initiation (liminal)
- Re-incorporation (post-liminal)



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Gilgamesh

The Hero's Journey includes a descent into the underworld



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The Martyr vs The Masochist

“The martyr avoids psychological movement by staying victim. He uses his victim position to victimize others, rising above his suffering in an inflation balloon of moral superiority.”

Lyn Cowan *Masochism*







Life After Death

“A man should be able to say he has done his best to form a conception of life after death, or to create some image of it even if he must confess his failure. Not to have done so is a vital loss.”

Memories, Dreams, Reflections