

REAWAKENING INDIGENOUS SENSIBILITIES IN THE WESTERN PSYCHE

A dissertation submitted

by

TAYRIA JULIE WARD

to

PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirement for the  
degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

This dissertation has been  
accepted for the faculty of  
Pacifica Graduate Institute by:

---

Barry Williams, PsyD  
Advisor

---

Don Sloggy  
External Reader

---

Glen Slater, PhD  
Dissertation Coordinator

October 15, 2003

Copyright by

TAYRIA JULIE WARD

2003

## ABSTRACT

### Reawakening Indigenous Sensibilities in the Western Psyche

by

Tayria Ward

Indigenous peoples not exposed to the civilizing processes of the West maintained access to modes of perception and sensing capabilities that kept them in a flow of intelligible communication with the nonhuman as well as the human world. Modern persons have allowed these innate capacities to atrophy. The result is an overvaluing of the human and a forgetting of the delicate inter-dependence of the earth community. This has effected a tragic loss of health, balance, and harmony ecologically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually.

As humans, we are inherently endowed with these indigenous sensibilities. Though dormant, they can be recovered. The endeavor, however, requires a strong commitment to the processes such an awakening initiates.

This dissertation is a heuristic and hermeneutic description of my own journey as the indigenous dimension of my psyche began to revive. I discovered that the ways in which Westerners have regarded and treated indigenous peoples the world over—the unapologetic conquest, disrespect, violence, oppression, and marginalization—are exactly how we have tacitly been trained to treat the indigenous aspects of our own natures. To recover respect and a voice for the

indigenous mind is to go against fierce internal and external structures built specifically to disavow and exclude these ways of knowing and being.

My contention is that this work has become imperative for Westerners if we are to regain ecological and internal equilibrium. The split from our own natural selves has caused us to become destructive to ourselves, each other, and the natural world—for the most part unwittingly, without evil intent, not realizing the consequences of styles of thinking and living unquestioningly pursued. The inertia is hard to interrupt, yet a radical reversal is required. In my case, the reversal was violent, devastating, and unwelcome until I began to grasp the importance and meaning of what was happening and why. My hope is that if these meanings can be communicated and understood, other persons may be able consciously and creatively to bring about changes that will assist individuals and thereby the larger culture and our planet in necessary recovery and reawakening of the indigenous mind.

## Dedication

With a heart full of gratitude, this dissertation is dedicated to:

The women who vigorously loved and believed in me through the worst of times: Arlene Ward, Josi Ward, Mary Davidson, and Kathryn Whitlow.

The mentors who guided, encouraged, and supported my development: Lionel Corbett, Gloria Avrech, Don Sloggy, Barry Williams, Eze Anamalechi, and Ann Ree Colton.

And the invisibles who support, help, and guide without fail.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Awakening	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Method	12
Review of the Literature	24
Organization of the Study	50
Chapter 2. The Black Sun	52
A Visitation	52
Depression as a Calling	54
Dealing with Trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Related Problems	61
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	61
Yahweh and Job	61
Conscious Femininity and the Incarnation of the Dark God	61
Chapter 3. The Birth Canal of the Heart	61
Heart Murmurings	61
Human vs. Machine	61
The Manufactured Self	61
A Difficulty We Face	61
The Birth Canal of the Heart	61
Christianity's Contribution to Our Psychic Split	61
Understanding <i>Nature</i> in Human Nature	61
A Schism in the Human Heart	61
Tiger in the Heart	61
Chapter 4. The Language of Ritual	61
I Am Spoken To	61
I Talk Back	61
Here, At Last	61
Some Perspectives on Ritual	61
Dialogue as Ritual	61
Ritualizing Life	61
Chapter 5. The Indigenous Mind	61
The Human's Original Equipment	61
Two Kinds of Thinking	61
The Ego	61
The Dreamtime	61
Bring Back the Banished Dionysus	61
Re-enchanting the World	61
References	61

## Chapter 1 Awakening

It is impossible to go directly on from our cultural state of today if we do not receive increments of strength from our primitive roots. These latter, however, we receive only if in a certain sense we go back behind our present stage of culture to give the suppressed primitive in us an opportunity to develop itself. How that is to happen is a question in itself.  
-Carl Jung

### *Introduction*

The intent of this dissertation is to suggest that within the human psyche there exists an intelligent and intelligible component that maintains the ways of perception, vision, wisdom, and sensing abilities of indigenous peoples who have not yet been exposed to the civilizing process as we know it in the West. This faculty has been suppressed and largely forgotten in our thrust toward modernity during the last centuries. It is my contention that the recovery of the sensibilities of this indigenous inner “being,” as I am choosing to speak of it for the sake of this writing, has become crucial to the restoration and revitalization of health for individuals, for our species and for the planet. The loss of this health is evidenced by, and also results from, the extensive damage humans have wrought upon the balance of nature on the planet, and is also indicated by our severe social ills.

I propose that—possibly due to the human’s survival instinct, as well as to a deeper wisdom—this indigenous layer of psyche is currently pressing forward in a call for reclamation. It demands a rigorous re-evaluation of the human’s present ontological and epistemological sense of herself, and sense of separation

between herself and her world. A process of profound transformation collectively, and individual by individual, appears to be on the horizon.

The impulse for writing upon this topic began one day in 1993. At the time I was serving as an ordained minister in a nondenominational, interfaith ministry. While researching the topic of “ritual” for a public lecture that I was preparing, an announcement in a local bookstore caught my eye. Malidoma Patrice Somé, an African teacher and author, would be speaking that evening about his new book entitled *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community* (1993). Seeing that notice might have been the first moment of the rest of my life.

In the musty, stone basement of the bookstore Malidoma addressed the small gathering assembled for the evening lecture. As he began I was intrigued, then mesmerized, and soon found myself falling into a place of profound darkness, but full of heart. Being there, I barely recognized myself, yet felt that I was more myself than I had ever been. My lungs seemed to be breathing something other than just air. My heart was an organ made of dark, wet, earthy matter, and was breathing and sensing in a way I had not known that it could. My cells were like millions of tiny, sensitive antennas. As I made my way back up the stairs after he spoke, I wasn't quite sure how to face the artificial light and the rhythms of polite conversation.

He sat at a small table to sign books. I took mine to him, and we exchanged a few words. I was looking into and was seen by the gentle eye of the



heart of darkness. He wrote: "It is good to meet someone in touch with Ancestral Energy."

I sensed that the religion of my upbringing, as well as the many religions honored and studied in my then current ministry, had all conspired to keep me from this darkness. Yet, in a certain way, I had never felt so alive or so at home as I had in those few moments. Driving home in stunned silence, it occurred to me that a heretofore slumbering indigenous being within me had just been awakened. It felt as though this being had been there all along, and was more "me" than the "me" that I had previously known myself to be – and now it was awake. I did not think it could be put back to sleep, nor did I want it to be. Something permanent had happened.

During the next year, I discovered the writings of Carl Jung. Jung's embrace of darkness and shadow, his vast understanding of this realm, and his discussions of the need for conscious integration of all that it represents helped me with what I had begun to experience through further reading of Somé's, and others', writings. A journey to Africa called to me, and I responded. The events of this journey, which I will describe in a later chapter, moved me much closer to the heart of what was awakening within my psyche. A life-long quest for the transcendent and the Light had left me dried out, burned out, brittle, and exhausted. Life was returning to me through dark, rich, embodying experiences. However this new life, it turned out, had a price. It demanded nothing less than everything.

It has been just short of a decade since that awakening. I now know that hell exists, for I have been burning up in it. Hell, in my experience, is the enantiodromia of a lifetime of searching for light and heaven, of the Christian project devoted to splitting off and scouring out “sin” from human nature, of the religions’ denouncement of matter and earthly pleasure, of philosophies that over-value mind and spirit and undervalue body and instinct, of our scientific and cultural standpoint since the Enlightenment. The blaze of hell’s fire burns up illusions, hopes, and dreams, and burns down a self and a life. As in a forest fire, it indiscriminately clears out all of the good with the bad of the old life. And it takes this infernal heat to open the underground seeds that will grow a new world.

Dante (trans. 1948) tells us that above the gates of hell are written the words: “Abandon hope all ye who enter here” (p. 5). The processes involved in reuniting with the indigenous self afford some utterly numinous moments; however, in general, it is anything but a romantic reunion. As I imaginatively look back at what has happened to me during these years, it seems as though the indigenous part woke up, took a long, hard look around at my inner landscapes and the architecture of my civilization and said definitively, “No-no, I cannot live in here. I will die very shortly if we do not tear this all down and start over from scratch!” Thus began a ruthless deconstruction of my interior and exterior reality.

First to go was the ministry, from which I resigned. With that went my profession, my sense of identity and purpose in the world, my belief system, and

a community of long-term friendships. “God” was gone, or any sense of trust in the goodness of a higher power, due to a deep sense of having been tricked and betrayed by this power. Next to go was my “mind”—the shattering of my most basic understandings and perceptions regarding self and reality. Next went my 23-year marriage to the only person in the world I had ever wanted to be married to, the love of my life. This tragedy precluded any hope of living out a deeply held value of an integrated family life in my future, and of giving that to my daughters (integrated in this case meaning, to me, *with* original parents in tact). Along with the loss of the marriage went long-term friendships. The experience of profound betrayal was involved in these events. Deep depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety attacks, and a severe loss of health on every level resulted. Then the demise of newer but much cherished friendships occurred.

Fortunately throughout all of this I was able, for the most part, to hold onto a sense of faith in nature herself as she had her way with me. I felt that I was in the throes of Life pushing forward, living itself through me, and I was no longer permitted the fantasy that we humans have control over nature. Rather than being defensively removed from Life and attempting to control it, as it seemed I had been strongly enculturated to do, Life was having her wild way with me, and I was at her mercy (or mercilessness, more aptly put). It was *excruciating*, nearly unendurable, but it seemed real, as if I wasn't being lied to or lying to myself anymore.

I tell this story at the outset of the dissertation as I am convinced of its collective as well as personal significance. I see my private story as a metaphor for a much larger one that is currently taking place culturally. A vast deconstruction of life as we have known and sometimes loved it is occurring. The earth's ecology cannot sustain the inertia of our rush to plunder her resources in order to maintain our modern way of life, our way of being in the world, or the sense of entitlement modern humans have developed, thinking of ourselves among species as the one that is superior, the only species with rights that ultimately matter. Individually and collectively, we can either engage with consciousness the process of deconstruction of our way of life and a radical reversal of our ways of thinking and being, or it will most likely be thrust upon us, as it has been upon me. And as Life makes these demands for attention and re-evaluation, we can engage the demands with some degree of conscious cooperation and appreciation—or we can split off, disassociate, reinforce defensive mechanisms, and attempt to delay the inevitable, to our own detriment.

If the metaphor I have described is a true one, it might be said, then, that collectively our inner indigenous being is awakening. This person is looking around and demanding a radical re-thinking and a painful letting go of that which will not allow or sustain its life. And, it seems to me, this life *will* have its way, or we may not survive as a species. This may be our final exam, as Buckminster Fuller described the phase he believed that humanity has entered.

And if this metaphor is valid, I am suggesting that an in-depth look at some of the experiences I have had to undergo may bring awareness to processes that humans on a larger scale may be required to endure collectively, as well as, in various configurations, individual by individual. Although much of my suffering over the last years is definitely personal, born out of my own history and complexes, some of it appears to be significant at a much broader level, archetypally explanatory and demonstrative of what I instinctively believe humanity itself is being asked to engage with greater consciousness. In many ways I do not, and feel that I ought not, take what happened to me personally. And I feel in this life pressing forth a powerful sense of urgency.

In this dissertation I will extract from my personal story, since the awakening and revivifying of this inner indigenous being, elements of the tale that I believe have a general relevance, and I will amplify these through the literature. Having *lived* these elements of the story, there is the obvious risk of a too subjective analysis of that which I attempt to make objective. On the other hand, having lived the elements should bring a level of authority and insight that a more removed or strictly theoretical discussion could not hope to offer.

### *Statement of the Problem*

A study of trends emergent in the Western psyche over the last century reveals a multiplicity of themes that may have a unifying coherence. The rise of feminism, ecological awareness, shamanism, earth-based spirituality, the

resurfacing pre-Christian religions, reawakened understanding of communication between the human and the nonhuman, oracular awareness, mysteries of stone circles, crop circles, extra-terrestrial communications, as well as the new sciences, quantum physics, field theory (studies which in many ways bring science full circle to what the ancients apparently knew but had not “proven” through the scientific method)—one could imagine that all of these themes, and others, spring from the mind of the indigenous being now awakening.

It might be that these themes are emerging not so much to satisfy our quest for more and more knowledge, or to pique our appetite for novelties and curiosities, but rather because it may be an imperative, a matter of survival, that humans reawaken sensibilities indigenous to our more ancient, primitive, and feminine roots in psyche. The urgency and precariousness of the ecological situation on our planet, with the resulting unprecedented number of species becoming extinct, a list that may soon include the human species, has been well discussed by many authors and scientists. This dissertation will not attempt to convince the reader of these concerns, but will be assuming their fundamental validity.

When the white man arrived upon the continent of North America, he came with a horrifying sense of entitlement. The natives who had been living here for thousands of years were unconscionably wiped out and colonized, and other human beings were taken right out of their homes in Africa and brought

over to this continent to be used as slaves. How did we develop this appalling sense of privilege? How did our consciences become so numbed that we could commit these crimes without agonizing over the horror of the suffering we imposed? How did we split so far from ourselves that even the historical reporting of these events has largely failed to ask these questions? What happened to us? And how does the sense of entitlement we demonstrated in exercising power over the Native Americans and Africans, for example, reflect what has happened to us interiorly – demonstrating how we have treated the indigenous parts of ourselves, the ways we stopped valuing or listening to those parts, disallowing them any respect, rights, or their natural life?

The focus of this dissertation will be to examine what the reversal of this century's high-speed movement toward destruction and extinction will require, individual by individual, and of the culture at large. I propose, based upon what feels like a revelation born out of my personal "dark night of the soul," that a process of deep transformation calls to us, and may be inevitable. Few who understand the global situation will deny that it will take something radical to awaken and turn us around, and that the inertia of our rabid destructiveness and consumerism has to be interrupted right away if a recognizable ecology, and humans, are to survive. If we awaken to the possibilities inherent within a mindful, cooperative participation in the transformation process, it may not be too late for us. Though some small or large-scale disasters may be averted, others have already occurred and more are certainly in store. Whatever amount of

consciousness or perspective we can bring to these events will give assistance and ideally some comfort as the unavoidable pain of transformation is endured.<sup>1\*</sup>

If indeed an indigenous self is now awakening within the collective psyche and in varying degrees within individual psychologies, then herein lays the problem: the world of the indigenous being and the world of the Western being are like oil and water. The values, thinking, and ways of knowing and being of the indigenous person and the values, thinking, and ways of knowing and being of the Western person are opposed, even hostile to one another. Attempting to give each of these their rights and psychic life in one personality creates enormous, seemingly insurmountable conflict, a raging inner war. As hard as it might be to imagine the Indian and the white man living fully and peaceably, their respective ways of life in the same town, not only because of the differences but also because of their disdain for one another—that's how hard it is to negotiate this co-existence inside one individual psyche. Any peace or resolution at times seems utterly impossible; it feels as though one side or the other has to win, that co-existence is unattainable. However, on the strength of my own experience I submit a belief that these opposites can be held together, but not without agreeing to take on a massive amount of inner work. All of one's courage, strength, willingness, commitment, and focus must go into it, day and night.

---

<sup>1\*</sup> This section of the paper was written two months before September 11, 2001, the day of the terrorist bombing in New York City. As it was written, there was a sense that something would come along to turn us around, but it was unimaginable, of course, what that might be.



Resistance to the demands of such work is formidable. That which we Westerners have become admired experts at suppressing and splitting off now requires integration, and we are unequipped for the task—religiously, philosophically, and culturally. There are few supports for going awfully through the depression, chaos, madness, anxiety, rage, despair, and breakdown that precede the breakthrough. What the poet John Keats (1990) called “negative capability” (p. 370)—the ability to be with uncertainty, ambiguity, mysteries, and severe doubts without frantically grasping after facts and reason—is considered a disease rather than a talent in our culture. Rather than encourage, support, and embrace oneself or a person undergoing a process of learning to be in negative capability, the fearful tendency is to infantilize, pathologize, and medicate, or more brutally to demonize, remonstrate, and abandon the person. There is a powerful stigma attached to demonstrating a rapid diminishment of outward ego strength and control; and, I suggest, a grave fear of contagion. People do not want to come near it. A taboo in the Western psychic make-up has been violated and, as Freud (1913/1950) says, “anyone who has violated a taboo becomes taboo himself” (p. 42). Even if the taboo is unnamed and unconscious, it has a very potent force field.

It has been suggested that Jung, after having extremely compelling and powerful experiences in Africa, recovering some deep sense of his own indigenous mind and roots as well as those in the larger human psyche, could not integrate these experiences into his European personality structure upon his

return. So, he “‘forgot’ much of what he experienced” (Romanyshyn, quoted in Saayman, 1990, p. 77). Roger Brooke states: “Jung’s frightened retreat from Africa needs to be faced” (quoted in Saayman, p. 90).

This dissertation attempts to address the problem of what it takes to allow the experiences of recovery of the indigenous mind, to confront the taboo, and to re-member these strong roots in psyche. If we are to integrate the wisdom and values of the indigenous mind, a serious internal conflict must be faced and a profoundly transformative process endured. The consequences for our species and our planet of not facing the conflict, individual by individual as well as collectively, may be the unthinkable devastation of life systems. It is my intent to describe as best I can my own encounter with the indigenous self, to impart what I am learning about the necessity and value of its call for reclamation, and to shed light upon what the process of reintegration may entail in a Western psychological structure.

### *Method*

A description of the method for this dissertation might be contained in the following story. Sitting on my upstairs balcony one balmy afternoon reading Heidegger’s descriptions of the phenomenology of hermeneutics – explaining that the implicit, not fully conscious, preunderstanding or assumptions that the reader brings to any text absolutely shape his interpretation of the material and to that extent preclude any real methodological objectivity—I thrilled to the elegance, beauty, and power of the written word to awaken and transmit thought

and insight from one mind to another. Suddenly I heard a screech and had a visceral notification of a bird's flight right next to where I sat. A bright yellow bird with a black throat and black tail landed on a branch at eye level right next to me. The bird's colors were brilliant and stunning. My attention was riveted by the visitation.

Each phenomenon—the book on my lap, the bird five feet from me—compelled me equally. One appealed to my “head,” influencing and illuminating how I see, understand and interpret the world. The other appealed to the senses, and did not need to be understood or interpreted. It simply called forth attention and delight.

There has been a fascinating and delicate dance going on for me between these two types of experience since I began working with the subject of this dissertation. Sensate experiences, which seem to bypass and disarm any intellectual skill or activity, have been acutely heightened. Inner sensory events such as powerful currents of grief, rage, despair, and fear seemed to explode open the very cells in my body so that each began to feel like a tiny, very receptive antenna with a newly sensitive perception of the world around me. I sometimes feel that I am *made* of millions of antennae or receptors. This can be terrifying and distracting as well as delightfully thrilling. At the same time, texts that I encountered through coursework, dissertation work, and in desperate attempts to understand and learn how to be consciously with the overwhelming experiences I was having, offered marvelous, comforting, and sometimes

seemingly salvational insights. The perspective granted through the written word saved my sanity, unquestionably. I received accurate and compassionate mirroring; permission to deepen into and trust the experiences I was having; and the wisdom, insight, and foresight to soothe some of the terrifying uncertainties and help me figure out how to put one foot in front of another.

The method of this dissertation will be to explicate and demonstrate the dance between these two ways of knowing. It will be a heuristic, phenomenological description of my personal journey since the arousal of the indigenous “being” or layer in my psyche. And it will be hermeneutic as it explores writings that have helped to illuminate, clarify, deepen, and shape my experience. I suggest that there has been synchronistically an intentional and purposeful dynamic between the indigenous being presenting itself to my awareness and the literature that I encountered. And I have felt that I am being read, interpreted, and evaluated by the texts as I am reading, interpreting, and evaluating them.

In the spirit of Martin Heidegger’s (1953/1996) conception of the phenomenological method of investigation, to examine how the “thing itself” (p. 24) shows itself to us, my method might in part be what Richard Palmer (1969) called a “‘hermeneutic’ of existence” (p. 129). Palmer writes:

This kind of hermeneutic is certainly not old-fashioned philological methodology . . . . It lays open what was hidden; it constitutes not an interpretation of an interpretation (which textual explication is) but the primary act of interpretation which first brings a thing from concealment. (p. 129)

Both Edmund Husserl and Heidegger emphasized the value of a phenomenological approach to hermeneutics in which a direction is reversed: it is not we who point things out, but the things themselves that show themselves to us. We allow ourselves to be led by their power to demonstrate the ontology of their own beingness. As Palmer (1969) writes: "Such a method would be of highest significance to hermeneutical theory, since it implies that interpretation is not grounded in human consciousness and human categories but in the manifestness of the thing encountered, the reality that comes to meet us" (p. 128).

As the reality of the indigenous inner being came to meet me, I experienced a shattering of my world and psyche as I had known it. This is not an overstatement. I had to hold a *wild* tension between realizing I had invited, sought after, and earnestly desired this encounter, and feeling utterly overwhelmed, devastated, and victimized by what the encounter demanded. Realizing bit by bit what was happening to me, that the subject that I had somewhat naively engaged became the source of so much consequence in my physical and psychological life, I knew that any writing about what I was learning needed to utilize a strongly heuristic methodology. As Moustakas (1990) describes this method, "The focus in a heuristic quest is on recreation of the lived experience; full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person" (p. 39). The writing style will follow what Craig (Moustakas, 1990) describes as part of the heuristic process, that of moving from whole to part and back to whole again, "from the individual to the general

and back again . . . from the feeling to the word and back to the feeling, from the experience to the concept and back to the experience” (p. 16).

As mentioned earlier, during most of my experiencing, no matter how my own personal psychology was being scrutinized, challenged, tormented, dismembered, re-shaped—there was a part of me that knew I should not take what was happening to me any more personally than one would take a storm or a hurricane personally. It was clearly Nature acting upon me, impersonal and indifferent to my suffering, even as I had to work toward personal mastery and compassion for myself and all other players involved. In this sense I saw myself through the holographic model. I am a cell in the body of the universe, and in the body of humanity. What is happening in me is a reflection of what is happening everywhere, and what is happening everywhere is also happening in me. The “what is happening” is, I am proposing, the collapse of the hubris and entitlement humans have evolved into in the last centuries.<sup>2\*</sup> Our present human ontologies, epistemologies, and ways of relating to the rest of life are not sustainable, and there is a demand for a radical re-evaluating and restructuring of these, an utter transformation individually and collectively. Holographically thinking, then, certain seemingly small moment-by-moment, personal events in my own experience looked at through a hermeneutic gaze will provide insight helpfully relevant to the collective. As Moustakas (1990) writes, “The heuristic

---

<sup>2\*</sup> This statement was also written in the months before the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York. That image certainly is an outward representation of the interior collapse of many systems of thinking that have been and will be taking place.

process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters personally there is also a social—and perhaps universal—significance” (p. 15). It is with this concept in mind that I offer a written account of my encounter with the indigenous being and of the journey that this began of awakening, cell by cell, indigenous sensibilities. I am in the very first baby-steps of the journey, but there is much to share.

If I were to chose a key word to describe the method of inquiry most utilized, it would be the word *listening*. There have been hours, weeks, months, even years during this process in which I felt paralyzed at a certain level, barely able to move or even breathe. The only attitude that was possible to take was one of active listening—listening to my body, to what the antenna-like cells of the body were picking up, to the phenomena that whirled around and inside of me, to the words of those who spoke to me, to insights and perceptions encountered through the literature, to voices of the wind, bird, tree, weather patterns, rock, leaf, dog.

I have heard of training for shamans in certain tribes in which the one being initiated is placed in a cave without light for up to 9 years in order to heighten inner awareness and listening. I submit that such a training can take place at a psychological level, even as one fulfills certain basic requirements of being in the world externally. The removal from everything psychologically familiar, from all psychic structures that created a “daylight” world and reality, the experience of profound isolation in which not a person in the world can

actually see you or know where you are, putting you in a place where even if you cry out no one can hear—nature can create and impose this initiation in a very effective manner in psyche without the person needing to enter into a physical cave. While dwelling in this interior cave, one learns that all there is to do is listen.

Gerald Bruns (1992) writes of the hermeneutics of Heidegger that the key is “listening.” It is a mystical attitude that leaves one open and vulnerable to what arrives and presents itself, as opposed to a more heroic method of going out to probe and to find, conquer, and acquire ideas, concepts, or information. Bruns points out that it matters to Heidegger that in German the word for listening and hearing is also the word for belonging. “In the mode of listening and belonging, one is in the grasp of what is said, no longer in the attitude of domination and control” (p. 157).

It became clearer and clearer to me during the course of this investigation that any attempt that I might make to seize control of how events progressed, or to influence the timing of their duration, was in vain. I was being addressed, something else was in charge, and my job was to figure out how to be in relationship to this reality. At one point during the latter part of my ordeal, I felt that I was beginning to tenuously emerge from the interior “cave” and was venturing into more of a daylight world. My eyes were trying to adjust to the light, my focus attempting to come back. Just about this time, I experienced an odd event. My formerly trusty wristwatch stopped. I purchased a new battery.



The watch stopped again. I bought a new watch. That watch stopped. In every case, when the watches were off my wrist they would run, telling time accurately, but when they were back on my wrist they would stop again. I do not know how to interpret this except to say that my experience of time was acutely altered from what it had been prior to these life events, and the watches stopping made me wonder if something in my own electro-magnetic field had changed as a result of the experiences.

In the daylight world that I was re-engaging, everyone else seemed to have a wristwatch on, one that worked, and seemed to look at me as though I should be capable of timing my life by it. I thought I should be able to also, but I could not. The clash of rhythms was excruciating, embarrassing, even humiliating to the Western part of my ego identity. I felt empathic with stories I have heard of indigenous people who leave their remote environments, land on a sidewalk in the Western world and are absolutely clueless about how to navigate or even begin to conceptualize this reality.

Any attempt that I made to hurry my reintegration process or to engage my Western heroic ego in order to willfully take charge of my situation seemed almost laughable in the face of the reality that had overwhelmed me. I needed to learn painfully, day by day, the art of patience and trusting over the temptation to extreme frustration and despair. I wanted finally to complete the process, to resolve it, end it, now. There is little training in the Western paradigmatic way of being for tolerating extreme states of ambiguity. Religions have answers, science

has answers, we love and glorify answers. I didn't have an answer. I didn't even know what the question was. All learned systems utterly failed me. Holding the tension between the sense of responsibility to take charge, to just grab an answer, any answer, and take action based upon it, and the sense of responsibility to courageously trust and submit to the demands and the intolerably slow pace of this very "other," foreign reality pressing its way into my psyche was excruciating and exhausting.

I was heartened when I read Moustakas' (1990) description of the heuristic research process, that it "is not one that can be hurried or timed by the clock or calendar." He writes that one has to be willing to risk opening wounds, sustained immersion in the research question, and "the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey" (p. 14). Reading this, the sense of "belonging" to a process that is larger than myself, which others have experienced similarly, offered strength and bolstered courage.

Embarking upon this dissertation journey of writing, articulating a method, formulating thoughts and words to describe fathomless inner experiences, organizing them into chapters and logical sequences requires a powerful engagement with the capacity for what Jung (1912/1956) described as "directed thinking" (p. 11), a capability that was beyond me for quite some time. In his essay entitled "Two Kinds of Thinking," Jung describes the difference between directed thinking, the thinking that is utilized for the purpose of bringing thoughts or concepts outward so that they can be communicated to and

received by others, where they seek acceptance and are exposed to a culture's judgment or rules of appropriateness—and the thinking that is an interior following of fantasies and images that knows what it knows without the need for communication or approval. According to Jung, "Directed thinking, as we know it today, is a more or less modern acquisition which earlier ages lacked" (p. 16). Primitives and the ancients lacked training in directed thinking, as do children. Their thinking was saturated with mythology and its potent ways of perception and imagining. Directed thinking has produced, as Jung says it, a "readjustment of the human mind" (p. 16).

Heidegger spoke of the problem of modern "technological thinking," which he sees as manipulative (Palmer, 1969). The inquiring subject guides the process of thinking, using it technologically to control outcome, to achieve a desired goal. Development of this type of thinking produced the Enlightenment. Its achievements are many, but its shadow is that in a significant way we have lost our mind. It has produced, in my conception of it, a loss of indigenous mind.

During the most acute and agonizingly difficult phase of my journey over the last years—and especially after receiving some terrible news, the revelation of which produced what I experienced as an interior "Hiroshima," a split second holocaust of my psyche and world as I had known it, news which precipitated the end of my previously much-loved marriage—I seemed to altogether lose the capacity for directed thinking at a certain level. I remember trying to watch a familiar half-hour sitcom with my daughters and not being able to follow the

dialogue, much less the story line. I could not get how one phrase connected with the next one; it was an exercise beyond my capacity. During this period of time I couldn't type, as letters and words would come out jumbled. I couldn't remember which side of the road to drive upon, or upon which side of an envelope to place a stamp. I couldn't read. I couldn't "think." People would tell me something, and a minute later I would ask a question that revealed I had not retained what I had just been told. I was supposed to be writing a dissertation, but I couldn't even follow the words on a page, must less produce a directed thought. Financially there was pressure for me to start the new career which my doctoral work had been intended to launch, but my inner reality had no way yet of matching the one in which jobs and money abided.

Nietzsche wrote: "As man now reasons in dreams, so humanity also reasoned for many thousands of years when awake . . . . To that extent dreaming is a recreation for the brain, which by day has to satisfy the stern demands of thought imposed by a higher culture" (quoted in Jung, 1912/1956, pp. 23-24). My enforced retreat from directed or technological thinking immersed me in a more primitive state of mind in which sensations and images took over and I was at their mercy, incapable of directing or controlling them. I believe that it was, in Nietzsche's words, a "recreation for the brain," "recreation" meaning to re-create, to create again. New neuropathways were being opened. When looked at from the standpoint of the thinking and values of the higher culture, it seemed like I had lost my mind. But I have slowly come to believe that it has been a

recovery of mind. The New Testament attributes these words to Jesus:

“Whosoever will lose his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:25). Possibly in a similar sense, one must lose one’s mind to find it.

In order to communicate what I believe has shown itself to me in these many experiences, the dialectic between the two modes of thinking Jung describes is explored for this writing. I do not attempt to interpret what is showing itself to me, but to utilize directed thinking well enough to present a flow of images in as organized and clear a way as possible so that it can be seen, as a work of art or a living landscape is seen.

In summary, the method for this dissertation is heuristic, utilizing phenomenological hermeneutics. The use of the texts is not a philological examination or critique of the writers’ viewpoints. Insights and ideas from a large variety of authors are brought into this discussion in order to amplify, extend, and give voice to what I believe wants to be shown. My purpose is not to compare, contrast or offer critical evaluations of the authors’ thinking, but rather to assemble the varieties of their viewpoints like pieces of a puzzle that, when put together, reveal a larger picture. In this I may be experiencing what eco-theologian Thomas Berry (1988) calls “a postcritical naivete” (p. 4). an attitude that fairly simply includes rather than rigorously examines peoples’ ideas. I do not make much use of the “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Palmer, p. 44). Ideas an author articulates that help to further this discussion, I include, without

taking the time to argue others of that same authors' ideas that I may find limited or arguable.

*Review of the Literature*

The image of the rhizome has been with me from the inception and throughout my engagement with this dissertation project. The mental picture is of a long, sturdy, healthy stalk with branches that travels through time and space, an energy system, a root system that is the coherent thread connecting ideas, people, and eras. It broke through the surface of my awareness from underground somewhere, and has wanted me instinctually to follow its lead through the inner landscapes and the terrain of the literature. I have needed to stay close to its stalk, and to point to, but not go too far out on, its branches. The rhizome took me through a broad range of topics, not obviously related to my subject. For a long time I could not see where this was going or what sense it was making, but felt I had no choice but to trust it with my heart. Now I am beginning to detect the pattern and am more ready to write about what I see.

Writings encountered in the field that help to open up, explicate, deepen, and clarify the flow of themes and events encountered along the track of this rhizome are included in this writing. If the reader will attempt to hold this image in mind also, it may help to achieve the vision of what is suggesting itself here. Although a variety of subjects are touched upon along the way, none have been studied exhaustively as I believe this would serve to distract from the larger

message. It would lead the project out on a branch rather than staying closer to the stalk.

Another metaphor that may be pertinent is that of the magic eye computer images published in many books. Looking at these images, if a person adjusts the eye's focus beyond the pattern on the surface, another three-dimensional image within and beyond the patterning is seen. I believe that my writing here may work similarly. Focus too sharply on the subjects on the surface, and the reader might not see what is presenting itself as a deeper vision. Follow the ideas along the flow of writing with a softer focus, and something else will appear. My hope is to expose, to make visible, an invisible and forgotten reality, and then to explore what the re-emergence of an awareness of this reality asks of one. What follows is a brief survey of subjects to be explored and of the literature that will be used in this exposition.

*The indigenous mind.* While he was in Africa, Carl Jung (1961/1989) recounts having connected to a part of himself and a world that had been his "for countless millennia" (p. 255). Every civilized man, he states, is "an archaic man at the deeper levels of his psyche" (1933, p. 126). In many of his writings he discusses the difficulties for the European psyche in understanding the nature of the primitive mind and world, as the assumptions that the two different psychic structures are built upon are so radically different. However he believed that it is now an imperative for humans "go back behind our present stage of culture to

give the suppressed primitive in us an opportunity to develop itself" (1975, p. 81).

Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) distinguishes what he calls the human being's "savage mind" from the "cultivated" or "domesticated" mind (p. 219). He believes that the two minds are capable of co-existing and interpenetrating, but alerts his reader that the latter is threatening the former with extinction. He was very much attracted to the primitive site in the mind as a place of unlimited possibilities, having ways of perception and imagination not available in the domesticated mind. Paul Radin (1953) describes two basic but opposing urges in the mind, explaining that the development of the differentiated individual and social consciousness calls for regular, "frequent atonement" (p. 6) and acknowledgement toward what is forsaken and lost as the growth takes place.

Sigmund Freud (1930/1961) acknowledges that "it is rather the rule than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life" (p. 20), but references the "oceanic" or "pre-Oedipal" stage as infantile, a regressive state in which the boundaries of the self are not perceived, nor the inevitability of subject-object relations. He was suspicious of the indigenous part of the mind, and seemed to think of it in evolutionist terms, as "a necessary stage of development through which every race has passed" (1913/1950, p. 29). He believed that primitive peoples projected their internal anxieties and hostilities outward to create an imaginary external world of demons and spirits.



Anthropologist Victor Turner (1969) explains his belief that the primitive man's thinking is quite as sophisticated as modern man's, but that it is the "wide diversities of cultural experience" (p. 3) that create the differences between their articulations of the world and ours. Marianna Torgovnick (1990, 1997) says that Euro-Americans have clearly projected "other" onto the primitive, and defined it in ways that support Western notions of superiority. In their minds, Westerners make the primitive world into what they want or need it to be, rather than attempt to understand it for what it is. Because the primitive is "voiceless, it lets us speak for it. It is our ventriloquist's dummy—or so we think" (p. 9). We reveal ourselves rather than discover who they are in the ways that we define the Other.

Laurens van der Post (1955) suggests that Africa is the "greatest of all the mirrors of our age" (p. 83) and that Eastern and Western 20<sup>th</sup>-century man stared into it as if hypnotized, not recognizing that it is the reflection of our own hidden selves. He was deeply concerned that we might destroy the mirror rather than recover ourselves and change the fast course of our planetary destruction.

African shaman and scholar Malidoma Somé (1993) writes compellingly of his belief "that there is an indigenous person within each of us" (p. 34) that is waiting to be revived; of the ordeal he underwent in which a Western education colonized his own indigenous mind and self; and of the recovery, through ritual, of his suppressed indigenous mind and sensibilities. David Abram (1996) describes through his own understandings of magic and the shaman's craft, the need for re-opening the human's lost sensitivity, awareness, and perception of

the languages and world of the nonhuman. He discusses the path that the Westerner has taken which has produced the devastating and tragic loss of these sensibilities.

Martin Buber (1923/1970) stated his belief that the relationship of mastery of the human over the non-human is “the root cause of Western malaise” (p. 6). His concept of “I-Thou” thinking, of deep mutual respect between human and nonhuman, was based on his understanding of primitive groups who still experience the mutual, nonhierarchical lived relation between man, animal, plant, mineral, and element. Mircea Eliade (1958) says that our modern determination to create the separation between the human and nonhuman has landed us in a “desacralized cosmos” (p. ix).

Jurgen Kremer (1996) has made it his work to help to “recover European indigenous minds for the future and for the social and ecological healing so desperately needed” (p. 29). He is brilliantly articulate in his definitions of indigenous mind, his critique of the Western paradigmatic assumptions that silence the indigenous voices inside of each of us, and of the “dark night” that a Westerner will undergo in order to challenge the deep structure of his own thinking enough to reclaim these voices, a work he sees as crucial for the survival of our species and of the life systems of the planet.

*The Western psyche.* The Western enlightenment project has produced inarguable advances; its benefits are everywhere evident and are continuously celebrated. But its huge shadow needs to be faced almost immediately, or the

inertia of our destructive movement will devastate the human's chances for survival on the planet. We are in a vast cultural denial that is very powerful and hard to break through.

Author Thomas Berry (Berry & Clarke, 1991) claims that Westerners are involved in a "profound cultural pathology" (p. 46) and have become autistic culturally, unable to perceive much of anything but ourselves, insensible to the world around us. We have stopped listening and participating in, indeed have broken, the "great conversation" (p. 20) being carried on among every other thing in the world around us, continuing to talk only to ourselves and to listen only to ourselves. We have severed our sensibilities from the rest of life on this planet so profoundly that we are killing it, and thus ourselves, without even hearing the death cry. In the last hundred years, humans have destroyed planetary systems which took nature hundreds of millions of years to develop, yet we forge ahead in this pathological destruction somehow believing that we are sane.

Jurgen Kremer (1992a) states that the Western technological world view and assumptions have practically taken over the world, and must be challenged. He suggests that we may need to come to terms with the fact that our imperialistic epistemologies "may be creating as well as reporting reality" (p. 169).

Alexander Lowen (1985) believes that our cultural narcissism "verges on the psychotic" (p. xi). He explains how our culture rewards the development of

narcissistic behavior patterns that place the achievement of success above the need to love and be loved. This results in a loss of our humanity, a disconnection from deep human values, an inability to feel and be embodied. Christopher Lasch (1979) describes the ways that narcissism as a defense appears “to represent the best way of coping with the tensions and anxieties of modern life, and the prevailing social conditions therefore tend to bring out narcissistic traits that are present, in varying degrees, in everyone” (p. 50).

In order for Westerners to remember, re-member, who we are as humans, the parts of ourselves that have been exterritorialized, and cast out as “other” need to be recovered. Robert Romanyshyn (Saayman, 1990) states his belief that a profound revolution in our Western psychology is called for, and that “either we learn to embrace the figure of the original man . . . or we perish” (pp. 68-69).

The re-integration of this “other” for the Westerner will require a radical deconstruction of the architecture in psyche that imagines and promotes the extreme discontinuity between the human and nonhuman worlds, and that which grants all rights to the human while robbing the nonhuman of them. Jung (1997) identified a predominant attitude in Western consciousness: “we are always above, we think we must educate nature and give it manners; we condescend to nature” (p. 1069). David Abram (1996) explains his belief that we are “human only in context, and conviviality, with what is not human” (p. ix). Richard Tarnas (2000) remarks that

we cannot become whole psychologically as human beings if we do not recover our psychic ground, which is the whole earth-being from which

we have emerged and which we are still embedded in. That is a crucial part of healing, and we can't heal ourselves if the Earth is being riven. (taped lecture)

The Copernican Revolution must now reach into the deeper layers of psyche, so that the notion of the human as the center and crown of creation will be replaced with the concept of the human as merely one among many forms of life on the planet, none being more important than or superior to any other.

Awakening from the Western dream that has become a nightmare promises to be very painful. Culturally and individually it can only be a profoundly disturbing ordeal. The Western psyche has built itself around the illusion of control. The loss of this illusion presents all of us, and each of us, with a vast, dark region of uncertainty. A culture devoted to the light must enter the darkness. We are little prepared.

The responsive individual no longer has the luxury of standing at a distance, pointing to a cultural pathology, while declaring his or her own self to be sane. The cultural pathology has been spoon-fed, educated into the Western individual for generations, and unavoidably has become our personal madness. To face cultural insanity now requires the individual to courageously face his own. James Hillman (1981) describes that in his work with his patients he could "no longer distinguish between the neurosis of self and neurosis of world, psychopathology of self and psychopathology of world" (p. 93). Christopher Bache has written a moving account of his process of realizing as he went through a personal "dark night" that his private experience was but a portion of

the collective dark night that he believes humanity has entered; he believes that the individual and the collective cannot be conceptualized as separated. Jurgen Kremer (1992b) similarly writes: "There is no way to will ourselves out of this situation. Only by confronting and suffering the ordeal within ourselves will we be able to create a world beyond modernity and postmodernity" (p. 10).

*Facing pathology.* As I will discuss at greater length in Chapter 2, I believe that Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* brilliantly illustrates an image of the pathology of the West. Dr. Jekyll is kindly, well mannered, intelligent, powerful, and good. Mr. Hyde is monstrous and murderous. The conscious personality of Dr. Jekyll has so split off from Mr. Hyde that no one knows they are the same person. I see the West, and those of us shaped by Western thinking, as Dr. Jekylls. The polite, well mannered, intelligent, powerful, morally good person is the standard, the model that most of us either embody, aspire to, or come up against the expectation to be. The monstrous, murderous shadow of this personality, our Mr. Hyde, is acted out everywhere, creating devastation, tragedy, and ruin ecologically and socially; but no one even knows this shadow is us, we are it. The split in the Western psyche is so complete. The shadow is so phenomenally disowned, even by the most psychologically astute, because it can barely be held together in the Western personality without a serious disintegration of the psychic structure as it now stands. There is little to no cultural understanding or support for undergoing and healthfully surviving the process of this disintegration. Mr. Hyde has become

demonic, and increasingly so, because of being so renounced; which makes him progressively harder to integrate.

Over the course of my “dark night” experience, my beautiful 12-year-old daughter was diagnosed with Type I diabetes. This has caused me to reflect much upon the nature of an auto-immune disease, the development of mistaken signals within a well-intentioned self-care system that cause it to kill off healthy life-giving cells. It occurs to me that the Western psyche has developed something like a psychological auto-immune disease. In defending the structure of our technological, mechanistic world-view, we have developed misguided signals that kill off healthy cells within the body of the world that are essential to our life, to living healthfully and staying alive.

In order to function successfully in a mechanistic world, the human must learn to function like a machine. Our humanity gets in the way. The cells of our humanity begin to be killed off. Along with these, any symptoms of anxiety, depression, or uncertainty that might cause us to think more deeply about what we are doing, feel more deeply the effects of modernity, are silently snuffed out by a psychological immune system that thinks of itself as helpful, that indeed intends to helpfully allow us to live successfully within this man-made world. However with breakdown evidenced nearly everywhere we look, maybe our auto-immune disease has advanced to the point now that individually and collectively we will either treat the condition or slip into a coma and die.

Donald Kalsched (1996) writes in his book *The Inner World of Trauma* about the inner self-care system within the victims of trauma. He describes the problem that occurs in this inner world that the traumatizing aggressor becomes introjected in the psyche of the individual, thus creating a system that is self-attacking, self-defeating, continually re-traumatizing. Trauma literature almost universally acknowledges that a young psyche has a hard time seeing the aggressor as “bad” so it thinks itself to be bad, and therefore aligns and colludes with the traumatizing agent. This is a defense intended to protect the self from further outside aggression, but it becomes a malevolent force within the psyche of the individual, “the dark side of the Self,” (p. 17) continually disabling the patient’s efforts to recover from trauma and regain psychic health.

If the indigenous component in the Westerner’s psyche has been treated in the same brutal way that we have treated the indigenous peoples we have colonized and enslaved, if we have subjugated it with the same sense of entitlement, then that part inside of us is a trauma victim. As such, it will be inclined to behave as Kalsched suggests, aligning with the aggressor, agreeing with the negative assessments of itself. To flesh out and enable this part of oneself is to go through a demanding process of recovery from trauma. Understanding the effects of trauma, and rehabilitating the wounded psyche is laborious and painful. Writings by Peter Levine (1997) from his landmark work will be used to discuss the nature and treatment of trauma.



The hard question for us is how can we integrate these lost indigenous parts of ourselves without going back, without losing the value of what the West has achieved, in our own psyches as well as in the larger culture. The temptation to delay indefinitely and deny the task of integration is enormous. This we do either by fiercely holding together the adapted Western personality structure and tuning out the voices that call for reclamation, or by succumbing to one of the many ways of dropping out all together, becoming merely a dis-integrated shadow of one's former self and staying that way.

A historical look at what has been required for suppressed peoples to regain their god-given rights and power—having to confront the intractable resistance by those in power, with rage and fear exploding on both sides, violence and war—this is a picture of the inner civil war that erupts when the struggle to revive the oppressed indigenous part of the self begins. One becomes a walking war-torn land. All of the symptoms of war dominate the days—confusion, fear, depression, self-hatred, rage, trauma, anxiety, violence, despair—one side of the self warring against the other. The outcome might be, as in most wars, that one side will “win” and take control while the other loses. Or, if there is courage, one can call forth an inner visionary such as a Gandhi or Abraham Lincoln, a part that will try to hold together the warring parties, to address the inherent tensions and produce a new nation based upon integration rather than subjugation. This sounds like a romantic notion, maybe, until one looks at what happened to Gandhi and to Lincoln, each of whom was shot. It is

dangerous not to give in to one side or the other. The personality that attempts this integration may not survive the effort, and the risk has to be faced squarely.

Indigenous people know that in any effective rite of passage, survival is not guaranteed. If it were, the rite would not accomplish what is designed to achieve. The indigenous part of oneself instinctively knows this, I believe, and pressures one to take the risk. Life without growth is no life, anyway.

*The power of the individual.* Before discussing the literature on this subject, I want to digress slightly to explain the development of my personal thoughts on the matter, in order to give reason and context for the writings that will be cited.

An adage I once heard attributed to Socrates has stayed with me for many years. "If thou wouldst move the world, first move thyself."

As I grew up and cultivated a personality that could succeed in this culture, and later when I got married and joined the cultural standard of wife and mother, I have come to realize that I simply threw parts of myself away that did not fit into the culturally imposed models for the roles I had to play. I just threw them on a trash heap. I didn't know that those parts were worth anything, anyway. Nothing had taught me to believe in them. In fact, I had been taught not to trust them by my religion and culture. This denial of significant aspects of the true self, in essence, is the narcissistic wound (Lowen, 1985).

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1996) speaks of this wound eloquently, I believe, in this poem:

No one lives his life.

Disguised since childhood,  
haphazardly assembled  
from voices and fears and little pleasures,

we come of age as masks.  
Our true face never speaks. (p. 112)

Having organized our personalities and relationships around this hole at the center, this void created by our self-betrayal, a certain numbing and departure from body and feeling takes place so that one can survive. A narcissistic character disorder is developing.

One of the most difficult challenges for me in the past few years has been to arrive at a level of self-acceptance as I have been confronted with, and had to own and admit, my own psychological problems. Narcissism is but one of them. Post-traumatic stress disorder is another. With this condition, the smallest incident can trigger a sense that one's entire life and existence is being threatened, and severe panic and anxiety attacks ensue. One has to deal with feeling completely terrified, with no way of controlling the physiological symptoms or the feeling condition. These types of illnesses are little understood in our general culture, and there is much shame and stigma attached, internally and externally. Rather than being reassured and comforted, as is desperately needed, the sufferer is too often considered weak, is looked down upon, given up on, and avoided. The resulting abandonment increases the suffering enormously.

To declare a diagnosable physical illness or to have to rehabilitate the body after a physical accident or trauma usually engenders empathic support

and concern among persons in our society, with time granted to go through treatment and recovery. Physical problems are perceived to be in the realm of science, and therefore under our control and ability to understand and dominate.

A person whose time has come to face psychological illness, or who has experienced an acutely traumatizing psychological event, is treated otherwise in Western culture. These conditions exist in the realm of the dark and invisible, that which is not under domination and control. It would be cruel to tell a paraplegic to get up and walk. But a person in a paralyzing psychological state is generally thought of in more denigrating, pejorative terms and is often expected somehow to have the wherewithal just to get over it. The reality of the psyche is so little understood. This person is no more capable of just dispelling his or her circumstance than is the person in a wheelchair. When he or she cannot just get up and go on the time clock others seem to think is appropriate, the shame and embarrassment that are experienced are at times too much to bear. He or she is cast into the taboo realm of "other." People just stay away.

It is not a wonder, then, that Westerners have used their well-oiled genius to find ever more effective ways to delay, run away from, and avoid facing themselves and to shore up complex systems of denial that justify the rampant illness we have collectively, and individually, developed. Even the field of psychology can be used as a defense—a way to distance the psychologist from the illness, to be the master who diagnoses rather than the patient who suffers.

Surely, however, a cultural pathology will never be healed unless individuals, one by one, tackle the daunting task of actually confronting, acknowledging and working hard to heal their own personal pathologies. This means allowing defense systems to come down, experiencing excruciating vulnerability and uncertainty, undergoing terrifying and heartbreaking dissolutions of a self once thought to be well structured and valid. The social stigma and shame will be overcome incrementally as one person at a time agrees to take on the project of bolstering his own inner sense of self worth, even as he faces with clarity and honesty the reality of his personal psychological illnesses; and allows himself to feel remorse for the actions and consequences the pathologies produce. Layer upon layer of denial must be broken through.

Our culture as a whole will not be able to become conscious of itself and its adverse effects upon the world, to come out of denial, take responsibility, and reverse damaging behavior if the individuals that make up the culture are still clinging to the illusion of their own sweet, Dr. Jekyll natures and continue to disown their personal Mr. Hyde parts. Evil is almost always, in everyone, perceived as “out there,” rather than “in here.” It might be safe to say that everyone on every side of every fight thinks the other is evil, not himself. It is very, very difficult to own one’s own capacity for being mistaken, misled, and misguided, and for evil. The power needs to be found to achieve honest acknowledgement and to take responsibility while maintaining a way for self-understanding, self-embrace and self-forgiveness, all of these things at once.

This personal psychological work is, to me, where true social activism begins. It is insane to believe we can solve the world's tragic outer problems before we solve them in ourselves. As Barfield (1979) states, "I am certain that our responsibility [to the evolution of consciousness] will only be discharged, if at all, not by tinkering with the outside of the world but by changing it, slowly enough no doubt, from the inside" (p. 92). Laurens van der Post (quoted in Saayman, 1990), in discussing the cultural problems of the West states that, "the real journey we have to make is to turn to our undiscovered within . . . and realize that the problem is in our own nature and there is where it has to be handled, because otherwise the whole external world suffers" (p. xii).

Jung (1944/1953) remarks that "people will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own souls" (pp. 99-101). But Jurgen Kremer (1992b) believes that Western epistemologies have brought us to a time in which the avoidance is no longer possible, and the "dark night" must be endured one by one. Malidoma Somé (1994) states, "In the face of all this global chaos, the only possible hope is self-transformation" (p. 1).

In his book, *The Dark Eye in Africa*, Laurens van der Post (1955) most eloquently proclaims his belief in the power held by the individual.

It is, for me, no idle coincidence that the most significant discovery in the physical world of this age has been the fact that the greatest and most unimaginable power resides in the smallest possible organization of matter. The force which threatens to blow the world asunder resides not in the clouds or mountains but in the invisible heart of the atom. The inner force, too, which, like the power of the atom, can either remake or shatter civilization resides in the smallest unit of society, the individual. The

individual is the secret advance base from which this power sets out to invade committee rooms, mothers meetings, county councils, parliaments, continents and nations. (pp. 79-80)

If the individual can maintain a sense of the “why” along with the “what” of his labors of self-discovery and self-transformation, the pain is more bearable. An unavoidable experience of alienation as one undergoes this process is somewhat soothed by the knowledge that he or she is laboring in a colossal project of renewal for the health of larger global systems. It is a profound irony that at the bottom of the agonies of isolation one finds the ground where the connectedness of everything that exists is discoverable.

*Shamanic intervention.* In the dissolution process that I have experienced, I entered and dwelled long in worlds of black richness, terrains of psyche so indescribable and irretrievable in words, not even translatable to a daytime world’s mindset. Even as every cell in my body trembled endlessly with fear and terror, grief and loss, and my psyche could not guarantee to my mind that I would ever emerge from the chaos of this experience with an intact personality communicable or acceptable to the daylight world, I marveled in awe at the wonder of this “other” reality so close to our breath and our bones. In that world there is no inside or outside, the boundaries of self and other, of human and nonhuman are hardly discernable. The importance of these boundaries exists only in certain layers of conscious life, but matters little in others.

I came to realize that these are the worlds the shaman enters to retrieve information that is brought back to our conscious reality for healing, perspective,

wisdom, and creation. The shaman is one who can go to these worlds and who understands how to come back and to translate them. My own experience has led me to believe that these worlds are available to every human being who is willing to submit with courage to the processes of journeying to them, to undergo the initiations these journeys will inevitably produce as they radically alter one's former grip on reality and perceptual frameworks, and to learn the demanding ways of retrieval, translation and integration.

Mircea Eliade (1958) discerns that the "psychopathology of the shamanic vocation is not profane; it does not belong to ordinary symptomatology" (p. 89). He describes the future shaman as having to undergo a total crisis, sometimes leading to the complete disintegration of a personality and even to madness. In his introduction to Eliade's book, Michael Meade writes that such initiation is "a shattering and a shaking all the way to the ground of the soul . . . . Loss of identity and even feeling betrayal of oneself are essential to rites of passage" (p. xix).

My belief is that the life-shattering experiences that we may be individually and massively called to, the profound disintegration of our former unsustainable ways of knowing and being, if undergone while holding to a vision of the shamanic, creative aspect of this journey, will lead to personal and global renewal. I believe that to some extent, in varying degrees, all humans are shamans waiting to be initiated and born.



Stanley Krippner (1992) references a perspective on shamanism that he learned from the Paratinin tribe of Brazil, that “there is a little bit of shamanism within each of us” (p. 168). Thomas Berry (1988) speaks of the shamanic personality as one that “journeys into the far regions of the cosmic mystery and brings back the vision and the power needed by the human community at the most elementary level” (p. 211). He believes that a shamanic dimension of the psyche itself is now emerging in response to our present ecological crises and to help address our extreme cultural pathologies. These dimensions of the psyche will help humans not only deal with the issues that must be faced in resolving problems among humans, but will help achieve a sensitivity that will allow us to communicate with the non-human elements of the earth community, comprehending the larger patterns of nature of which the human is a small part. The human person has lost its sense of itself, barely knows who it really is anymore, but this knowledge can be recovered through shamanic awareness and technologies. Writings by Malidoma Some, Sobonfu Some, Mircea Eliade, David Abram, Carl Jung, Victor Turner, Edith Turner, Martin Buber, and Black Elk will be used to discuss the shamanic dimensions of psyche and the practices involved in translating them to our conscious reality.

Jung (1933) says that because the primary assumptions of the indigenous person differ essentially from ours “he lives, if I may use the expression, in a different world” (p. 130). The indigenous person inside of us also lives in a different world than our developed personality lives in. One might also say that,

to some extent, every human being lives in a different world from every other human being, since each person's basic assumptions about life so often differ very radically from the next person's. And, as humans, we live in a different world from nonhumans. Shamanic dimensions of psyche know how to navigate at will the many worlds, and create the possibility of working out a harmonious correspondence between them rather than the discordant experience so often endured of worlds clashing, crashing, and colliding. The languages and values of the various worlds are most often very far removed from one another, but a shamanic personality will find and translate the coherence among them.

*The world of the dream.* In pre-technological eras, rationalistic and positivistic modes of consciousness were just one system among many ways of knowing, sensing, and interpreting the world. Since the developments of science over the last centuries, these modes have become dominant and imperialistic, suppressing and even extinguishing other innate and powerful capacities of the human mind and psyche.

Drawing upon the earliest anthropological writings of the aborigines, Robert Lawlor (1991), in *Voices of the First Day*, discusses the world view held by aboriginal people. This view states that the earth, in each of its many manifestations, bears imprints of our primordial origins, just as a seed carries imprints and patterns. The earth is ever dreaming, and if one enters the dreamtime of the earth, the potencies of our archaic consciousness can be contacted and utilized.

Indigenous peoples everywhere communicate their belief that it has become crucial to the human's survival, and to the health of the planet, that these original seeds of consciousness are allowed to re-emerge in the Western psyche. The well-defended boundaries of rationalism will need to be loosened in order to allow the human mind to courageously remember who we are as humans, and our appropriate place among the earth community. As previously discussed, our development away from these origins has taken a pathological turn.

Thomas Berry (1988) articulates that the human needs now to look into and reclaim the spontaneities residing within our own genetic endowment. He quotes Paul Ehrlich as saying that to look to technology for a solution "would be a lethal mistake" (p. 207). Berry says that, instead:

We must go back to the genetic imperative from which human cultures emerge originally and from which they can never be separated without losing their integrity and survival capacity. None of our existing cultures can deal with this situation out of its own resources. We must invent, or reinvent, a sustainable human culture by a descent into our pre-rational, our instinctive, resources. Our cultural resources have lost their integrity. They cannot be trusted. What is needed is not transcendence but "inscendence," not the brain but the gene. (pp. 207-208)

The difficulty, Berry states, is that our genetic coding is considered to be merely a physical determination, ignoring the fact that it also contains our richest psychic endowment, a guiding and inspiring force of nature within our own construction as humans. Our cultural expression has deviated too far from the imperatives of our genetic endowment. We have lost an intimate presence to the

dream of the earth, to the functioning of the earth's nonhuman communities, and to the processes of the universe itself.

Malidoma Somé (1998) explains that “matter is to [the indigenous mind] as the shadow of a tree is to the tree.” (p. 64) A shadow is not the source of itself. In the indigenous awareness, the seen and the unseen, the visible and the invisible, matter and Spirit are interrelated, but both are highly perceptible terrains. If the mind is trained, as it is in the West, to focus only on matter and what is visible, the mind has the narrowest perception possible. It becomes barely accessible to other realities of which it is ever a part.

As I read the Russian psychiatrist Olga Kharitidi's (1996) book, *Entering the Circle*, an account of her profound experiences with shamans in the Altai mountains in Siberia, I was astonished as page after page described detailed images and inner events with which I was personally familiar. I have recorded my own dreams for over 25 years, and sometimes felt while reading Kharitidi's story that my own dream journal could be set along side her narrative with a number of notable intersections. Throughout the book, dream after dream that I have had was brought vividly back to recollection, and I entered the dreamscapes again, this time knowing that someone else had been there too. The experience caused me to bring more sharply to focus what I have always more vaguely understood about the dream world—that it has its own ontology, its own geography and terrains. These landscapes interpenetrate those that our eyes and minds have been trained to focus upon. Western consciousness presently has to

be asleep, relaxing its developed structures, in order to be aware of these worlds. But a conscious awareness of them can, and needs to be, recovered.

Newtonian and Cartesian epistemologies have been overturned since the revelations of the new physics, but our psychologies have not caught up. The fact that a wave and a particle are true both at the same time has implications far beyond what we have yet been able to integrate into our perceptual worlds. The human being is a separate, bounded, ontological "particle," and at the very same time is a wave, unbound by time or space, not separate from anything in the universal field of which it is a part. Somehow our Western psyches have developed a sense of safety in believing in and focusing the mind upon the particle side of who we are, and has become terrified of the uncontrollable wave aspect of our true nature. Our denial is extreme. And the limitations and distortions produced by this denial are crippling the global situation.

Robert Lawlor (1991) writes:

All of our technology is an externalization of powers innate in the human organism. Aerospace travel, computerization, electronic communication, the probing capacities of microscopes and x-rays, the remote viewing abilities of telescopes, and even nuclear fission are accomplishments that tribal shamans and mystics have experienced inwardly by cultivating the innate potentials of consciousness. The inner life knows none of the constrictions of time and space. The journey to other worlds and the adventure of exploring the universe beyond the earthly domain belongs to spiritual awakening, not technological development. The ancient myths assure us that when we reawaken in the reality of the Dreamtime, we will discover the expanse of cosmic time and space to be inwardly navigable and experiential. (p. 148)

Richard Tarnas (1991), in his seminal work *The Passion of the Western Mind*, discusses the “metaphysical and epistemological box” (p. 431) the Western mind has sealed itself into by selectively filtering out and shaping human awareness to a reality conceived as objective, literal, and opaque. The human has alienated himself from himself and from awareness of deeper realities, disenchanting the world he populates. The impersonal soullessness of the modern mind has projected onto the world the machine, something that is not found in nature. Tarnas explains his belief that it is the province of depth psychology to connect the modern mind once again to archetypal forces that will help to dissolve our crippled, dualistic world view. “It is theoretically possible,” he writes, “that the human mind has more cards than it has been playing. The pivot of the modern predicament,” he writes, “is epistemological, and it is here that we should look for an opening” (p. 422).

Christopher Bache (2000) writes that for the modern human,

The ultimate challenge facing us is to explore the seat of all human experience, the human psyche. Our task becomes scrutinizing that through which we know anything at all, to sound its depths and chart its reefs . . . . Because there is no making contact with the world or each other except through our minds, the discipline that can unlock the mind’s deepest secrets holds the key to this moment in history. (pp. 25-26)

One day while alone in the wilderness, I had a vision of a condition that seems to afflict our entire species. It occurred to me that it is something like a birth defect, one which challenges our species as a whole, that our eyes are located right next to the brain instead of over the heart. Thus we have the inborn

tendency to process what the eyes take in through our brains, rather than through our hearts.

I was privileged to work for a year in a ritual process under the guidance of a Nigerian dibia, or indigenous scientist, named Eze Anamalechi. Eze told me that the indigenous understanding is that the mind is not centered in the brain, but in the heart. The thinking operation takes place at the core of the heart; the mind's operating system is grounded in the heart.

I have come to believe that the region of the heart for the Westerner is our Africa—that land of dark mystery that we so little value and understand, a land whose peoples we have enslaved and colonized, whose ways of knowing and being we think of as unevolved and puerile. The Western mind has relocated its operating system to the brain, infantilizing the wisdom of the heart.

The Upanishads contain this passage: "As large as the universe is outside, even so large is the universe within the heart." For the last few centuries, humanity's focus has been the universe outside, and we have gained very much knowledge and information. However, the terrains that await the exploration of the modern mind now are those that machines cannot probe; and investigating these will require the ingenuities, strengths, and powers that reside within our deepest humanity.

If a cultural narcissism has disconnected us from our humanness, as the symptomology of this disorder describes, the deep psychological work of

recovery from narcissism, individually and collectively, holds the promise of reconnecting us to inborn human resources and powers. It is time to awaken from a dreamless trance of positivist conceptions and rationalist logics that reduce humans to machines. These misconceptions will not hold, and as the world they have created collapses, interiorly and exteriorly, an original state of awareness will re-align our living with the dreaming of our true being.

### *Organization of the Study*

This dissertation is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1: "Awakening." This chapter provides an introduction to the topic, the statement of the problem, a discussion of the methodology, and a brief introduction to the themes that will be presented and the literature that will be used to amplify them.

Chapter 2: "Black Sun." I had a vision of the image of the Black Sun at the outset of what turned out to be years of experiencing a dark night of the soul. This chapter will describe personal and archetypal processes within the phases of dissolution and deconstruction that sometimes precede new opportunities for psychological development and growth. Awakening indigenous awareness seems to provoke a cracking up, a breaking down of certain structures strongly developed and formidably defended in the Western psyche.

Chapter 3: "The Birth Canal of the Heart." This phrase, and an accompanying image of a tiger giving birth to its cub through her chest, came to



me in a dream. This chapter discusses the heart as an organ of perception, a vehicle of thinking and sensing. The sufi poet Rumi said: "Shatter my heart to make room for an infinite love." At our present stage of evolution, the heart may need to be shattered, utterly broken, before the human can reconnect with its wisdom and power. Through this experience, however, we may be giving birth to ourselves.

Chapter 4: "The Language of Ritual." This chapter describes my sense that the universe speaks, and unfolds her meanings and mysteries, by arranging ritual processes to be lived and drawing us into them; and we speak back by participating consciously in and creating ritual activities. Stories of my own experiences in this regard, and those of several others will be told.

Chapter 5: "Indigenous Mind." This concluding chapter will contain descriptions of the capacities of mind that are indigenous to the human. Indigenous peoples of the world still utilize powers of mind that Westerners have lost touch with. A new phase of development lies ahead as individuated persons undergo the process of reclaiming indigenous sensibilities, while retaining the growth and development so hard-won in the Western world.

## Chapter 2 The Black Sun

Where does this black sun come from? Out of what eerie galaxy do its invisible, lethargic rays reach me, pinning me down to the ground, to my bed, compelling me to silence, to renunciation?

-Julia Kristeva

### *A Visitation*

I will never forget the vision. It occurred one afternoon in the latter part of 1994 not long after I had attended a large, exceptionally impressive service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City on the Feast of St. Francis. An author and eco-theologian whom I greatly admire, Thomas Berry, was being honored on this particular occasion. Though I was genuinely moved by the proceedings, I felt my body begin to quake with a strong sense of foreboding. A legion of ministers was scattered about the cathedral serving the Eucharistic bread and wine to the thousands of congregants gathered. The ministers were all men in robes and stoles. I was, at that time, a woman minister preparing my resignation from a ministry that, with all of its limitations, at least did not carry a gender bias about whom it ordained. The sight of all of these men in their regalia, with their wives tucked unquestioningly into the pews, caused a slow scream to begin sounding through my sinews, cells, veins, nerves. Why weren't any of the women up there too?

Shortly after returning home to California I spoke to one of the wives on the telephone and sensed an unnamed distrust of me. During the conversation an

energy invaded my body, such that immediately after hanging up I stumbled to a nearby bed to fall down on it. As soon as I was horizontal, I was riveted by a vision that presented itself to me—a black circle with sun-like rays emanating from behind it. It was darkly electrifying—I felt a paralyzing physiological sensation of burning, annihilating weight. Having never heard of the black sun at this time, when I journalized the event I called the vision an eclipse. Some years later, while studying alchemy, I learned that this image has a name, and for the first time understood that I am not alone in having seen it; that it is a thing in itself, not just a production of my own mind. Discovering this was vaguely comforting, but mostly disturbing; especially as I listened to our professor describe dramatically difficult, sometimes fatal problems—both physical and mental—that others who have received this vision experienced after its occurrence. The alchemical literature regarding the black sun details sensations, symptoms and conditions I have been undergoing ever since the dark visitation.

What has addressed me? Why? What does it want?

In the days just prior to beginning the writing of this chapter I had a dream. In a mirror I saw my face erupting with black, coal-like, shiny granules. Big, round pockets of this substance were emerging from my forehead and cheeks. I had a feeling of the numinosum; something very mystical seemed to be happening, even as I was uneasy at the sight. The next day I encountered these words in Jung's (1963/1989) *Mysterium Coniunctionis*: "When you see your matter going black, rejoice for this is the beginning of the work" (p. 152).

After the dream, ways to articulate the qualities of a variety of inner experiential events since the vision of the Black Sun have started to congeal in my mind. The vision was like a dark annunciation; I was notified of an impregnation with blackness. It has demanded complete attention, faith, and a devotion to the processes it initiated. I have felt the need to keep an utter integrity with it, not allowing myself to be diverted or distracted from the course that it set for me. Either I was going to be overcome and devoured by this energy, or I was going to cooperate and participate with its emergence. Not even one minute has been spent outside the tension of the process in the years since receiving the vision.

#### *Depression as a Calling*

While preparing to resign from the ministry, I knew fully that there would be much pain involved, but I also anticipated a certain exhilaration of freedom to explore a world of new choices and opportunities that could carry forward the deep passions, interests, and talents that had developed during nearly 20 years of a deeply involving spiritual journey. I was naively unsuspecting when what called me to itself was a serious depression.

I had long been susceptible to visions and waking dream states, but their quality had mostly been of Light, sometimes with sensations of intense joy and pleasure. During the depression, my openness to such experiences took me instead to underworld landscapes, visions of dancing skeletons in a vast desert,

numbing, paralyzing voltages of blackness, and a void where only meaninglessness, purposelessness, and despair could survive. In this place, any new concepts or perceptual worlds that suggested themselves as replacements for the vanishing ones were quickly dissolved, like passing clouds. No comfort of any kind was to be found. To have hope seemed stupid and foolish. Bitterness, rage, disappointment—a wide spectrum of disowned, split-off feelings and emotions invaded my being. The only relief to be felt was a certain fascination that I could have been so long in denial and avoidance of this realm and its overwhelming power; and a small sense of liberation in finally giving up, knowing I could not fight off these sensations any more. But there was little consolation, really, as the steady annihilating assault upon former notions regarding the ultimate goodness of self, God and world terrified and disenchanted me.

Though I live in a culture that hurriedly medicates one in a depressed state, which places a very high value upon dusting oneself off, putting on that smile, and heroically conquering a mood that would keep one from dutiful, ambitious, ceaseless busy-ness—the state that was overcoming me like a slow-moving flood asked for the courage not to resist. It came like a calling, a vocation. To avoid it would have been to say “no” to a destiny that drew me toward it with an unnerving power.

Marie Louise von Franz (1980) aptly observes that a person in a heavy depression feels “unable to get up from one’s chair, or even open one’s mouth to

explain that one is depressed; one just sits like a block of heavy matter" (p. 103). Even while I was performing necessary functions, the leaden feeling pervaded even the breath. Von Franz explains that such a state is the result of the psychological libido having fallen into deeper layers of the personality, which can only be fetched up by undergoing a depression. Unless there is a latent psychosis, she advises that people should go into it and "*be* depressed" (p. 104). One should move deeper and deeper into it, until a level of psychological energy, a creativeness, an impulse of life is again reached. Robert Romanyshyn (1989) writes that "depression, then, is a matter of home, of coming home or trying to, of being called home. It is not an illness to be cured. It is the cure" (p. 227).

No one can prescribe how long this journey will take, or how many twists, turns, and phases will be called for. The heroic ego that would like to decide on timetables or that wants to shape and determine outcome is relativized beyond recognition in such a process. The ordeal has a life and determination of its own. The absolute inability, once the process has begun, to take hold and conform to one's own or anyone else's schedules, desires, or expectations is a deeply painful and crushing aspect of the experience. Superficial image concerns and worry over the opinions of others must be foregone, and the ego suffers enormously. Being understood, even by oneself, is a luxury not granted.

It is paradoxical that a depressive stage such as this was entered just as I felt I had broken through the tightly restrictive definitions and confines of a traditional religious structure, just as I had gained clarity, courage, and vision to

move forward and outward into new possibilities. As it was, rather than feeling graduated after decades of learning and experience, I felt regressed back to well before kindergarten. I did not know anything anymore that made a lick of sense. It is astonishing how quickly and thoroughly the blackness dissolves any positivist notions. Before a new idea or momentum can even start to take shape, it melts away again. Even an infant has more capacity for positivism!

A trick is being played upon the mind, however. In this state there is a feeling of terrifying incompetence in terms of any Western notions about what makes a person functional and productive; but right along with it a sense also arises that, as James Hillman (Marlan, 1997) puts it, "The nigredo is not the beginning, but an accomplished stage. Black is, in fact, an achievement" (p. 47). Jung (1963/1989) says of the nigredo, "the magnum opus begins at this point" (p. 497).

The Western mind is highly sensitized as an instrument for discovering and acquiring positive knowledge. From birth onward, a child raised in the ethos of Western thought is engaged in the quest to know. What is known, and how much is known, creates an identity and a feeling of mastery. In general, *not* to know is a problem to be solved, rather than a state of being to be lived into and accepted. Attention and focus are given to what is known; the enormity of what is not known and cannot be known is largely ignored, defended against or related to through a systematized religious, doctrinal or philosophical approach.

Jung (1997) states, "It is typical of the Western mind that it moves in a conscious world" (p. 601). Knowledge is light; the opposite of it is dark and black.

I have heard a number of people comment that starting very early in life, they learned from the modeling of parents, teachers, and others that it is definitely *not* ok not to know. Their elders were very reluctant to admit to not knowing about something, and apparently felt vulnerable and unstable if caught in that situation. Dignity, strength, and power seemed to be vested in having answers; and there seemed to be not only anxiety, but also a shame or taboo surrounding the experience of not knowing.

As a teenager I was exposed often to the great mind of the scientist Buckminster Fuller, who was a friend of our family's. I remember clearly the impact of hearing him once say, while holding his hands about two feet apart, "If the spectrum of all of the energies that influence us at any given moment is this long, those that can be picked up and measured by our senses or our technologies are only this long," he said changing his gesture to holding two fingers about a half an inch apart. The rest of the continuum of steady influences upon our thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and body are invisible and unknown to us.

Malidoma Some (1998) describes the belief of the Dagara, his people in Africa, that "the physical world that we can touch and feel and see came into being in parallel with a brighter, more dynamic and expansive energetic world" (p. 61), which he refers to as the unseen, Other, world. In order to exist as



material beings, we had to squeeze ourselves into the “narrow part of the universe that allows energy to exist as matter.” It is barely suitable for us as humans, but we do it, ironically, in order to expand our spirit.

To consider in such ways the contrast between the narrowness of what we know and the vastness of what is not known and not perceptible to our common human instrumentation, it seems astonishing, possibly pathological, that we stay so focused upon the light and the known, and turn a blind eye, ignore, defend against, and generally attempt to avoid relating ourselves to the looming reality of the great unknown. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I love the term John Keats gives to the capacity to stay for long periods in uncertainty and doubt without grasping after rational fact and reason—Negative Capability. It seems to me that this capability should be taught, encouraged, and nurtured—right alongside the building of cognitive structures—in toddlers, during elementary school, all through life.

Without this training, when a person with a Western psychological structure experiences a life event that shakes loose or calls into serious question what had been previously taken for granted as a known, reliable, certain reality or world, and the person is swallowed up into the realm of the uncertain and unknown, a serious identity crisis and profound depression are likely to occur. The darkness that is entered, “like a black hole,” in the words of James Hillman (Marlan, 1997), “sucks into and makes vanish the fundamental security structures of Western consciousness” (p. 48).

During my experience in the darkened world, I could not sustain even for a brief moment a belief that there is meaning, purpose, stability, care, or love in the universe. The notions that had caused me to believe in these seemed like infantile ideas created to defend myself against the harsh reality of a cruel, cold, uncaring universe. Every time I tried to believe there could be any purpose even to my suffering, there seemed to be a hot, stinking breath that laughed in my naïve little face. Wolfgang Giegerich remarks that during such a process the soul is turned inside out in a violent reversal of orientation. "These operations are excruciatingly painful and resist uplifting dialectics" (Marlan, 2000). Any platitudes that were suggested to me, either by my own self-talk or from others, rather than comforting me made me angry, as they seemed like ignorant, inane, damaging idiocy.

The only recurring dream I remember having during my childhood is one of my tricycle going completely out of control in a downhill plunge, with me riding helplessly upon it. I wonder if my fall into depression was being foreshadowed all my life in these frightening dreams. On an evening in the early stages of the experience, I began to hyperventilate. I went outside to focus upon a star in an attempt to stabilize myself. As I riveted my attention upon the tiny light I felt myself falling, falling, falling into blackened realms and depths I felt that I had no power to resist or climb out of.

A large part of the pain of such a descent is the isolation that it engenders. No one knows to where you have fallen, and no one can go with you. The ego

becomes a shell, like Demeter wandering helplessly above ground, while the soul is caught, desperately alone, in the realm of Hades. It is a descent that looks and feels very much like madness. And, horrifyingly, once the libido is fallen into this place, there is an instinctive understanding that absolutely no guarantee is given that a way back will be shown, or even possible. No guarantee. None. Some persons will and some simply will not make it through the trial.

Those who are called to and who make the choice to enter into this realm should prepare for abandonment. Jung (1974) writes that the encounter “induces a panic fear in civilized people, not least on account of the menacing analogy with insanity” (p. 126). It takes a person of enormous heart, tenacity, and vision—and one who has a particular calling to do so—to keep faith with the individual who makes this descent. For the suffering person, not only the structures of mind, but the structures of relationships are taken down and dissolved during the ordeal. Until our culture gains a greater respect, tolerance, and wisdom regarding how to support a person who is living into and through such a meltdown, the potential for loss of formerly cherished relationships is very strong.

*Dealing with Trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Related Problems*

In my particular case, though the journey through depression was excruciating and there were elements of it that I would not wish upon any other living soul, it at least seemed to have an end. In time, I began to return, with some degree of strength and vitality, to a daylight world of optimism and

accomplishment, feeling wiser and more empathically open and attuned to life. However, as fate would have it, just as I was openly acknowledging the healing to myself and to my analyst, someone arrived at my doorstep bearing a piece of information that exploded in my psyche and body like an atom bomb—news that precipitated the ending of my more than 20-year marriage. I knew without question in that moment that the world in which I had formerly lived had just been obliterated and that life would never be even close to the same. Whether I could survive the shock was in question.

Within a few weeks I had lost 30 pounds, and it took brute strength, sheer will, and complete determination to focus my mind well enough to remember how to spell, type, or recall which side of the road to drive upon or which side of an envelope to put the stamp on. Breathing did not seem an involuntary activity any more; I had to remember to do it. I could not think, eat, or sleep. This went on for some months.

I had thought the depression was terrible; this experience was off the chart, undetectably far beyond it in the horror it unleashed. There were times when I entered a death-like state, an unbounded condition in which I was not even aware that I had a body except for a weight felt in my chest that seemed to bind me to this plane. There was no mind as we know it, no duality, only consciousness. Trying actually to *live* this death, to walk around and figure out how to function in a daylight world, was an extraordinary effort. It seemed

impossible. I have never felt anything in my body like the anxiety it produced. At a cellular level it felt like being in labor during childbirth 24 hours a day.

At this writing, 2 ½ years after the event, I feel I am only beginning to reconstitute. The very cells in my body still feel consistently shaky. The sensation has improved but has never stopped, even for a moment. Living in this state has become part of my new world.

Three different doctors, from three different paradigms (general medical practitioner, psychiatrist and doctor of Chinese medicine), have offered to me the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This information is useful insofar as it gives scientific insight into the symptoms that I experience. However, if I put what is known about this disorder on Buckminster Fuller's ruler, what is yet to be known outdistances the known by so far; and as I have strived to live into this disease rather than simply medicate and cure it, I have come to respect that it is a messenger.

Edward Edinger (1992) writes that

anxiety is an expression of proximity to God. This is a very helpful orienting principle, because once you grasp its reality you have immediately shifted the level at which you are understanding your experience from the personal to the transpersonal. (p. 113)

In my experience, extreme episodes of the Post Traumatic Stress reaction are very similar to powerful holotropic states. Perception is radically altered, and in those conditions I have received vivid and clear insights, visions and awarenesses. In these states, things that I perceived, not knowing how I so plainly knew them,

proved themselves out over the course of ordinary time to be astonishingly accurate.

Two professors from Pacifica Graduate Institute offer psycho-biographies of well-known mystics, St. Francis of Assisi and Joan of Arc. Dr. David Bona describes his belief that St. Francis returned from war with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and in that condition experienced his conversion. Dr. Hendrika de Vries theorizes that Joan of Arc also suffered this disease. If indeed this is so, it may have played a part in her having been receptive to voices and visions that helped shape the future of a nation.

Peter Levine (1997) has spent his career studying and treating trauma disorders. His studies reflect upon the observation that animals in the wild, though routinely threatened, do not develop problems related to trauma, whereas humans are traumatized after severe injury or threats of injury. Both humans and animals demonstrate an involuntary “immobility response” (p. 17) when faced with injury or threat. The body and nervous system shut down, freeze. This occurs for two reasons. One is the instinct to “play possum,” the hope that danger will pass us by if we immobilize; and the other is the anesthesia or numbing effect of freezing, so that our bodies can bear the injury. Animals instinctively shake or move this immobilization out of their bodies once the experience is passed. Humans, on the other hand, seem to have largely buried or lost the instinct to physically shake it off, and instead tend to store the immobilization response in the body. As a result, we do not regain full mastery of

our physiology; the undischarged residues of energy become trapped in our nervous systems, where they wreck havoc on our bodies and spirits. Paralyzing fears, inhibitions, numbing depressions, and a large range of physical and psychological problems can result until something is done to free the immobilized energy.

The sudden release of energies that have been frozen in the physiology and psyche can present a devastating disturbance to the conscious personality and psychological structures. The fear of being utterly overwhelmed by the experience causes terrible panic. I even experienced some fainting spells. However, as Robert Sardello (2000) astutely remarked in a lecture, "What's wrong is what's right" (taped lecture).

When the carefully constructed defenses that have held the suppressed energy in check are blasted apart by an event, the release creates a revival of life energy. The psychic pain, felt in every cell of the body, might be compared to the terrible pain that is experienced when a sleeping arm or a leg comes back to life. That pain is excruciating, but momentary and localized. Depending on the amount or type of repressed energy liberated by a severely traumatic life event, the psychic pain may be much harsher, very long lasting, and will be felt in every system—physical, mental, emotional, psychological. However the sting of the revival must be endured in order for these life energies to be unleashed out of their death-like paralysis.

My psyche was helped to believe that what was wrong in my life possibly had a certain destined rightness when I happened to be looking for a dream in an old dream journal. I was amazed when I encountered a record of the following dream, about which I had completely forgotten:

I am completely on fire. Not like big flames lapping around me, but like every single cell has burst into flames. The hottest part of the fire is at the back of my neck, at the base of my brain stem. I am tempted to be terrified by the experience but I keep repeating, over and over, "God is my strength and my redeemer." This seems to get me through. As I awaken I hear the words "God is a consuming fire."

I looked at the date of the dream. It occurred on the night of April 15, 1989. April 15, 1999—exactly 10 years later to the day—I received the piece of information that set my interior and exterior world to flames. I have no idea how to interpret this except to say that knowing it gave me a greater faith that I should attempt to trust and live into the breakdown that I was experiencing.

The discharge of so much powerful energy breaks apart the structures that formerly shaped thought and perception. Rationality and logic are far too tight a straightjacket to attempt to fit the onslaughts of unconscious material into. These systems of thinking are exploded like so much sawdust as unnamable forces, images, and emotions surge. To attempt to cling to cultural indoctrination that insists upon the dictates of reason is to humiliate and mentally exhaust oneself in a battle that cannot be won.

Witnessing the white man, following the light of reason, tragically conquer the way of life of Africans in Africa, Laurens van der Post (1955)



describes that the Africans barely even put up a fight. For the most part, they took the European at his own superior estimation of himself. The white man's powers over physical things, which "were never merely physical things to the African but containers of all-powerful spirits," (p. 55) convinced them that the European was more than human. Van der Post observes that this same conquest has happened internally in the Western psyche. We have similarly conquered, dismissed, and disrespected our own inner "dark brother," that part that is instinctual, not trained in or beholden to our notions of rationality. He writes:

In a profound sense every man has two halves to his being . . . . I believe that in the heart of each human being there is something which I can only describe as a "child of darkness" who is equal and complementary to the more obvious "child of light." Whether we know it or not we all have within us a natural instinctive man, a dark brother, to whom we are irrevocably joined as to our own shadow. However much our conscious reason may reject him, he is there for good or ill, clamouring for recognition and awareness and a fair share of life . . . . I need not emphasize how the rational, calculating, acutely reasoning and determined human being that Western man has made of himself has increasingly considered this side of himself not as a brother but as an enemy, capable, with his upsurges of rich emotion and colourful impulses, of wrecking conscious man's carefully planned and closely reasoned way of existence. (pp. 69-70)

If this is taken to be true, it is not a wonder, then, that as our badly traumatized inner dark brother begins to break free from his oppression, the ruling principle in our psyches is threatened with dethronement, and an inner war begins to rage. All out efforts to bomb and subdue the "enemy" come in many forms—external and internal. Chaos, fear, and uncertainty reign as aggressive tactics are used to destroy this life, so demonized by the reasoning

conscious mind, and vigorous attempts are made to either kill it, or to shame and embarrass it back into silence and submission.

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Robert Louis Stevenson's brilliant story of the kind, good, widely respected Dr. Jekyll, and his assistant, the sinister, demonic Mr. Hyde—who no one realizes is the same person—is eerily descriptive of the state of the Western psyche. It is very difficult to own, in our individual lives, how accurately this story depicts who we are, what we have become.

The split between the conscious and unconscious parts of the personality is particularly acute for a psyche that is, as previously discussed, finely trained to focus upon what is known, and is afraid of the unknown. To conceive that the self one drops onto the street every morning is constantly emitting not only known and knowable effects, but also unidentified, mysterious, nameless products that cannot be identified or understood, much less adapted to the conscious personality or controlled, is a very disturbing notion. For the most part, this reality is so unsettling that, as a defense, it is split off and unacknowledged in our day-to-day operations.

Denial of the wholeness, the complete picture, of who we are individually and collectively is an extremely tenacious and very serious problem. Even the tenets and methods of depth psychology can be employed as a means of bolstering the illusion of control in relationship to unconsciousness.

When unfamiliar parts of the self stir for attention or recognition an individual may experience a strong visceral sensation of “enemy” approaching, due to a fear of the unknown. Whether it is an internal event or an external encounter that brings about the hint that something darkly unrealized about oneself may be exposed, primitive survival and warring instincts are likely to be unconsciously engaged. Before the unnamed element reaches the awareness, it is already shut down, split off, disavowed. Generally all of this activity is taking place instinctually without our conscious participation.

The vice in the parts clamoring for attention may only be that they represent something not yet seen or understood. Though we more understandably split off exposure of what we consider character flaws such as anger, greed, pride, and envy, the vulnerability experienced when other parts show up that have no assigned positive or negative value, but which are simply unfamiliar and therefore leave us feeling awkward, causes us to cast these parts into unconsciousness also.

Out of all that is unknowable about us and about nature, when a specific part begins to try to reach our awareness, there is probably a reason that it asks for this; a meaning and usefulness to the timing that it chooses. If consciousness of it is, then, out of habit, denied, a dam is being erected against an oncoming stream. Nature itself is being manipulated. Since human vision is limited and what nature intends is profoundly beyond our grasp, taking control over the course of nature most often produces unforeseen, broadly damaging effects that

may take much time to become apparent. When the harm is exposed, it may be so far downstream, and such a length of time away, that tracing what went wrong will be a great challenge.

In the development of the conscious personality in Western psychological structures, with the extraordinarily high value placed upon reason and the persona of goodness, internal mechanisms that split off parts of the self inadaptable to this particular structure have become like a psychological immune system, killing off awareness of these elements or the possibility of their conscious entry into the personality. This involuntary system operates nearly as far from our awareness as does the physical immune system. Thus unconscious nature's attempt to flow toward consciousness is damned like the river. In this way something like a pasture is possibly produced in our current situation, but psychological and physical drought, or flooding, or other damaging effects take place downstream in time and place. And we have not the faintest idea that we have anything to do with, or any responsibility for, these events. It becomes nearly impossible to perceive the connection between our reasonable and good actions and dark effects taking place elsewhere in our life and in the world.

As individuals, it is very hard to understand that we do not have to be ill motivated at all to have the effects of our actions turn into something "evil." The evil effect may be the farthest thing from our minds or intent.

In the case of Westerners, the result of our well-intentioned efforts to feed our children and provide a standard of living for them that we have come to

believe they should enjoy is destroying life systems on the planets through deforestation, air and water pollution, top soil loss. Sustaining the life style to which we have become accustomed is causing hunger and famine among peoples, enacting unconscionable cruelty to animals, draining the planet of the oil supply the earth needs like we need our own blood. But we, sincerely, do not mean any harm. We are just trying to live the values we have been taught are good, moral, and upright.

When we go to a doctor with symptoms of anxiety and stress, the body's signals that a serious re-evaluation of our lives and ideals may be overdue, the doctor does the job he is trained to do by offering medications and treatments that silence these signals, and allow us to continue in our lives such as they are. The doctor helps bolster and perpetuate the style of life that is ultimately ruining the health of the entire planet and all who dwell within it. But he does not mean harm. He, of course, means well.

In academia, a child with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is treated so that he can concentrate his mind on the narrow spectrum of information in the education that is being offered. His sometimes 360-degree awareness is brought down to 12 degrees so that he can succeed in our system. We mean to help the child, not harm him.

We are the polite, kind, good, well-mannered Dr. Jekyll. When asked to own or integrate the disastrous, evil effects of our big-hearted, well meaning, supposedly moral, upright actions it seems completely counter-intuitive. We

know our hearts, we know what we mean, and we mean well. We are not evil. We are good.

One of the laws of nature states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If as humans we understand ourselves to be part of nature, and that as such this law applies to us, we may begin to realize that no matter what we do, there will be effects that are equal and opposite. Every “good” deed, then, will have an opposite effect somewhere; and every “evil” deed will produce some good.

A terrible difficulty is created for us by the fact that our inherited psychological structures have developed with a calamitous split between good and evil, right and wrong, light and dark, valuing of consciousness and fear or devaluing of unconsciousness. Just as Dr. Jekyll really did not know that Mr. Hyde was a part of himself, absolutely thought of him as “other,” so have we projected onto “other” the Mr. Hyde effects of our own psychology.

Unfortunately, in most cases, we really do not have the tools or potential to begin to comprehend our reality, or begin to resolve the split internally.

Addressing this problem, Jung (1963/1989) writes:

Despite all attempts at denial and obfuscation there is an unconscious factor, a black sun, which is responsible for the surprisingly common phenomenon of masculine split-mindedness, when the right hand mustn't know what the left is doing. (pp. 247, 248)

Further, he remarks in *Answer to Job* (1958/1991):

The conscious realization of what is hidden and kept secret certainly confronts us with an insoluble conflict; at least this is how it appears to the conscious mind . . . . The only thing that really matters now is whether man can climb up to a . . . higher plane of consciousness . . . . But he can make no progress with himself unless he becomes very much better acquainted with his own nature. Unfortunately, a terrifying ignorance prevails in this respect, and an equally great aversion to increasing the knowledge of his intrinsic character. However, in the most unexpected quarters nowadays we find people who can no longer blink the fact that something ought to be done with man in regard to his psychology. Unfortunately, the little word "ought" tells us that they do not know what to do, and do not know the way to the goal. (p. 98)

On a personal level, I became increasingly aware of the dynamics of this problem, and of the formidable unconsciousness that I was up against in myself and in my world, as devastating troubles played out in my personal relationships. On both sides, mine and the other with whom I was tangling, the Dr. Jekyll part, would review and review again, "What? I said this. I meant that. There is nothing in the world I can find wrong with this, or that!" A frantic examination of the heart still comes up with the same responses, yet the other person is absolutely, completely flipping out and convinced of the Mr. Hyde effect, as I will call it, of actions which to the conscious mind seem at least benign and maybe even good.

When I can identify a mistake I have made, or a bad intent or motive, I am very capable of saying so, apologizing, and working on it. Though the first admission is painful, I enjoy the sense of discovery, revelation, and awareness of new possibilities that the growth brings. This kind of self-reflection is not a problem for me. The problem is in figuring out what this Mr. Hyde effect has to

do with me when everything I know about myself says I just did not say, do, or mean anything even remotely like this evil consequence I am accused of creating. I want to be self-honest, I want to learn, but how can I connect the dots between what I considered goodness in me and this horror happening for someone else as a result of me?

It can be helpful, but ultimately is too facile, I believe, to call up the well-articulated concept of projection as an explanation for this particular confusion. As Jung (1946/1985) succinctly states in his essay “The Psychology of the Transference,” “How many marriages are wrecked for years, and sometimes forever, because he sees his mother in his wife and she her father in her husband, and neither ever recognizes the other’s reality!” (p. 219). When I become the carrier of another’s negative parental projection, it is can save sanity to hold in mind that generally there is not one thing that I can do to influence the other person to see me, who I actually am, or to hear what I am actually saying; the things being seen and heard are dynamically altered by the filter of a powerful projection. This is, however, not the problem I refer to in the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde allusions.

Nor am I ultimately helped by the convincing rhetoric of the Dr. Jekyll part that goes like this: “I just have to be me, who I am, become myself, be true to myself, grow. If that harms someone else, I can’t help that. I do not mean harm. I will acknowledge and feel very sorry for the pain that my need to be authentic and responsible to myself causes another—but ultimately their pain is their own



problem to work out, not mine.” There is a level at which this logic carries a great deal of truth, and puts the individual in an excruciating bind. But there is a level at which it resembles the logics of a nation that lives in too much plenty which says, “We are the good, freedom-loving people. What do we have to do with the famine and misery and hunger elsewhere in the world? We are sorry that they are suffering, but we just have to carry on being who we are and defending to the death our reasonable and good way of life.” At this level, such thinking is a defense against a badly needed re-evaluation and possible deconstruction that might take the personality of individuals and of whole societies all the way down to “ground zero.”

I am sensing that this work of integration, becoming conscious of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the same personality, individually and collectively, is an extraordinarily challenging and demanding task that, difficult as it may be, masses of people may be called upon to undertake, and soon. There is poignancy in realizing the prophetic import, and the call to psychological work, in Edward Edinger’s (1999) message in *Archetype of the Apocalypse*:

One way or another, the world is going to be made a single whole entity. But it will be unified either in mutual mass destruction or by means of mutual human consciousness. *If* a sufficient number of individuals can have the experience of the coming of the Self as an individual, inner experience, we may just possibly be spared the worst features of its external manifestation.

When the Self comes, it necessarily brings the “opposites,” since they are its essential content . . . once this essential content touches the area of consciousness, the opposites split apart: and the individual ego is confronted with “conflict.” Then, there arises the crucial question whether or not the ego is able to contain the conflict of opposites as a psychological problem to be met with consciousness . . . . What usually happens is that

the individual is not able to contain this “warring” within one’s own self, and the conflict of opposites spills out into the outer world by way of projection. (pp. 174-175)

Dr. Edinger clearly expresses his belief that consciousness itself is the agency of transformation. If enough people work to become conscious and understand what is called for in world-shattering apocalyptic times, a critical mass of individuals could change the course for the whole world. We could be diverted from a path leading to mass destruction onto one that contains the possibility for mass renewal. Such a prospect offers some comfort to the individual, and the collective, as shattering apocalyptic ordeals are suffered. Though the individual may feel less than useless as he struggles hard day and night just to achieve small glimmers of consciousness, these efforts, when added to by those of others’, may be a significant contribution to the survival of life on our planet.

#### *Yahweh and Job*

As I was undergoing the nightmare of the ending of my marriage, there were several months in which my body was constantly broken out in boils. This served as a physiological cue to look into the story of Job for possible insights into an archetypal perspective upon the events of my life.

Yahweh had the power to take away Job’s family, property, wealth, health and well-being. Job’s only power was in choosing how to respond to the losses as they befell him at the whims of a suspicious, angry, irrational, amoral deity. The psychological dynamics of this conflict are similarly constellated in a person’s life

when the naïve and innocent part of the personality, which unconsciously accepts the belief that sincere efforts to live in the best way possible will secure for an individual his or her right to the life that has been granted, encounters the force that can and will take it all away.

The general relevance of Job's story to persons of this era is suggested by the fact that Carl Jung considered his seminal work, *Answer to Job*, his most inspired writing. Late in his life he made the statement that given the development of his thinking over time, he would like to rewrite all of his books, however he would leave *Answer to Job*, "just as it stands" (Von Franz, 1998, p. 161). Edward Edinger (1999) sees *Answer to Job* as "the one and only antidote the individual has while obliged to endure (and hopefully survive) the ordeal of the Apocalypse in its collective manifestation." (p. 172) And I will add to that, in its private manifestation as well.

As I re-read this work midway through my own ordeal, I was astonished at the almost play-by-play, phrase-by-phrase accuracy of its descriptions detailing the events, characters, dreams, sensations, interior thoughts, and exterior travails of my own experience. There were, point-by-point, astounding similarities. It was, as Edinger remarked, an antidote to the torture I lived through inasmuch as it placed me and my story inside a much larger story that seems to be taking place at the collective level. This greatly helped me to gain perspective and not take my own life so personally.

My sense of it from where I sit today is that Job is a complex, and Yahweh is a complex inside the individual and the collective personalities. These complexes need to be dealt with and treated on the individual level and the collective level—both complexes, at both levels, all at the same time.

Job resembles Dr. Jekyll. He is the character embodying the sense we have of ourselves as good, moral, upright, magnanimous, well-intended, and deserving. Yahweh is the erupted force of envy and repressed rage, the spoiler of all that Job built by colonizing and suppressing others and important parts of himself in order to achieve and maintain his style of life.

For example, Job is the white person sitting in a spacious, airy villa, listening to Mozart and drinking wine, living a civilized life of security and pleasure, unthinking and unaware of the peoples, animals, eco-systems, rivers, topsoil, forests, and balances of nature that have been devastated so that this lovely life full of amenities is granted. Yahweh is the revenge of nature, a force that breaks out to systematically ruin that life—using whatever persons, circumstances, events or happenings available. Yahweh has not one atom of mercy; he is a power that is conscienceless, amoral, obsessed with the pleasure taken in finally releasing and demonstrating great power, using the power to viciously, angrily and self-righteously inflict more and more sufferings.

Both Job and Yahweh demonstrate different sets of characteristics of a narcissistic personality disorder. If indeed their story conveys a relevant cultural

myth, the conflict between them, to me, underlines the problem of narcissism pervasive in the society. Insights garnered through a deep look at this story are keys for the individual and the collective in working to heal the pathology.

Job is a man described as “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). A narcissist is defined as one who “identifies with the idealized image” (Lowen, 1985, p. 7). The complex problem of acknowledging one’s own darkness or shadow aspects is little modeled or supported in the developing psyche of a person who is raised in a culture that splits good from evil, and shames or “eschews” evil while clinging to an identification with the good. This creates the narcissist’s inclination to ignore the reality of the actual self, and function out of an unreal idea or image of an all-good self.

Lionel Corbett (2001) discusses Job’s sense of entitlement, such that he washes his steps with milk and honey, suggesting a secret inflation in Job that Job was not conscious of. “We begin to wonder,” he remarks, “if the initial wager between God and Satan was actually a challenge to Job’s arrogance, to his narcissism, and not really to his piety” (audio tape series, *Spirituality Beyond Religion*, #5).

It seems to be a law of nature that the disowned darkness of which the narcissist prefers to remain unconscious eventually will come to haunt him. Since it will not be accepted as in internal reality, it rattles the world from the outside through people, events, circumstances that are completely out of the tight control

and organization of the Job aspect of the personality. This, I am suggesting, is Yahweh. Since the force and power of this energy has been held back and dishonored vehemently for so long, when it finally gets activated it is enraged and viciously destructive of the pretty life that has left it out.

When the force of Yahweh was set loose in my life, I was, and still am today, as Jung (1958/1991) describes “trembling in every limb with the terror of almost total annihilation” (p. 5). Deep in my bones, in every cell of my body, I feel the never-ending, day-and-night shaking. The horror and pain of it cannot be assuaged; there is not one thing to do that relieves it. Nothing.

It is noteworthy to me that Jung (1959/1978) relates Yahweh to Sol Niger. My personal encounter with Yahweh is part of what was forewarned when I experienced the vision of the Black Sun.

Increment by increment my life was taken from me. Job lost his wife; I lost my role as wife, and my husband. Job lost his family; I lost forever the possibility of an integrated family life. Job lost his children; I watched heart-broken as the innocence of my children prematurely died. As did Job, I lost property, wealth, and health. These were excruciating losses, but worse than these was the vicious sense of cruelty and lack of concern exercised by this storm of power set loose against my life; all at the hands of a “god” I had worshipped and served with passion my whole life.

Jung (1958/1991) comments upon Job's "incurable optimism in believing that he can appeal to divine justice. In this he is mistaken" (p. 16). I, too, was incurable. I could not stop thinking this force could be reasoned with, and wasted uncountable hours and bewildering amounts of energy trying to design yet another way to attempt to do so. I still can't seem to give it up. Our highly developed, much prized capacity for reason is a completely inept commodity in this dramatic event.

Though Yahweh came at me from every corner, and was a phenomenon rather than a person, the force itself had and a very discernable and describable personality, which in my experience matches almost to the letter the depictions given in the Old Testament, further elaborated by Jung. I will use some of Jung's descriptions that impart the story and the character of Yahweh, as his words illustrate clearly and accurately my own encounter.

"Yahweh had let himself be bamboozled by Satan" (Jung, 1958/1991, p. 17), who "owned Yahweh's ear and is able to influence him" (p. 19). Horrifyingly, Satan was "treated with remarkable tolerance and consideration" (p. 17) and disappeared from the scene after making his bargain. Jung explains that Yahweh is "brazen" (p. 20) and "permits himself all things without batting an eyelid" (p. 20) with "no need of circumspection, for nowhere does he come up against an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence make him reflect upon himself." (p. 13) There is a "jealousy . . . that . . . might perhaps

explain his behavior" (p. 14), hence "Yahweh's surprising readiness to listen to Satan's insinuations against his better judgment" (p. 14).

The Yahweh of my experience displayed "no compunction, remorse, or compassion, but only ruthlessness and brutality" (Jung, 1958/1991, p. 14). He did not "see Job (me) in his (my) situation at all" (p. 18). The experience for me was as described in this paragraph of Jung's: "Man, abandoned without protection and stripped of his rights, and whose nothingness is thrown in his face at every opportunity, evidently appears to be so dangerous to Yahweh that he must be battered down with the heaviest artillery" (p. 18). It was contradictory and utterly confusing.

Jung (1958/1991) references Yahweh's "peculiar double-faced behavior" (p. 13).

At one moment Yahweh behaves as irrationally as a cataclysm; the next moment he wants to be loved, honoured, worshipped, and praised as just. He reacts irritably to every word that has the faintest suggestion of criticism, while he himself does not care a straw for his own moral code if his actions happen to run counter to its statutes. (pp. 22-23)

"He turns the tables on Job and blames him for what he himself does: man is not permitted to have an opinion about him, and, in particular, is to have no insight which he himself does not possess" (p. 16). It is stunning to me how precisely these depictions portray the bind in which I found myself.

Finally, "Job has no alternative but formally to revoke his demand for justice" (Jung, 1958/1991, p. 17). And so it was. I "lay my hand upon my mouth"



(Job 40:4). To stop trying, to give up, seemed like the hardest thing in the world to do.

Reading Nathan Schwartz-Salant's (1982) descriptions highlighting the dominant features of persons suffering a narcissistic character disorder, I was astonished to find that Yahweh fits the profile nearly to the letter. To mention just a few, Yahweh/the narcissist:

- 1.) "Lacks penetrability" (p. 37). Give up on the idea of getting through to Yahweh.

The experience of being with a person with a narcissistic character disorder is one of being kept away, warded off. Often this is accompanied by a body tightness or tension. Extreme self-reference is dominant in the narcissistic character, so that whatever one says is immediately transformed by that person into a story or fantasy or idea about himself. (pp. 37, 38)

- 2.) "Rejects interpretation" (p. 38). In a variety of life events for me, there was an adamant refusal to engage a logical analysis or attempt to expand understanding of the conflicts. These could not even be listened to.
- 3.) "Cannot tolerate criticism" (p. 38). Criticism of any kind would immediately result in the ending of the conversation, and in some cases, the relationship.
- 4.) "Low empathetic capacity" (p. 39). There is an utter blindness to or refusal to feel concern for the suffering that is being caused.

5.) "Lacks sense of history or process . . . . History is distorted" (p. 39).

That which has gone before is told differently, not remembered, or is only partially assimilated. Events that wounded the self-esteem are recalled with great tenacity, eclipsing recall or assimilation of positive or loving aspects of the history.

Schwartz-Salant (1982) also discusses the problem of envy and rage in the narcissistic character. "Narcissistic rage has a special, unforgiving quality" (p. 41). And envy provokes the desire to spoil or destroy the object of envy.

The temptation in such a horrific chapter of life is for the sufferer to identify with Job, conceiving of oneself as an innocent, righteous victim, and to cast Yahweh in the role of evil outsider. This is much simpler than attempting to understand clearly but compassionately the deep pathologies of both characters and acknowledge each of them as aspects of one's own narcissistic problem. The difficulty in so doing is built right in to the problem itself. The nature of the narcissistic wound is that there is too little development of a sense of self, too little healthy ego structure to allow for one to assimilate the self-reflective "criticism." There is too little connection with a self that exists beyond, differentiated from the parts of the self that are sick, pathological, and much in need of correction and healing. Overcoming narcissism is very tricky business.

Personally, I had finally to acknowledge that Job is a complex in me that is arrogant; self-righteous; who feels entitled; is unempathic with, unconcerned and

unaware of those who suffer so that I can have my life; who thinks I am good and undeserving of retribution; who identifies with victim. My Job-aspect is unconscious of wrongdoing, and the harm that it causes is not at all intended as such; on the contrary it sincerely strives to be kind and good. This part of myself is severely traumatized as a result of Yahweh's onslaught and suffers the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Yahweh is the complex in me that contains huge rage on behalf of the parts of me that had to be oppressed and split off so that my good, Job-like, Jekyll-like self could be well developed. It is the parts that envy my Job persona; that feel the injustice massively done to self and other in order to develop and maintain the respectable aspect, and want revenge at any cost; the parts that have been marginalized, shamed, and abused to such an extent that they have lost consciousness and the ability to feel, have empathy, mercy, or compassion; the parts that are so split off that they have to meet me from the outside, and appear as "other"; parts that have come with force and vengeance to destroy the old order without discrimination, remorse or conscience.

In Western culture, I have often heard persons identify with Job when calamities befall them. It is easy enough, and comforting, to make this identification as long as Job is believed to be innocent, righteous, patient, faithful, longsuffering, and, as Jung describes, more conscious and more moral than Yahweh. It is tougher to identify with Job if he is understood to be also

narcissistic, arrogant, self-righteous, entitled, and in certain ways responsible for Yahweh's behavior.

I have yet to hear anyone identify with Yahweh.

The call for us, I believe, is to avoid identifying with either of these two, but to see each of them as aspects of ourselves inasmuch as we are, inescapably, products of a Western mindset and a cultural psychology and, in this case, a cultural pathology. As much as we would love to disavow it, and point to the pathology as though it were a problem outside of us, it is unavoidably a personal dilemma.

Our challenge is to effect enough of a cure for the narcissistic wounding to find and believe in a self that stands apart from our complexes, that can see and own them, and at the very same time disidentify with them in order to resolve and heal them. Until the strong sense of a self that exists separately from these distortedly developed patterns in psyche is discovered, it is very hard not to believe that *we are* those patterns. If Job is being annihilated, *we* experience annihilation, and we feel in our bones the utter terror of the extinction. If we cannot differentiate ourselves from the Yahweh complex, it is entirely too painful to assimilate the fact that Yahweh is an energy system that must be owned as part of ourselves. The reality is too horrifying and denial of it will be bolstered at all costs. The problem of evil, to me, is that it rarely can be acknowledged as an individual person's own creation and internal problem. It is always conceived of as out there, in the other.

For me, the capacity to discover a self that is differentiated from my complexes was achieved increasingly as I came into contact with the indigenous mind. But not until my other mind and world had been shattered did I discover more fully the ground beneath them—this original, indigenous nature. That aspect of the human psyche is apparently indestructible, though it has been covered over and covered over again by centuries of suppression, with civilizations built on top of it to the point that it is not even remembered.

To achieve healing of the terrible problem of our massive cultural narcissism, this rich ground of being needs to be excavated and reclaimed. The task is accomplished one individual at a time. The journey is agonizing, inasmuch as so much deconstruction seems necessarily to precede the realization of what it is that truly supports us. But a greater sense of what stands to be recovered after the difficult losses will help bolster confidence, vision, and faith in the process.

*Conscious Femininity and the Incarnation of the Dark God*

In *Answer to Job* Jung notes that around the time Yahweh opened himself to Satan's insinuations, it is rumored that he also began to remember a feminine being who lived at the time of the original man. Her name is Sophia. She is wisdom. Yahweh is about to enter into a trial wherein some self-understanding and self-reflection will ultimately become necessary and anamnesis of Sophia helps bring this about—both to necessitate the self-reflection and to assist with it.

I clearly recall the time when it felt that Sophia was rising in my own psyche—an ancient remembrance, like a breath from deep within the earth finding its way through the countless layers of mind that had covered her over. Suddenly something innate in my feminine soul would not be managed, controlled, and silenced in the ways that it always had. Suddenly it was awake and had things to say, none of which seemed very troublesome to me, but all of which seemed to threaten and shake the world around me for reasons that I could not clearly understand. It was at about this time that Yahweh began to rage and my world was taken away from me. Remembrance of Sophia starts the trouble.

Jung (1958/1991) recounts that Sophia had been replaced in Yahweh's life by a covenant with the chosen people. He writes: "At that time the people consisted of a patriarchal society in which women were only of secondary importance. God's marriage with Israel was therefore an essentially masculine affair . . . . The inferiority of women was a settled fact" (p. 33). This history is discoverable deep within the personal psyche, solidly woven into the fabric of inherited psychological structures. It is an arcane patterning not much influenced by modern rhetoric positing equality among the sexes.

Around the time of remembering Sophia, I had a dream. In it, I look down and notice for the first time that my legs, appearing below the hemline of my skirt, are very thick, like small tree trunks, and are very, very hairy. I am horrified at how ugly they are. I sit down on a nicely upholstered couch and twist my legs

underneath me, sideways. I notice when I do this that the legs now appear to be slender, hairless, and feminine, so I determine to sit this way as much as I possibly can.

Eze Anamalechi, my Nigerian mentor, told me that his people image the goddess, the archetypal feminine figure, as a strong, sturdy woman who stands holding a baby in one arm who nurses from her bare breast, while her other arm is lifted brandishing a machete. This goddess comforts and nurtures on the one hand, while being a powerful worker and protector on the other. You probably do not want to mess with the babies of this lady.

The archetypal feminine figure handed to us as a model in the West, on the other hand, is pale and slender, covered in veils, hands folded in adoration of and supplication to a male god. She is a virgin uninitiated into her sexuality, and a mother who is fainting and helpless as her son is brutally murdered.

My dream of the strong, hairy legs was experienced before I ever met my Nigerian friend, but it may have foreshadowed the work I would later do with him. In the dream, I believe I was discovering an aspect of the feminine in me that resembles what he describes, but which was not yet known to my conscious mind, and it very much embarrassed and frightened me. In response I twisted myself up and rendered my legs immobile, like useless ornaments, in order to continue to be like the image of the feminine inherited through the tradition into which I was born.

Jung (1958/1991) also writes in *Answer to Job* that “woman was regarded as less perfect than man, as Eve’s weakness for the blandishments of the serpent amply proved. Perfection is a masculine desideratum, while woman inclines by nature to completeness” (p. 33). He describes that exalting Mary, the mother of Christ, as perfect was injurious to the feminine principle of completeness. Jung remarks:

The more the feminine ideal is bent in the direction of the masculine<sup>3, 4\*</sup> the more the woman loses her power to compensate the masculine striving for perfection, and a typically masculine, ideal state arises which, as we shall see, is threatened with an enantiadromia. No path leads beyond perfection into the future – there is only a turning back, a collapse of the ideal, which could easily have been avoided by paying attention to the feminine ideal of completeness. (p. 37)

As Yahweh’s thunderings forced me into deeper and deeper states of self-reflection, I strove to admit and correct every flaw that I could possibly discover in desperate hopes of winning him over and calming him down. I worked so hard on myself, unearthing multitudes of mistaken notions and bad behaviors, straining to correct them. I would work on a neurosis until finally it seemed as though it could heal. Relief. Joy. But then, oh no, two more neuroses, worse than the first, presented themselves. And on and on it goes. All the while, there seemed to be a background idea that at the end of these labors, underneath

---

3

<sup>4\*</sup> Even Jung’s use of the words “bent in the direction of the masculine” recall the image in my dream of bending my legs in a direction that made them fit the more “perfect” image of femininity. There are far too many of such matches between Jung’s wordings in *Answer to Job* and my own dreams and experiences to recount in writing. The similarities speak to me of a deep story taking place in the evolution of consciousness that Jung saw directly into, and that all of us in various ways are living.



all of the problems, there resides a beautiful perfection just waiting to be excavated.

Never-ending frustration, disappointment, self-judgment, and constant feelings of failure pervade these efforts. The psyche wears itself out running after a goal of perfection that cannot be reached.

An image that haunts me at this writing juncture is that of the universe unfolding. The original surge of creation began with a “big bang,” if scientists are correct, and since then the unfolding continues ceaselessly. As we humans are part of, involved in, that unfolding reality, we ourselves are unfolding every moment. And every moment unfolds new energy potentials, teeming with possibilities. There will always be raw, incomplete, undigested psychic and physical matter unfurling right along with more pure and refined matter.

Our masculine nature discriminates between the refined and unrefined, the perfect and the imperfect. Our feminine nature loves, embraces, and sees the possibilities in all of it together. Classically, archetypally, the father disciplines and corrects the child to make the child more “perfect,” while the mother unconditionally loves the child, all of the child, completely.

Over the ages, during the development of patriarchal societies dominated by masculine values, including discrimination and the pursuit of perfection, the feminine instincts, urges, and principles have been sublimated and submerged. The embrace of wholeness, the giving and receiving of unconditional love, the

ability to appreciate and accept ourselves and each other just as we are, have gone underground and have been forgotten. There is a well-established exterior and internalized father-god that corrects, admonishes, shames, punishes, and disciplines us for imperfections, but there is no exterior or internalized mother-goddess to love us completely and unconditionally just as we are, right now, exactly as we are at this moment's unfolding.

Due to the split-mindedness of the culture into which we are born, the human psyche is split almost from the moment of conception. We can't even *imagine* who we are in our completeness. How can we have the experience of being loved completely when we are incomplete? We are shaped into something palatable to a masculine world, and are loved for that shaped image. The rest of who we are is thrown out, not wanted, not cared for, not loved. This takes place pervasively on subtle, undetected, unacknowledged psychological levels, but is played out literally in places where girl babies are thrown away, young women are castrated, and women are rewarded and valued only insofar as they resemble men.

I remember one day listening to an audiotape by Marion Woodman (1998) in which she describes a scene from the movie called *Dead Poet's Society*. The father of a young boy who wanted his son to become a doctor forbade the boy to play a role in a dramatic production at his school. The son had an artistic temperament and did not want to become a doctor, but saw no way to fulfill his own dreams in the face of his father's expectations, demands, and domination;

and so he took his own life. Woodman points out that during this entire scenario the mother stood mutely by, her voice and instinct silenced. She suggests that the scene is broadly descriptive of our cultural condition—a dominating, patriarchal, demanding voice resounds everywhere, while a disempowered feminine, without any voice, stands by—not even in touch with her own thoughts, values, or instincts.

Hearing this story caused me to reflect upon my own life. I recalled life-altering decisions made by my father for me that disturbed and affected me profoundly, while my mother stood mutely by. I don't even know what she thought, or if she even realized she had a right to her own thoughts in the face of my father's domination. I certainly didn't think to look to her for an alternate perspective, advice, or comfort. The ruling that came down from the top was all there was. We had all been shaped from birth to function just like this.

Some years ago, I attended a workshop devoted to exploration of the experiences of each gender; men groping to articulate their formative experiences together in the presence of women, allowing the women to reflect and respond afterward; then women did the same, allowing the men to respond. One of the most poignant and memorable moments for me took place when a man, a former priest, got deeply in touch with how he had been shaped, and damaged, by the strong imposition of masculine values at the hands of his culture and church. He looked at the women present with so much pain in the lines of his face, saying, with some anger, "Why didn't you DO something?" He said this over and over.

It was a soul cry from someone who knew he had been tragically failed by the feminine. And we women sat mutely, only able to witness, incompetent to adequately answer such a profound question. Guilty as charged.

Generations of inadequately mothered mothers produce generations more of inadequately mothered children to carry on the problem. The silenced parts of us have been held down for so long we don't even know that they exist. How can we love and mother these parts in ourselves or our children when we don't know how to see or find them, much less value, nurture, protect, and develop them?

I know a twin who lost her other twin to death in the womb. Never having been told that the other had even existed, she searched her whole life for someone she strongly sensed was missing, not knowing in her mind how to understand or discover what the great feeling of loss she suffered was about. Well into her adult years she finally had an inkling of what had happened, did some research, and discovered that she had, indeed, shared the womb with another soul who didn't make the journey into life with her.

I believe all of us suffer a similar problem. We have a twin self, another part of the self, that is there in the womb with us, but which is killed off even before birth. It cannot make the journey into life with us. There is no place or space for it in the world we have created. We suffer miserably at the loss, and live only partially because of it. No matter how much we are loved, we know we are not fully loved because an absent part of ourselves is not welcome, not invited,

not cared for. Somewhere we know this, and the ache from it is profound. We suffer no less when the suffering is unconscious. It still permeates our inner and outer atmosphere.

It is an observable phenomenon that that which we exclude and exterritorialize comes in through the back door with a peculiar intensity and, due to continued abuse and repression, often shows its face as a perversion or as demonic. What might the twin that we have not allowed into consciousness appear as if we were capable of embracing, nurturing, developing and loving her right from the start? I do not think this is yet known or knowable. Even if earlier peoples and other cultures have been more whole, have not split themselves in the way Westerners have done, neither have they achieved bringing wholeness into consciousness, living the masculine and feminine values consciously.

It is a particular challenge for those of us shaped by European conceptions and thought systems to now match the highly developed attainment of solar, masculine consciousness with an equally well-developed feminine *consciousness*. As it is, the feminine is mostly unconscious. "There has never been an era of conscious femininity. The World has never known Conscious Mother," writes Marion Woodman (1993, p. 82). To bring her into consciousness is a new task for our species.

Clearly our civilization has taken a bad turn and cannot continue in the direction it is headed; nor is it possible or desirable to go backwards to the more whole, but less conscious mind that preceded the one we have inherited. How do

we recover the indigenous mind without throwing out the gold in the hard-won, very costly achievements of the West? The opposite minds seem impossible to integrate, yet that is apparently what must be done.

Though we cannot yet say what Conscious Mother will be when she is fully incarnated, I feel confident suggesting that in order to bring her into matter, into our human realm, a notion deep in our thought structures, maybe even deep in our cellular structures, saying only perfection deserves love has to be brought to consciousness and reworked. Not only the good, the divine potential, the appropriate, clean, acceptable aspects of ourselves deserve to be deeply loved, but all of us, imperfections, mistakes, failures, warts, the whole sum of the person deserves love.

What was the holocaust of the Jews but an extreme attempt to create a perfect human race? Among all of the genocides in history, this tragedy continues to haunt us profoundly. Possibly this is due to the fact that the holocaust is still going on internally, and within each of us still lives both victim and perpetrator. We war against ourselves in the struggle for perfection. We ruthlessly and robotically exterminate innocent parts of the self that don't fit the particular ideal of perfection given to us by our family, social circle, culture, or our own mind. What is the fear that drives this tragedy? I believe it is largely the terror of not being loved or lovable; and the unconscious belief that only perfection deserves love. It is trying to please father, since mother has been lost to consciousness.

To attempt an end to the holocaust on ourselves, deep, empathic, nonjudgmental listening to an inner dialogue among all parts, with all of the emotions and value systems that go with each part must begin. When underdeveloped aspects of the self begin to present themselves to the personality, they will obviously be awkward. They will throw us out of synch with the world, will make us feel incompetent, insecure, unsure, like beginners.

As Jurgen Kremer (1992a) points out in his magnificent article, "The Dark Night of the Scholar: Reflections on Culture and Ways of Knowing," it wasn't Lancelot or Arthur who found the Grail castle; it was Parsifal, "the great fool" (p. 170). Deep in our Western psyche is the knowledge that the hero has his uses, but does not finally attain the goal around which all of his adventures and efforts are organized. It takes a hero's courage, however, to allow oneself to be the fool, to be perceived as fool, and to love the fool.

To speak of such a courageous love is easy, but it is very, very hard to do—to allow both the possibility of receiving it from another, or of giving it to oneself or someone else. Jurgen Kremer (1992a) writes "that which is no longer participated in gets relegated to 'the other.' 'The other' is the shadow of the Western mind. Here we find what has been excommunicated from participation—the feminine, wilderness, 'strange' cultures, subcultures, and the like" (p. 175). For the Westerner, 'other' is feared as taboo, stigmatized and strictly marginalized.

To *love* the “other” is to cross the internal threshold of extremely powerful taboos, and to suffer being considered taboo oneself. This kind of love is not a sweet, sentimental idea; it is a power so strong that it is misunderstood, greatly feared, and formidably defended against. We have not consciously known or experienced this unconditional love in a living, incarnated way; it has visited the Western mind mostly in brief encounters considered mystical.

I have to muster certain courage to tell the following story. During the worst of my breakdown I found that on occasion I had to treat the symptoms of anxiety medically in order to stay breathing; the quaking in my cells felt as though I might come completely unglued. It was extraordinarily frightening. Later, on more than one occasion, I experienced an opposite kind of quaking. Seemingly out of the blue arrived overwhelmingly powerful surges of joy, and of love. During these episodes, every atom in my body and environment seemed so intensely loaded with these energies that I feared it wouldn't all hold together, like it could detonate. I found that I had to use the same medications that I had used for anxiety just to stay breathing and grounded; it felt as though I might go into dangerous convulsions. These intensely positive experiences were just as frightening as the others.

I know this is a personal matter for me, but I also believe it is more than that. It seems that the human physical body in its current stage of development has a hard time containing powerful emotional energies. For this reason, strong emotions of any kind are defended against. I continually observe that persons are



just as defended against great happiness and love as they are against deep grief or rage. Our bodies have either forgotten, or have not yet developed the capability for incarnating, bringing into matter, the forces of great transpersonal energies in a sustained way. I am fully convinced that our physical make-up is completely equipped to allow for the embodiment of such powerful energies, but our minds and emotions have more work to do to develop the coordination to consciously embody them day-to-day.

Part of the difficulty in opening ourselves to the fullness of our reality may be that at some level we truly know that it cannot ultimately be separated. If we let in the “good” then we also let in the “bad.” If we allow ourselves to feel the joy, we will also feel the pain. If we acknowledge our capacity to help, we also acknowledge our capacity to harm. If we embrace our inner Gandhi, we must also own our inner Hitler. The strength of our present state of denial on all of these counts is formidable.

To the extent that Hitler was a perverse external manifestation of an on-going and pervasive internal human problem, the loss of humanity in a ruthless quest for perfection, he is not, nor was he ever, “other,” he is us. To the extent that any external figure in our personal or collective lives is also a symbol notifying us of an internal reality, there is no such thing as “other.” Even science proves the unitive nature of our reality. The notion of “other” is a pathological delusion being suffered extensively. A cure for the pathology will certainly require facing the extent of our darkness as well as our light, and wisdom to

understand that both are complimentary parts of the completeness of who we are, and of the larger whole of which we are each a part.

Referencing Jung's *Answer to Job*, as well as our troubled times, Edward Edinger (1999) comments:

This one terse and passionate work tells us what is going on, the *meaning* of the vast collective upheaval of which we are now in the beginning stages: namely, that it is the coming of the Self into collective awareness, the "incarnation of the God-image" with all its paradoxical ambiguity, a God who unites within himself both good and evil. (p. 172)

"What is going on," according to Jung, is that Yahweh has made a decision to become man. And he is not looking for the perfect man in whom to incarnate.

Rather, in Jung's (1958/1991) words:

God . . . wants to become man, and for that purpose he has chosen . . . the creaturely man filled with darkness — the natural man who is tainted with original sin . . . . The guilty man is eminently suitable and is therefore chosen to become the vessel for the continuing incarnation, not the guiltless one who holds aloof from the world and refuses to pay his tribute to life, for in him the dark God would find no room. (pp. 98, 99)<sup>5\*</sup>

Unless we creaturely men and women develop a willingness and capacity to acknowledge our own darkness, and the darkness of God, this next divine incarnation will be delayed or may fail. Mr. Hyde, and Yahweh, have to be owned and integrated. We are called upon to make the effort, to do the difficult

---

<sup>5\*</sup> I think one of the most dramatic and poignant demonstrations of the reality of this new incarnation, and the beginnings of a cultural awareness of it, is seen in the worldwide impact and grief after the death of Princess Diana—a flawed, imperfect, but enormously loved and admired figure that the culture, not the church, seemed instinctively to want to canonize; and the fact that the timing of her death nearly eclipsed attention to the death of Mother Theresa, the model of a more "perfect," saintly figure. The depth of emotional response to Diana's death took the world by surprise; and overshadowed the event of the death that came shortly afterward. The fact of these two deaths coming so closely together, two women who carry projected images for an entire culture, and the differing reactions, certainly notifies us of a deep internal shift taking place in the collective psyche.

and demanding work of becoming conscious. Edinger (1999) further describes the human's responsibility and the urgency that this work must be done soon:

The image of a totally good God – albeit pestered by a dissociated evil Satan – is no longer viable. Instead, the new God-image coming into conscious realization is that of a paradoxical union of opposites; and with it comes a healing of the metaphysical split that has characterized the entire Christian aeon.

This is what can happen potentially. But the process of transforming the God-image can take place only if its human participants are conscious of what is happening, because consciousness is the agency of transformation for God and man. There is, of course, no transformation of the God-image if we end up with nothing but a heap of ruins and a group of savages having to make the laborious climb to civilization all over again. But the God-image can incarnate in a way that averts massive destruction if there are enough individuals aware of the unfolding archetypal drama that is before us. (p. 177)

The current tenuousness in the state of the world certainly wakes us up to the fact that we cannot wait for governments to take care of the problems.

Unconscious ills are demanding attention, and it will be the individuals who work to make them conscious, who bring about their healing in the personal psyche, that will have the power to impact, cell by cell, the huge infrastructures of thought that are creating the problems.

The beginning of this Black Sun chapter, and the beginning of the Black Sun ordeal in my life, occurred at the event of my seeing a small army of men, decked out in their regalia, scattered about a large cathedral serving the Eucharist while women passively watched, and everyone carried on as if there wasn't anything terribly, horribly, tragically, extremely, excruciatingly *wrong* with this picture. Where is the empowered feminine in this supposed house of the

divine? Why isn't anyone screaming about this? Please hear my scream and the earth's scream that still in our catastrophic deafness is barely even audible.

Sophia *is* rising, and her emergence shakes down old structures. The Black Sun heralds this deconstruction as well as the renewal. The darkness entered is painful, difficult, and ugly—but also is rich with life and full of possibility.

As humans, we are the self-reflective aspect of the universe. Among species, ours bears a unique responsibility, one that we are called upon to take very seriously at the current stage of earth's development. I believe we are pregnant with Conscious Femininity. We do not yet know what she will be when she is finally born, and thus we find ourselves truly at the brink of the unknown. This is a taboo state for the Western mind, a frightening proposition. However, unless we commit ourselves to engaging actively in the work of rigorous self-reflection in order to bring Conscious Mother safely into matter, the whole human experiment may fail. We may be eliminated as a species. It is a distinct possibility now being faced.

Some may just want to say “and good-riddance, too” to our dark, troublesome species; surely self-hatred is experienced personally and collectively, and suicides are becoming a public activity. What will turn the tide on this trend? I believe we now must figure out how to fall courageously and completely in love with ourselves and with each other, maybe for the first time. This will not be a romanticized love of idealized images, of perfect partners and partnerships. That is not the love that will sustain and carry us forward. It will be a conscious

love of the whole person, an earthy love of exactly who we are—now, today, in all of our confusing ambiguity and complexity. This may be a love that has not yet happened to us or within us. Discovering it and allowing for it may be the next call.

Chapter 3  
The Birth Canal of the Heart

Work of the eyes is done, now  
go and do heart work  
on all the images imprisoned within you; for you  
overpowered them: but even now you don't know them.  
-Rainer Maria Rilke

*Heart Murmurings*

Who speaks to me in the night? In the state between sleeping and waking, sometimes words come to me in clearly articulated statements, as if I were being spoken to directly. Not long ago during a wakeful moment in the middle of the night, these words formed softly, seemingly out of nowhere: "The heart thinks in images." A few months previously as I awakened in the morning, these words drifted in: "The only truth is the truth of the heart." Some time before that, in the middle of the night: "Whatever the question is, the answer is love." As simple as these statements are, volumes could be unfolded from each of them. Because of the kinds of messages that come to me in this way and their tremendous potency, I have the impression that this in-between realm is the realm of the heart.

Some years ago I lay down for an afternoon nap. While still awake, just as I began to drift toward sleep, I heard the words, "You have to listen to the space between heartbeats." Suddenly I found myself in what seemed to be an endless, fathomless space, maybe more aptly described as spacelessness. Then I felt my heart beat, like a hammer, and it seemed to crash me back into time and space—a

very disturbing and disruptive sensation. After this, I drifted back into the spacelessness. Crash, again my heart beat. I was, irritatingly, back in the world of time and space. I fell away again, only to be slammed back. This went on for some moments, and each time the heart beat I felt unhappy, cheated, angry. Soon, however, I started to get the rhythm of it, and felt less aggravated. There is a dance here, I thought. Accept it. Get the beat, find the rhythm.

On another occasion, I sat at a restaurant with a small crowd of friends all busily chatting away as we enjoyed the ambience, food, and wine. As I listened to the conversation, I suddenly slipped into a “space between,” had a remarkable and complex dream, and then found myself right back with my friends, not having blinked an eye or missed a word. This was new. The dream that occurred has been powerfully with me ever since, and is one that opens to me in new ways at different turns in my life’s journey. All of this occurred right in the middle of a sentence that I was still tracking, a conversation I was still an active part of. There are eternities of information in the space between heartbeats.

The dream was filled with long sequences of detailed stories that spread over time, all of which faded upon “awakening.” As I came back I heard the words, “The only path is the path to the center,” and could see that all of the scenarios from my dream had made this point brilliantly. Words of Jesus came to mind, “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). I had a sense that my whole adult life I had been running from here to there, going to meetings, appointments, gatherings,

pilgrimages, lectures, classes—for the most part at a fairly frantic pace—all in sincere efforts to be true to the demands of my chosen life path. This dream gave me a sudden, solid sense of knowing that the journey to the core of my own beating heart is the only effort I need to make. The path is not over here or over there. It is never where I am not. I am already there. It is already here. I can relax. Stop. Slow down. Listen to the heart beat. What does the heart want? It wants to be here, at this table, with friends eating and drinking wine. When I get up to leave, it will want to smell the night air and look at the stars. When I get home, it will want to tuck in my daughters and kiss them good night. This, then, is the path—listening to and then doing what the heart truly wants. But that is not as easy as it sounds.

Eze Anamalechi, my Nigerian friend, explained to me that the indigenous people know that the “mind exists not in the brain, but in the heart.” Jung (1961/1989) was given the same message by his Pueblo Indian friend, Ochwiay Biano, who told him that their people believe the white men to be mad because they think with their heads. When Jung replied, “Why of course. What do you think with?” his friend indicated his heart, saying, “We think here” (p. 248).

Experience seems to tell me that the thought of the heart comes from these in-between spaces, dream-like places, unfamiliar and often threatening to the rational, reasoning, thinking of the head—the styles of thought and perception so well developed in the mind cultivated in the West. The logic of the heart often defies and opposes that of the mind. A consciousness intent upon the operations



of rationality and reasoning, and addicted to the resulting illusions of mastery and control, most often cannot or will not listen to the wisdom of the heart. To do so seems counter-productive and even counter-intuitive to the thinking in the head.

Once while in the wilderness, where my rational mind is not so engaged and I can wander into the in-between spaces for longer periods, I had a vision, which I briefly mentioned in Chapter 1. The image suggested that our species, the human species, was born with something like a birth defect. The fact that our eyes are physically located right next to the brain creates the unfortunate problem that the enormous amount of information taken in through the eyes gets processed through the brain before it ever reaches the heart, and sometimes it never reaches the heart. This produces a certain impoverishment and perversity of perception. Were our eyes and heart physically closer together, that which the eyes see would be more directly filtered through the heart's perceptual mechanisms, and such distortions would be less severe.

With this idea came the thought that just as a person born with a birth defect often develops phenomenal strengths as a result of the problem, capacities that might otherwise never be called forth and developed, so might the human species achieve astonishing aptitudes and powers as a result of our defect—possibly the thinking of the head and the thinking of the heart, distinct and sometimes opposite as they are, can be brought together in as yet unforeseeable ways. For this to occur, however, we have to shake ourselves

awake, out of denial about how perfectly imaged we are. We would have to accept and perceive that we are flawed, to recognize a fundamental imperfection common to all of us, and live with humility and courage into the challenges that overcoming the weakness present, individually and collectively. If a handicapped person denies that there is a problem and fails to accept the challenge it presents, the opportunity to develop new strengths and powers may be foregone.

While in the wilderness, I noticed that as the great beauty surrounding me lavished my eyes, my brain busily sparked off of all that I was seeing. My heart, however, felt like a dense, dark region that did not have the facility, cultivation, or language to join the party; it felt uninvited. The heart, I thought, is our Africa. It is our misunderstood, uncomprehended, big land of rich mysteries inconceivable and perplexing to the Western mind and modes of perception. We treat the terrain of the heart as we have treated Africa. We unapologetically colonize, brutalize, infantilize, exploit, and enslave it, and are utterly dismissive of its messages.

Looking up the word "heart" in library catalogues at major universities yields long lists of references to the heart as an anatomical object: heart rate, mental effort in relation to gaseous exchange, pressure pulses in cardiovascular system, frog's heart—on and on. I could not find any reference to the heart as an organ of perception, thought, or knowledge. Such notions of the heart are not taken seriously, do not make it into the catalogues. This is tragically revealing. How have we managed to ignore and remain in denial of vast information that is

literally right under our noses? What is it about the thinking of the heart that is so threatening to Western conceptions that it must be suppressed with such denial, vehemence and strength?

Writings of Henry Corbin (1969), French philosopher and professor of Islamic Religion at the Sorbonne, are a counter-point to this denial. Corbin states that the heart is an organ “which makes it possible to achieve the true knowledge of things, a knowledge inaccessible to the intellect” (p.229). He writes of the “*himma*” of the heart as a concentration that makes it possible to “know the Divine Being” through intuitive vision” (p.230) such that the mystic becomes the true knower, or “eye-witness” of God. Corbin concurs with the Gnostics who say that the true eye is in the heart. That which the heart sees and knows he calls “the science of the heart” (p.230). The world of the heart is an intermediate realm, he writes. And facility within the realm of the heart yields the understanding that all things in our so-called sensible world are of the same order as visions in a dream, subject to interpretation in the same way as the images we encounter during sleep. The *himma* of the heart sees as real the figures of the imagination and of dreams, but also sees the figures we call “real” as dream images.

How often did we sing as children, in rounds, the wonderful little song “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream”? This is a heart-wisdom song. The heart knows life as a dream, and does not distinguish between the intermediate worlds and the sensible world in the same way the mind does. The heart does not see one world

as “real” and the others as “not real.” The heart dwells in and understands the reality of many worlds.

*Human vs. Machine*

“The desert is not in Egypt; it is anywhere once we desert the heart,” writes James Hillman (1981, p. 66). Modernity, he writes, is a desert.

Scientist Rupert Sheldrake (Fox & Sheldrake, 1996) uses the term “machine cosmology” (p. 3) to describe the worldview that has developed since the scientific revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In this view, the universe with all of its regulating laws is conceived of as a vast machine, and all of us who dwell within it are so envisaged. Rene Descartes was the original visionary of this movement, conceptualizing creation as soulless matter mechanized by mathematical urgencies. Robert Romanyshyn (2001) eloquently discusses the impact upon psychological life that occurred when, through the work of the English physician William Harvey during that fateful 17<sup>th</sup> century, in the minds of the masses the human heart became nothing more than a mechanical pump, “a piece of machinery” (p. 126).

Four hundred years later, life in the machine cosmology is dependent upon machines. I am increasingly horrified and unnerved as I realize how much these instruments affect and run my daily life—more, I think, than I can grasp. If my computer isn’t working, my e-mail does not function reliably, my answering machine won’t pick up messages, my oven, air-conditioner, refrigerator, or car

need repair, life as it has been created for and by me does not work. It is broken. Its operations are impaired and huge stresses result. Life becomes about forever maintaining and fixing the machines. When I pick up the telephone to accomplish a bit of business, it is hard to find a human. If I go to a public place of commerce or government, humans regularly defer to the machinery. "I'm sorry, ma'am, we cannot do [this reasonable task] for you because the computer will not do that. It does not understand that request." Their faces are generally friendly, but blank and unquestioning. Thinking, reasoning, and decision-making have been abdicated to the machines. And feelings or simple logics of the heart have no place in this desert of a system; it is generally inappropriate to even mention how you experience what the machine has decided. Humanness, our deepest humanity is rendered powerless, is irrelevant, and ultimately becomes so marginalized that it is, in critical ways, lost to consciousness.

As my own indigenous psyche was awakening I became increasingly sensitized to this machine reality. It began to feel that a war was going on inside of me at a cellular level, and this induced severe suffering. The machine thoughts have invaded even the structures of my biology, at the most basic level. Reviving an indigenous awareness caused my *cells* to hurt. I am not a scientist; I cannot explain this, but I feel it keenly. I ache in every cell as I try to bring myself back to life, and to wake myself up from the machine nightmare. It feels something like metal against flesh, pervasively, at a deep structural level. I was becoming

acutely aware of this problem when a friend who had been living in Africa for 2 years came home for a visit and shared with me this dream:

I am in some unknown location. It feels like a laboratory or some place that is sterile—lots of metal or maybe tile in the room. Under glass covers I see a whole range of “dishes” that have been prepared. There is a lot of blood that I can see in the periphery of my vision. The whole scene is pretty gross, really. I realize, suddenly, that what I am looking at are dishes made out of human parts. There is something with kidney and another with brain parts. But these are prepared as gourmet dishes – one dish is called something like “human kidney a l’orange.” The whole thing is very macabre and bizarre. And then I realize that the butchering of humans and subsequent preparation of the dishes have been done by these human-looking machines. Somehow it is easier to accept that machines did this. I felt I would be more offended if other humans had done it. Still, the whole thing is so weird, but I can’t seem to stop looking. Then I remember that my children are with me and I start to worry about how this scene is going to affect them. I think that it is going to cause them nightmares. I was left with an eerie, surreal feeling that lasted for days after the dream.

This woman had been living in a land that operates within a different cosmological structure. The Western invasion, the machine cosmology, has not penetrated so far into its functioning and its psyche. Though she is Western, she had been breathing and dreaming in this other world. Just after returning to American soil her psyche delivered this dream to her. Distance grants perspective. I believe this dream to be a candid photograph of the inner world of our cosmology. Humans who are actually machines are serving up dissected humanity as though this is the essence of sophistication and taste. We look like humans, but even our cellular structures are becoming altered over time by the concepts we hold in the mind. We are losing track of what it means to be human at the deepest level.

*The Manufactured Self*

“Narcissists can be identified by their lack of humanness” (Lowen, 1985, p. x). If indeed, as Lowen and many others suggest, our entire culture is pervasively narcissistic, if we are spoon-fed narcissist values from birth and need to cultivate them continuously in order to succeed and survive, the loss of our humanity insidiously permeates individual and collective psychic life. A true self and the true human are being forgotten, even vehemently denied, in the quest for creating a manufactured self to meet external standards of perfection, achievement, and a fashioned image. Brian Swimme (1996) shakes his readers out of a hypnotic stupor as he makes us aware of the level of brainwashing we unthinkingly accept through our “religion of consumerism” (p. 15). He writes:

Before a child enters first grade science class, and before entering in any real way into our religious ceremonies, a child will have soaked in thirty thousand advertisements. The time our teenagers spend absorbing ads is more than their total stay in high school . . . . We learned to accept [this] so long ago we hardly ever think about it anymore.

But imagine how different we would feel if we heard about a country that programmed its citizenry in its religious dogmas in such a manner. (p. 13)

The manufactured self that we promote and create is in certain ways like a machine built around a void at the center where our true, indigenous self should be. This indigenous self is largely avoided, and voided, as its human feelings and human values are inconvenient, even dangerous, to the structures of modernity. For the individual to be successful in our created world, our deepest humanity needs to be significantly silenced, domesticated, and tortured into containers that

meet acceptable standards. It is not a wonder that as a people we are violent, depressed, addicted, perverse, and unhappy.

Some years ago I had this dream:

I am in a hospital setting. There is discussion among several doctors about a discovery of chemicals in the brain that produce a limited vision of the self, that create a notion saying the self of a person is the only important or real thing, that the universe revolves around that self, and nothing else matters but that self. The discovery is being made that a shift in brain chemistry can resolve this illusion, so that a vaster, broader awareness of the universe can be experienced.

The message of this dream correlates to insights presented by physicist David Bohm regarding the brain, and impacts that chemicals emitted in the brain have upon our thinking. Bohm (1985) identifies a tripartite structure of reality, whereas much of science has dealt only with two aspects, matter and energy. He believes there is a third element inherent in the basic physical composition of all that is, and he calls this element *meaning*. Bohm understood meaning to be an essential part of *matter*, not some ethereal quality having its existence only in the mind. Because of this, a deep change of meaning, he writes, creates a “change in the deep material structure of the brain” (p. 95). The meanings we hold are fixed into the brain chemistry and construction; changes in meaning change the matter, and thus the operation, of the brain. He explains:

If the brain holds the old meanings, then it cannot change its state. The mental and the physical are one . . . . We could say that living as we do, we probably have a great deal of subtle brain damage. In other words, the brain is damaged at a subtle level that might not show up at the cellular level but deep in the implicate order. Eventually of course, it shows up in the cellular level too. (p. 95)



A cosmology that holds the meaning that the universe is an immense machine sets this mechanistic view deep into our collective brain structure and thus we can only operate out of it. This view compels the thinking operations, and the way we think creates our world.

Even certain branches of psychology are invaded with the machine thoughts. There are some very highly regarded and respected authors in the field that I find helpful up to a point, but I cannot read too much of their work as I find that I begin to be seduced to think of the psyche as a machine, with diagnosable parts and problems that can be fixed so that the machine will run smoothly again. Even psyche becomes soulless.

Narcissism as a psychological condition is a natural product of a cosmology that separates everything into mechanical parts that make up the big machine. The narcissistic concept of self perceives of itself as a separate fragment, and does not operate out of a meaning that recognizes a deep, living connective tissue between all beings, human and nonhuman. Certain kinds of feeling are lost in this cosmology. If these feelings were in tact, the pain that the narcissist inflicts by plundering the earth's resources for purposes of self-interest, and the pain that the narcissist inflicts upon other humans by nonrelational thinking and behavior, would be felt as happening to the self as well as the other. But we do not even feel it. The mechanical meanings that seep into our biology shut down the feeling, and we become no more aware than a machine is aware of the impacts of our actions and behaviors. Can you blame someone who does not

feel? Good Dr. Jekyll is completely unaware of the horror Mr. Hyde keeps producing. He can't even sense it, is utterly disassociated from it.

How might we correct chemistry in the brain that creates such a disassociation? According to David Bohm (1985), the perception of new meanings constitutes a creative act—it alters our physical reality and the chemistry in the brain. “The situation changes physically as well as mentally. Therefore each perception of a new meaning by human beings actually changes the over-all reality in which we live and have our existence—sometimes in a far-reaching way. This implies that this reality is never complete” (p. 94). Reality is not a dead, objective thing—a machine—that we stand outside of and are subject, or victim, to. We make reality. We create it.

Brian Swimme (1995) illustrates this point in the following story from his beautiful series of lectures called *Canticle to the Cosmos*. He describes the effect that the choices we make have upon the very structure of our genes, creating the world that is then lived in. He uses the evolution of the horse as an example. The horse used to live in the forest. When the time arrived that a predator attacked the horse, it chose to flee instead of charge or fight. This moved the horse out onto the plains. Living on the plains, certain kinds of bones and other physical structures became more important. Thus the selection pressures over time produced the species we now know as horse. The bison, on the other hand, chose to charge. This produced other environments and genetic selections, moving that species in its unique development.

Swimme urges his fellow humans to recognize that we are, right now, every minute, similarly making choices that create ourselves and the world we live in. This meaning is hard to grasp. Our reality is not created for us, with *us* having to adjust to *it*; it is created by us, and we decide what it is going to be. The responsibility we carry is immense.

With the development of nuclear capabilities, we live at the brink of self-annihilation as a species. The human's attitude of entitlement and domination over the nonhuman world, our narcissism as a species, is causing mass extinctions of plants and animals on the planet at an extraordinarily alarming rate.<sup>6\*</sup> The dark end we have brought to so many species may soon include our own. We have reached a time in which for our own survival it is imperative that we awaken to our responsibility, and especially to the very real power we carry to reverse these trends. This calls for deep listening, a listening to the heart, and to the humanity that is yet alive in our deep core. I hear an ecstatic call within these words of Brian Swimme's (1995) delivered in his lecture:

How you choose your world is ultimately going to depend upon what you hear at the depths of things. Return to the source of our dreams. What do you hear? That is going to decide what world you choose.

When you make that decision, then you allow the universe to conspire with you in sculpting who you become. You are going to set up your own selection pressures.

The basic idea I'm trying to present here with this cosmology is that if we see ourselves as kin to everything alive — there's a basic world! Enter that world! See yourselves as bonded to every species. I'm saying that if there's a decision, if there is a commitment like this, then the world is the

---

<sup>6\*</sup> For information, see the website created and maintained by California Institute of Integral Studies professor David Ulansky: [massextinction.net](http://massextinction.net).

world of love, or the world of compassion, or the world of biological wisdom. That suddenly is the world that shapes you. You see, with every decision you make, you're going to get shaped. We don't know what we're going to give birth to. But we can choose the world in which we're going to work. Enter the world of love. Enter the world of wisdom. Absolutely everything you interact with is shaping you for that world. (Tape #7)

The continuation of our planetary and self-destruction is not necessary.

But a reversal of it calls the human to *work*, to work hard, to change our individual and collective course.

### *A Difficulty We Face*

Unfortunately, changing meanings is not an event that comes without strong resistance, from within and without. The Western way of life has become an addiction. Anyone who has ever struggled to overcome an addiction, or who has watched someone undergo the ordeal, knows the overwhelming level of effort and commitment involved: the focus, time, humiliation, ego dissolution, horrors, sweats, nightmares, terrors involved in surmounting such an obdurate problem. Many would prefer to die than do this work—either by self-destructing within the addiction or by ending the struggle by suicide. I believe collectively we have the same decisions to make—either we self-destruct as we run our species into extinction by continuing the addiction unabatedly, we commit suicide by blowing ourselves up, or we do the difficult work of recovery.

In his book *Thought As a System*, David Bohm (1994) explains that thoughts we think produce endorphins, which have a similar molecular structure to morphine. Morphine, as we know, covers up pain receptors so that we don't

feel the pain; and we know that morphine is a very addictive substance.

Thoughts that become comfortable, familiar or habitual can be exactly the same; they become physically addictive and then we can't give them up no matter how harmful they are. If the desired substance is taken away from an addict, anxiety, despair and panic are produced. So it can be when our familiar systems of thought are challenged. When new or different thoughts try to inform, affect, or open up old ones that have become comforting or habitual, endorphin levels in the brain drop and unpleasant or painful symptoms of withdrawal are experienced. Even an obviously harmful thought—for example one that tells a person that she is worthless, since her mommy always told her she was worthless—will become familiar and therefore addictive. If someone tries to convince her otherwise, the incoming, unfamiliar thought may feel as though something is terribly wrong. Endorphin levels drop producing the reflex to defend against the incoming ideas, as though they are enemies. The defense may occur automatically and unthinkingly, almost at the tacit level—or if a larger danger is felt, the defense might be very outwardly fierce. Bohm remarks that we bring the instincts of the jungle to the defense of our thinking. The terrible fear and the response to defend are neurophysiological, as well as intellectual and emotional.

These explanations help to understand the nature of fundamentalism, an increasingly rampant and dangerous social problem, one that may produce nuclear war. Fundamentalism is certainly not just the domain of religions. Any

closed system of thought is fundamentalist. Political, corporate, social, scientific, philosophical, personal—there are many forms of fundamentalism. Even the world-view produced by an individual ego can be a person's own private fundamentalist religion. When threatened, the challenge feels like a sacrilege and a danger—and a personal, righteous, holy war may ensue. A cult can be comprised of one, two, several, or thousands of individuals. It is a style of mentality, a closed system. As the decay of the Western worldview continues no matter how hard some try to patch it together, fundamentalism is on the rise—politically, in religions, in science, in sects of psychology or philosophy. Opening the heart and mind to contain great diversity, and the resulting disequilibrium, is frightening and too challenging for most.

The act of real *listening* becomes exceptionally difficult when internal defense systems become triggered. To listen may allow the invasion of new thoughts, new meanings that seriously challenge the old ones. Endorphin levels might drop. Anxiety may be produced. The panic that the addict feels during withdrawal may arise. And this experience feels like a danger and an evil. A shield is thrown up to block the new thinking. Fear may cause the endangered mind to be simply dismissive of the thinking being presented; or to continually interrupt, talk more, faster, louder; or to withdraw, close the conversation, walk away—anything to avoid the threat posed by listening. These behaviors are observable in personal, collective, and international arenas. Notice how little true listening happens in most social or personal discourse.

Listening seems like a passive activity, but truly it is not. Deep listening requires tremendous resilience, courage, determination, vision, and commitment; a willingness to go through the potential neurophysiological and emotional ordeal of having one's most cherished notions upset. The willingness and ability to deeply listen show strength of heart.

### *The Birth Canal of the Heart*

As I was in the earliest stages of conceiving of this dissertation I had the following dream:

I am building my new home, a very large home without a roof, open to the sky. The home is on an enormous piece of land that reminds me of the Serengeti plains in Africa. It expands much further than the eye can see. A woman is there explaining to me that I have inherited two tigers that live on the land. They are very virile and strong and juicy, she says. Then I see that one of the tigers, a white tiger with black stripes, is coming toward me. We lock eyes. As she gets closer I see that she is in the process of giving birth. The head of the baby is already out, coming out of her chest. I see that the birth canal is through the heart. The tiger heads straight toward me to help her, like a mid-wife, and she lies down at my feet. My youngest daughter and sister-in-law are with me, and they reach in and pull out the baby. While they take care of the mother, I bathe the baby and put it in some warm, soft pajamas. It looks like a human baby, but I am aware that it is a tiger. I am not confused by this. I have some ambivalent feelings going on however, in that my daughter and sister-in-law pulled the baby out and I'm not sure that this didn't interrupt the natural flow of the birth, that maybe the mother should have been allowed to push it out without their help, in her own timing. The other ambivalent feeling is that while I am cleaning and dressing and tenderly holding the newborn, I am thinking "Oh gosh, now this baby is bonding with me as its mother and will always have those maternal responses to me." I'm not sure this is best, but I have such overriding warmth and joy in my heart about the whole event.

There are images in this dream that I may be unpacking for the rest of my days.

The dream itself is one of the core experiences of my life so far. I am completely

in love with this tiger, with the fact that she asked me to help her give birth, with the baby, and with the image of the heart as a birth canal.

Certainly the dream suggests a fierceness about the energy of the heart. To enter the terrain of the heart is to open oneself to a powerful and wild instinctual nature. Yet in this dream the nature of the tiger was direct, she knew what she wanted, who she wanted and what she was doing; she was serene, maternal, and extremely powerful even while abandoned to her birthing task. There was absolutely no sense of danger.

As the Western person has moved away from the thinking of the heart into the thinking of the head, much of the instinctual power and energy represented by this tiger and her wild terrain has gone into the unconscious. The thought of the head, of light, of reason stopped integrating these other modes of thinking, being and perceiving—and has attempted to cage and domesticate this aspect of our nature just as we have done to the wild animals and the indigenous people on our continents. These parts of ourselves have become feared rather than valued, and for the most part are pushed so far away from our conscious life that we have chosen to forget very important aspects of who we are as humans. This has effected a loss of power, which places our psyches in a posture of fear and defensiveness rather than one of harmony, courage and strength. Our lack of self-understanding makes us essentially nervous and has become a serious problem.



As humans we tend to fight wars outside, but it is inside where the only true victory will occur. We have to find the way to put ourselves back together, to get the opposites in our own natures back into communication with one another. It is much, much easier to cut away, bomb or destroy someone else than it is to do this internal work. Giving birth to ourselves, our whole selves, will require awakening the ferocity and power of the tiger, and the opening of the heart.

*Christianity's Contribution to Our Psychic Split*

Many times I have puzzled over the evolution of the Christian story. Looking at its simple beginnings, the man Jesus seemed to be a person who defied religious authority and who loved everyone, not just the people considered righteous, pious, and holy. His power was in his utterly nonjudgmental love that dissolved social, religious, and gender barriers. People were drawn in masses to that kind of love, which disturbed the church authorities, who perceived him as a threat and had him slain.

How did we get from that basis to such a perfectionist, excessively judgmental, punishing, domineering, conquest oriented, and intolerant system of religion and thought? Why did the story have to evolve saying that the man Jesus never made an error, never had or fulfilled human appetites, never got irritable—then making him an impossible model, an unnatural standard that all persons must imitate or else be doomed? What could be more opposite to what this man was apparently about? Certainly great damage has been done to human

spiritual, psychological and cultural development by imagining the life of Jesus in such ways and imposing the example upon ourselves and others.

The ancient quest for an ideal of immortality, infallibility, and perfection in human nature and the idea that we need to be saved from our natural or whole selves surely led to the creation of such a story for our species to grapple with. And the entire species does have to grapple with the story to some degree. Even those who have never learned of Christianity know about the ideologies of the West that are infiltrating the world, and as such are confronted with its foundational myths.

*Understanding Nature in Human Nature*

The cross, or whatever other heavy burden the hero carries, is *himself*, or rather *the self*, his wholeness, which is both God and animal – not merely the empirical man, but the totality of his being, which is rooted in his animal nature and reaches out beyond the merely human towards the divine. His wholeness implies a tremendous tension of opposites paradoxically at one with themselves, as in the cross, their most perfect symbol.

-C. G. Jung

As the Christian story evolved, it has increasingly endeavored to take nature out of the human, and the human out of nature. The subsequent attempts to conquer nature on the planet—the destruction, exploitation, and efforts to control her, the ways that we in Western life styles encase and protect ourselves indoors, away from nature’s cycles, rhythms, and vicissitudes—describe how we have come tacitly to regard our own inner nature, nature within us, and attempt to hide from, control, and defy the truth about who we are. Humans are not

masters over nature; what hubris and foolishness has led us to consider ourselves to be so?<sup>7\*</sup> Nor is our rational and reasoning component superior to, or entitled to dominate, the instinctive and nonrational parts of who we are. Externally we are paying an extremely high price for the effects that this idea of domination has had upon the planet—eliminating peoples and species, upsetting the bio-equilibrium, poisoning and destroying the air, water, and soil necessary for survival. Internally we are similarly paying an exceedingly high price. The efforts to destroy and dominate, rather than to be in right relationship to our own natural selves is effecting a loss of joy, sanity, and health on every level—physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. Yet in the external as well as the internal situation, humans tend to plunder on and refuse to stop, rethink, and re-evaluate the direction in which we are headed. A radical reversal of direction is called for if we are to survive.

Of these problems, Carl Jung (2002) wrote:

The European . . . has a science of nature and knows astonishingly little of his own nature within him . . . . For the European, it is sheer poison to suppress his nature, which is warped enough as it is, and to make out of it a willing robot.

. . . . It is undeniably much more comfortable to live in a well-planned and hygienically equipped house, but this still does not answer the question of *who* is dwelling in this house and whether his soul rejoices in the same order and cleanliness as the house which ministers to his outer life. (p. 124)

. . . . The European . . . needs to return, not to Nature in the manner of Rousseau, but to his own nature. His task is to find the natural man again.

---

<sup>7\*</sup> I am reminded of the many depictions in Western art that portray Adam and Eve as huge figures, with the garden as mere backdrop; whereas Taoist art tends to show the human as a tiny speck in a massive land or seascape. Notions held by a culture about the human's place in the universe are revealed in such basic artistic styles.

Instead of this, there is nothing he likes better than systems and methods by which he can repress the natural man who is everywhere at cross purposes with him . . . (pp. 125-126).

. . . So far reason has failed lamentably, and the very thing that everybody wanted to avoid rolls on in ghastly progression. Man has achieved a wealth of useful gadgets, but, to offset that, he has torn open the abyss, and what will become of him now – where can he make a halt? . . . the abomination of desolation will grow to limitless dimensions. And who or what is it that causes all this? It is none other than harmless (!), ingenious, inventive, and sweetly reasonable human spirit who unfortunately is abysmally unconscious of the demonism that still clings to him. Worse, this spirit does everything to avoid looking himself in the face, and we all help him like mad. Only, heaven preserve us from psychology – *that* depravity might lead to self-knowledge! Rather let us have wars, for which somebody else is always to blame . . . . (p. 204)

Self-knowledge may possibly be the most difficult and exacting of our tasks as a species. We can go to the moon, create art and technologies that continually astonish, possibly even clone ourselves, but we will not know ourselves. Denial, control, and mastery of nature in us, rather than partnership with it, seems to be the long-standing effort—from the earliest religious and philosophical traditions through the present. Since, as a species, we are possibly driving our train into a self-annihilating wall, maybe it is time to re-evaluate the root of even some of these most ancient traditions. Something is not working; seriously not working. I believe it is in the indigenous mind to know how to partner *with* nature, internal and external nature; but this mind has been departed from, submerged, forgotten, and could be extinguished if we do not work to revive it soon.

The human body is made of the elements of nature. Scientists tell me that if all of the space between the elements of the atoms in my body were removed,

the matter that makes up my body would fit on the head of a pin. So, I am air. They tell me that 90% of my body is water. I am water. They tell me my physical body is made from the same material that used to make up stars. I am fire. And it is the fruits of the earth that nourish and keep alive this body. So I am earth. *I am* air, water, fire, and earth. I am nature.

As air I can be a breath of fresh air to you, or I can blow you away. As water I might moisten you, or flood and even drown you. As fire I might warm you or burn you. As earth I might nurture you or hit you like a rock. The civilization process will help me to manage these powers and effects to some degree, but ultimately I cannot control nature in me, or how nature in me impacts you, any more than I can control the weather. It is foolish to imagine that I can. I exhaust, diminish, and ultimately destroy myself trying.

If, as science tells us, every particle of matter is both particle and wave simultaneously—as particle we are bounded and separate, individual, but as wave we are at the same time continuous and connected to everything else. As such, we share consciousness with everything else, and can draw upon and awaken other forms of consciousness within our own. We can think like a rock, know our kinship with the river, hear what the plants are saying.

Native Americans, along with many other traditions, know how to draw animal qualities and strengths into their own natures when they are needed. This was a rather abstract concept to me until recently. At the time I was experiencing some personal challenges in which my own rights and needs were continually

not regarded. In the past, I had always had someone to help me, stand up for me, defend me when harm was coming my way—a parent, a husband, a community—but now I had no one close by. Trying to exercise a muscle in my psyche that could come out in my own defense, I found that it was quite atrophied. I barely even realized I had rights, and generally just rolled over and took demeaning treatment. When I did realize that I needed to do something about it, the most I knew how to do was be hurt, cry, or get mad, but I did not know how to defend myself.

Finally, and suddenly, the image of a rattlesnake occurred to me very powerfully. I remembered having learned that this snake wants peace and does not come out to hurt or challenge in a predatory way, but if its boundaries are crossed and it feels threatened, the snake is provoked to action. First it shakes its rattle as a polite warning not to come nearer. If the warning is heeded, no aggression will follow, and everyone goes separate ways unharmed. But if the warning is not heard or respected, the snake strikes.

As I reached a juncture in my own development, I felt I was being presented with this strong image as a model to emulate. No living guide had ever taught this to me, but I seemed to know that I should call upon the rattlesnake to help me activate the wisdom and power in its nature. Like the rattlesnake, I do not want to harm and do not go out looking to hurt; but if harm is coming my way, I will arouse and create an energy that resembles the shake of a rattle. This is to politely warn that I do not want to use aggression, but I

definitely will if it becomes necessary in order to protect myself. My challenge in awakening this power was to commit myself to *meaning* it. I will not continue to allow myself to be harmed. I *will* strike rather than be harmed.<sup>8\*</sup> For me, as an enculturated woman and indoctrinated Christian, this was a hard strength to find, but I felt the energy of the rattlesnake awakening it within me. Every such attitude has a timing and level for conscious application.

Edward Edinger is quoted as saying, in private conversation with Jungian analyst Don Sloggy, that “the sacred urge to realize the self is located in the aggressive instincts.” Sloggy remarks that the aggression is in support of the self-realizing, not in support of greed, power, or ego concerns. “To locate your own aggressive instincts,” he said, “is fundamentally important and necessary. The Self cannot fully individuate without the brute aggressive instincts being present.”

Through the experience with the rattlesnake, I came to understand in a much less abstract way the remarkable variety of strengths and skills that can be called upon from non-human into human capacity and awareness. The unity and diversity of shared consciousness is a profound reality almost entirely overlooked and ignored in our anthropocentric narcissism and autism. David Abram (1996) eloquently states that “we are human only in contact, and

---

<sup>8\*</sup> To clarify, I do not mean a strike that produces physical harm, but like the snake, a strike with the tongue. I will say what I see. Most persons prefer a physical strike to one that might expose any portion of their shadows. I want to avoid a behavior that is experienced by another as such violence, but will do so if it is necessary to protect myself from further harmful aggression.

conviviality, with what is not human” (p. ix). Otherwise we experience a grave loss of insight, aptitude, and perspective.

In order to develop a capacity for awakening and integrating skills and powers available to us from other-than-human forms of consciousness, the task may be first to understand more fully who we are as humans, to face and acknowledge our specific nature. I don't want to *be* the bear or the snake, I want to be who I am, a human, utilizing these qualities with consciousness and moral responsibility. But who am I as human? Obviously, I have begun to realize, I am not who an overly anthropocentric, narcissistic, autistic, patriarchal, disembodied, whitewashed, brainwashed system of thought and culture has taught me to believe that I am.

The journey to recover human self-understanding will require, I believe, the courage to overcome deep personal and cultural denial, especially about the shadowed aspects of human nature. The inertia in our tendency to project the problems of humanity outside of the self will have to be interrupted. But it is frighteningly difficult work.

I was recently stirred to some awakening in this regard when I heard a biologist note that animals that are prey generally have eyes on the side of their heads, which helps them to see in more directions at once and therefore protect themselves. Animals who are predators have eyes on the front of their heads. They can focus better on what they are after and move in on it. My eyes are on



the front of my head. Do I deny my own nature if I say I am not a predator? Certainly it is easy to see that our *species* is predatory, but me? I? Myself?

Let me focus a moment upon the species. It is inarguable that human activities and life-styles prey upon the nonhuman and human worlds constantly. Preying is not only a means of survival, but for humans it is also a sport and a fascination. Historically in such places as the coliseum in Rome, the lust for witnessing humans being preyed upon was indulged and celebrated. Today snipers and serial killers have a kind of celebrity status. We are horrified but truly fascinated by what they reflect to us about our own natures, which we cannot figure out how to own and integrate. Violent movies continue to be made because the public demand for them is so phenomenally high. Humans are compelled in masses to look into these mirrors without much clue of what to do with the reflection.

I remember the horror I experienced many years ago when, in my good Christian mindset, I read the classic *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (Forbush, 1967). The first hundred or so pages provide account after moving account of individuals who gave up their lives rather than denounce their faith in a religion that professed simple love, acceptance, and kindness toward all others. Almost unimaginable horrors were unleashed upon these people in an effort to stomp out the growing number who defied the power of religious authorities and their doctrines. Bravely the martyrs faced the violence and offered their lives in hopes that a message of tolerance, forgiveness and love might prevail over what had

become a strict, condemning, elitist, punishing, and intractably rigid religious establishment.

It was more than my mind could bear when not too far into the story the history started to shift and, unapologetically in this account, the persecuted became the self-righteous persecutors. The stories turned into tales of conquest, forcible conversion, and violent suppression of opposition, enacted by the same persons who had previously endured the tortures and *knew* that pain and the injustice of it. I had to put the book down. I can't tell you how it ends.

Jung (1961/1989) writes of visions he had while visiting the Pueblo Indians. I find it interesting to note that he reports that these images occurred when he fell into a long meditation immediately after being told that the white man thinks with his head, whereas the Indians think in the heart. He says:

For the first time in my life, so it seemed to me, someone had drawn for me a picture of the real white man. It was as though until now I had seen nothing but the sentimental, prettified color prints. This Indian had struck our vulnerable spot, unveiled a truth to which we are blind. I felt rising within me a shapeless mist something unknown and yet deeply familiar. And out of this mist, image upon image detached itself: first Roman legions smashing into the cities of Gaul, and the keenly incised features of Julius Casesar, Scipio Africanus, and Pompey. I saw the Roman eagle on the North Sea and on the banks of the White Nile. Then I saw St. Augustine transmitting the Christian creed to the Britons on the tips of Roman lances, and Charlemagne's most glorious forced conversions of the heathen; then the pillaging and murdering bands of the Crusading armies. With a secret stab I realized the hollowness of that old romanticism about the Crusades. Then followed Columbus, Cortes, and the other conquistadors who with fire, sword, torture, and Christianity came down upon even these remote pueblos dreaming peacefully in the Sun, their Father. I saw, too, the peoples of the Pacific islands decimated by firewater, syphilis, and scarlet fever carried in the clothes the missionaries forced on them.

It was enough. What we from our point of view call colonization, missions to the heathen, spread of civilization, etc., has another face – the face of a bird of prey seeking with cruel intentness for distant quarry – a face worthy of a race of pirates and highwaymen. All the eagles and other predatory creatures that adorn our coats of arms seem to me apt psychological representatives of our true nature. (pp. 248, 249)

It is difficult to know what to do with such revelations about who we are as humans. The temptation is strong to just go with the long-standing tradition of projecting the problem outside of oneself. *They* are predatory, but not I. Evil is out there, but not in here. It is extraordinarily difficult to recognize evil inside.

Analyst Don Sloggy remarks that the task of the human is to carry the aggressive and predatory instincts consciously, and ultimately in service to the highest value. If we do not become conscious of them, they are played out destructively.

Part of the problem may be that often evil or predatory activities are carried out by a network, a collective body, of generally well meaning, well intentioned individuals—such as social climbers, religious persons, business persons or politicians. Few, if any, humans can honestly consider themselves as separate from some such network. When someone or something begins to feel threatening to the momentum or vested interests of these groups, in order to suppress the hazard, acts of prejudice and emotional, psychological, or even physical abuse may be acted out against the outside parties without a specific person within the group needing to take responsibility. The injured parties know that the hurt they experience is real and is painful all the way to the bone. Yet in

most cases the individuals involved in the hurting see themselves just like the good Dr. Jekyll sees himself—as good, intelligent, mindful, kind, harmless, righteous people. How do we fill in the gap? Horrendous hurting is taking place, but no one specifically owns up to being a hurter. No one consciously intends to be a hurter. If inquiry is made, the response will be along the lines of a scriptural or cultural justification, denial, and blame upon circumstances outside the individual's control. The injury is very real, but no one feels responsible.

The microscope needs to isolate the cell. The individual needs to find his particular responsibility in this system, to recognize his own nature and capacity for harm and evil. If it is outside of me, then it is also inside of me. How do I digest and reflect upon my personal predatory nature? To realize fully that I harm? I am responsible. If I begin to look honestly, it is not that hard to find. Most of the harm I do is unintended, even unavoidable, but that does not make it one bit less painful to the persons or life systems that I hurt. Much of the harm I do is acted out in reactionary defense, is thought to be necessary and is justified in my mind. Some is careless, thoughtless, unconcerned. Some is mean, vengeful, and vicious.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1982) offers his insight in the following poem:

At first a childhood, limitless and free  
of any goals. Ah sweet unconsciousness.  
Then sudden terror, schoolrooms, slavery,  
the plunge into temptation and deep loss.

Defiance. The child bent becomes the bender,  
inflicts on others what he once went through.  
Loved, feared, rescuer, wrestler, victor,

he takes his vengeance, blow by blow.

And now in vast, cold, empty space, alone.  
Yet hidden deep within the grown-up heart,  
a longing for the first world, the ancient one...

Then, from His place of ambush, God leapt out.  
(p. 259)

“The child bent becomes the bender.” The betrayed becomes the betrayer. The used becomes the user. The criticized becomes the critic. The dominated dominates another. The pattern is relentless, self-perpetuating and unconsciously acted out. But, as Jung (1958/1991) points out, “Before the bar of nature and fate, unconsciousness is never accepted as an excuse; on the contrary there are very severe penalties for it. Hence all unconscious nature longs for the light of consciousness while frantically struggling against it at the same time.” (p. 98)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is easy to identify with a model such as Job, the pious, righteous victim of violence. It is very, very difficult to identify with Yahweh, a predatory force of mercilessness and vengeance. Denial about this aspect of human nature is implacable, and has become a sophisticated art form, a highly advanced skill.

As a nation and as a people, it is hard to muster the courage, perspective and humility to look squarely in the face of and take responsibility for tragic consequences and unfathomable suffering that predatory global activities have caused to peoples, animals, and biosystems. Though many of these actions have been due to unmitigated personal or corporate greed, most have been thought to

be rendered for the cause of good, the advance of civilization, in order to progress and further the elite style of life enjoyed by only the small percentage of people on the planet who continue to feel entitled to that life. It is hard to back down, to say we have made and persist in making terrible mistakes, and to imagine the radically different life that will certainly be necessitated by a change of course.

As previously emphasized, it is absurd to believe that such reflection will take place at a collective level before we as individuals, one by one, muster the courage, perspective, and humility to look squarely in the face of and take responsibility for the tragic consequences of *personal* activities that have caused severe suffering to the people in our own sphere of influence, to animals, and to biosystems. There seems to be an observably enormous psychological investment in perceiving of oneself as harmless and good; and, when conflict arises, in being the victim but never the perpetrator. If being a perpetrator is acknowledged, then a whole system of excuses, justifications, and explanations kick in. These prevent the remorse and humility needed before real change will take place.

Why is it so hard to say "I got it wrong"? "I didn't know then what I know now." "I made a mistake." "I was offensive." "I acted badly." "That was a crime against you." "I apologize." Even among very sophisticated, psychologically well-trained, confident, and intelligent people, such admissions are very hard to find. Denial and justifications are the order of the day. I honestly believe that in many or most cases it is not for lack of willingness to self-reflect, but because

personal responsibility is very difficult to discern and discover. Learned systems of denial complicate the effort. Brain chemistry obfuscates the thinking.

Unconscious identification with an ego constructed to emulate an infallible model of god-like perfection that never makes mistakes or does anything wrong disallows contradictory information.

This is not a small problem that we face. It is huge. Intractable. Violent. People will instinctively kill, themselves and each other, rather than confront the opposites within their own natures. Schism after schism in personal and collective histories are recorded as people cannot conceive of how to do the work of holding together, rather than splitting apart, these opposites.

*A Schism in the Human Heart*

In *Aion* (1959/1978) Jung writes:

The present age must come to terms drastically with the facts as they are, with the absolute opposition that is not only tearing the world asunder politically but has planted a schism in the human heart. We need to find our way back to the original, living spirit which, because of its ambivalence, is also a mediator and uniter of opposites, an idea that preoccupied the alchemists for many centuries. (p. 86)

I find potency in every word of this statement. Jung warns that our coming to terms with the facts as they are is a must, and will be drastic. The schism between the split opposites has affected us all the way into the human heart. We need to find our way back to origins, there to encounter the inherent ambivalence that we have avoided at too high a cost. Finding our way back to that original, living spirit is the hope for re-uniting the opposites, which must

occur if we are to regain balance, health and wholeness—individually, collectively, and as a unified planetary system. It is my belief that the way back is through the heart.

“Shatter my heart to make room for an infinite love,” says the Sufi poet, Rumi. For some strange reason I fell in love with this prayer statement, and a friend had it drawn in artistic calligraphy to give to me as a gift. The gift hangs upon my wall. I keep it there to remind myself to be careful what you pray for, and to remember that I actually requested the shattering after shattering that has occurred to my heart over the last decade. Just when I think it can’t break any more, it is broken some more. Maybe there is no end to it. But maybe something in me desired this because I knew the shattering to be necessary before the original spirit could more fully emerge into consciousness. Maybe what I had come to hold in my heart obscured rather than revealed that spirit.

The prayer asks for this shattering to make room in the heart. Before the shatterings began, my heart felt smaller. Expanding into the room that was created, however, has been an arduous process. Previously something was either good or it was bad, but not both, equally, at once. Most of life’s questions seemed to ask for a “yes” or a “no” response; but both couldn’t be lived at the same time. You either stay or you go, but not both. You either love or hate, but not both concurrently and vividly. You are forgiving or angry, but not both at the same time. Previously in my self-reflections, at any given moment I could see myself as patient or impatient, kind or mean, happy or sad—but not all of it, all at once, all



intensely, with no opposing thought or emotion being more dimly felt or expressed than the other. The shattering of the heart unleashes so much energy. Everything is in the heart. All at once. Not just what we consider “good” stuff, but everything.

To live into this kind of ambivalence is paralyzing and difficult work. Move. Stay still. Act. Wait. Abandon. Restraint. Dionysus. Buddha. Even the marvelous occurrences of astonishing synchronicities would urge me to think or act in one direction and then the next day or moment in its opposite. Rather than being a relief from confusion, they compounded it. I might have as many as 16 psychologically and emotionally demanding dichotomies going on at any given moment in any given day, with conflicting value systems asking opposite things of me all at the same time. I could barely breathe, day or night. There was an explosion of so much unconscious material, all of it charged with so much potency and insistence, that survival seemed questionable. Giving the needed attention to every opposite thing all at once was almost unendurably demanding and exhausting.

Ultimately I came to understand that all of this was creating space in me, room in my heart. Every point of view had its time, its validity and its value. None needed to cancel the other out. Each could exist at its own level, in its own timing, for its own purpose. Jung (1961/1989) writes:

For self-knowledge – in the total meaning of the word – is not a one-sided intellectual pastime but a journey through the four continents, where one is exposed to all the dangers of land, sea, air, and fire. Any total act of

recognition worth of the name embraces the four – or 360! – aspects of existence. Nothing may be “disregarded.” (p. 214)

I have come to believe that Attention Deficit Disorder is a gift trying to be born rather than a problem to be solved. What if we actually can pay attention to everything all at once? The universe is so multi-faceted and many layered, and all of these levels intermingle and interplay all of the time. To narrow our focus to just one layer, one set of meanings, one priority at a time may be unnatural, counter to our deepest nature, making us so much narrower and smaller than we are meant to be.

The ambivalence of nature, the tension of the opposites, is in every single motion we make; there is a both-sidedness to whatever we do. Even the most kind, generous, healing act I can perform will have a shadow—it may create a dependency, an expectation, a denial of other possibilities, or have any number of negative consequences. No matter how hard I try to have a “good” effect, I will create a “bad” effect at the same time. The best I can do is strive for the good, and work to be conscious of, admit and atone for the bad.

I recall a dream of many years ago in which a woman from Canada approached me, seeming to idealize me in some way, saying, “Divine Mother told me that you have the blue thunder in the heart!” I was touched by her admiration, but laughed exhaustedly and said to her, “Well, some people like it and some don’t.” As a woman who wants too desperately to be loved, it has been hard to come to terms with the “thunder” in my own nature, and to experience

how acutely some people like it and some don't. I have had to learn the hard way respectfully to give people the freedom to just not like me, to have their own well-reasoned preferences, without blaming myself or pestering them to change their minds. This is a term of life that probably everyone has to face to some degree.

The human problem of the tendency to idealize seems to be a root cause when schisms happen—whether it is a person being idealized, a philosophy, a system of religion, or any organization of thought and effort. To idealize already splits off admission and acceptance of the problematic aspects, the inherent ambivalence in the nature of anything that exists. When idealizing happens, the problems are projected outward, away from the idealized object onto something or someone else. They are considered to be externally created rather than internal to the individual or philosophy. Adherents doing the idealizing become personally identified with the loved person or idea, and cannot bear to see the problems, as that feels like a negation of their own selves. The threat of it is experienced as demeaning and sometimes annihilating. Therefore as problems naturally accumulate, more and more is cast onto the other by projection, and into the unconscious. This backed up energy builds into something like a demonic force. Its vengeance is nature herself, but comes through persons or situations that will carry it. Intolerable antipathies, hatreds, and sometimes wars and violence ensue. Yahweh is constellated and Job works to deal with the onslaught, unconscious of his own part in creating the horrors.

When any schism takes place, I believe the event of something or someone being too idealized will be found at the root of the problem. The opposites contained there could or would not be held together by the individuals who split from each other. Even schisms in personal relationships often occur due to the fact that one or more of the egos involved has been too idealized, not allowing for the both-sidedness of human nature—holding to the notion of some ideal of perfection in oneself, unforgiving of imperfection in the other. In all of these situations, deciding to go separate ways is one thing, but the pain of great aversion or violence may be avoidable if more consciousness is brought to bear upon the problem of idealization, as it denies the unavoidable ambivalence in the nature of that which has been idealized. And, if this consciousness could be reached, the split may not need to occur.

James Hillman (1975) writes that schisms occur so that the multiplicity of the psyche can be realized. The divisions transpire to divide things up, reminding us of how complex is totality. A monistic environment or temperament will inevitably move toward schism, because psychic structure is polycentric. But if this reality were already realized, the pain of schisms would not be necessary. "Schism," he writes, "seems hardly possible in a polycentric universe" (p. 93).

Hillman (1981) also notes that the impassable wall down the center of the heart, the heart divided against itself, makes it necessary that the contents of the heart must circulate through the entire body in order for the blood to reach the

other side of the heart. The heart's "left and right chambers, though side by side, are most remote to each other, without communication" (p. 24). The blood's long journey through all of the body to travel from one side to reach the other creates the movement of the heart's energy into every cell. Thus in some sense, we become "all heart" (p. 72).

The heart is not a monism, but is multiple and polycentric. Even though the apparent illusion suggests that the heart is split, in actuality it contains, values, loves, invigorates, and nourishes everything, rather than splitting off anything.

The troubles in the brain chemistry that cause us to split away persons, ideas, or things that threaten the thought systems of the head will be eased if we can move the thinking operation from the head to the heart, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. This is not just an imaginal notion. In recent years, neuroscientists have discovered that there is what they call a "brain in the heart" (Childre & Martin, 1999, p. 10). There are cells in the heart that are just like those in the brain, and the heart has its own thinking and nervous system distinct from that of the head. There is a two-way communication system between the heart and the brain.

Joseph Chilton Pearce (2002) writes about the brain in the heart, noting that the heart's intelligence is distinct from that of cerebral intellect. "The heart's intelligence is not verbal or linear or digital, as is the intellect in our head, but rather is a holistic capability that responds in the interest of well-being and

continuity . . . . Intellect, however can function independently from the heart – that is, without intelligence—and can take over the circuitry and block our heart’s more subtle signals.” (pp. 66-67) His research illuminates the different areas of the human brain and their functions, describing the reflexes for defensiveness in thought, which obstruct and prohibit the thought of the heart from partnering with that of the head. Conscious effort must be made to make this communication and alliance possible.

According to Pearce (2002), cultural and religious dictates interrupt the dynamic interaction between the head brain and the heart brain, which would allow an evolution out of the current crises and endless cycles of violence, hate, and hurt. Biologically, he believes, we are *made* to transcend this, but to do so requires a willing break with culture. Picking up that cross, as he puts it, “shifts us out of hindbrain survival instincts and opens us to the higher frequencies of love, forgiveness, and trust. Intellect will open to heart and move for the well-being of all life” (p. 255).

### *Tiger in the Heart*

The creature in my dream who was giving birth through the heart was a tiger. This animal certainly suggests the courage and passionate energy necessary in order to live from the heart—but so would a lion, or a number of other animals. Why did my psyche present the specific dream image of a tiger? Curious about the difference between lion and tiger, I looked up their symbology. J. C. Cooper (1978) says that the symbol of the tiger is “ambivalent as both solar and lunar,

creator and destroyer" (p. 172). Interestingly, just after the tiger was born in my dream a struggle began with ambivalent feelings about various details of what had just taken place. Cooper continues, "[Tiger] can also be a manifestation of the Earth Mother" (p. 172). The dream's setting on the open plains certainly corresponds to this aspect of the image.

James Hillman further amplifies tiger in his book *Dream Animals* (1997). He writes that "Tigers are striped with contraries: orange and black, white and black. As different as day and night." (p. 59) Further, he says:

Whereas the lion can stand in for the king of Judah, for the crusading Christian king, for Christ's disciple Mark and other saints, even for Christ, the tiger seems contrary to that entire noble tradition. As William Blake wrote so famously in his poem "The Tyger": "In what furnace was thy brain?" "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" Blake put that tiger "in the forests of the night," implying that it brings darkness with it. So, the tiger carries our cultural shadow – sinister, double-colored, perhaps the duplicitous representative of the "other side." (p. 60)

The tiger dream occurred in the middle of a nightmarish period of confrontation with the shadow, with the "other side" of myself and of persons very close to me, persons I loved completely, with a whole heart. I could no more stop loving the persons whose very dark faces were hurting me than I could stop breathing. I compassionately understood and was horrified by their behaviors, each with equal intensity. I compassionately understood and was horrified by my own responses equally also. I fiercely loved and fiercely hated both at the same time. Unfortunately those who experienced the hate could not then trust the love. But I knew the absolute truth of both and could not deny myself either. I did not

know if I could be considered sane with the intensity of so many opposites exploding in my psyche all at the same time.

Hillman (1997) refers to the main character, Dr. Abbey, in Michael Ventura's novel *The Zoo Where You're Fed to God*, remarking that when he falls apart:

It is to the tiger's enclosure that he goes, the tiger who calls him, the tiger's eyes he looks into, the tiger who watches over his madness, his sanity, and the strange mysteries of passion and tenderness. It could not have been a lion because Dr. Abbey is undergoing a soul initiation, called in our culture "a breakdown" (p. 62).

Certainly what I endured was a very serious breakdown, yet the image of this tiger offered the perspective that it was also a birth. A human baby/tiger baby was born, and the birth canal was through the heart. The physical organ of my heart, throughout the long ordeal of the breakdown, hurt at times almost unendurably. I wished constantly that I had some knowledge of what kind of mud packs, something of wet earthy substances I could place over the area of the heart. Only wet earth seemed like it could take away the sharpness of the heart pain.

Though I never did discover such a remedy, it has been contact with earth that has provided healing energies that allowed me to breathe, endure, and persist. Just as in the dream my new home had no roof, I began sleeping outdoors, and when I did felt that I was a newborn safe at home in her cradle, loved and watched over by mother. All the elements of earth and sky profoundly soothed me. This love was unquestionably unconditional. It did not judge me, or



withhold love for bad behavior. It would not abandon me. It could be relied upon without fail. This was a love that is richly diverse, never-endingly mysterious and always available. My smaller heart, which had only really known love for humans, when shattered finally had room to experience this infinite love, as Rumi's prayer promised.

The question arises—can this kind of love be contained and expressed through the human heart? Can love be so unconditionally available among humans toward each other, toward themselves and for the rest of life? That which we now call love seems to be provisional, seems to end, seems not inclined to embrace and express the full range of nature in the subject or object of love. To keep this love intact, a splitting off and denial of much of who we are seems to be necessary. If that effort fails, schisms in relationships take place, or the love moves into a state of numbed-out tolerance, a trial of endurance. Can a relationship survive a major confrontation with shadow? Can an individual survive it? Maybe not until the heart is opened to a love that will hold all opposites together within it—a love so inclusive that not one organism, anywhere, is left out.

Humanity has done much in these last centuries to make light and reason conscious. Now it behooves us to make the darkness conscious, to stop the endless denial, splitting, and projecting—and figure out how to maintain love in the face of the horrors in the darkness of who we are, even as we work to

transform, transcend, and constantly atone for it. This will require a new understanding of what love is.

Sitting in my home on a recent afternoon, my thoughts drifted toward my daughter at school, who was taking her semester finals. As I was reviewing in my head her after-school plans and deciding what to cook for dinner, I moved my body. I then had a physical sensation like nothing I have ever in my life experienced. It was as though every cell in my body were a portal into an infinite abyss containing unfathomable voltages of high energy. I felt that I could detonate, like a bomb; not a bursting into flames, but something more like a nuclear explosion. I had a feeling similar to that which occurs when an accident almost happens, but doesn't—I felt like I had almost exploded. I was catching my breath when it occurred to me that this felt energy is the force of love contained like nuclear power at the atomic level of my being. Just thinking on my daughter produced this almost annihilating, terrifying sensation. Realizing this, my thoughts drifted to my older daughter and the sudden, frightening sensation repeated itself. I sat very still for a while. This power is locked into my body, my physical matter. It is not spirit, but body that contains it.

I had once had a vision of the big bang at the origins of our universe, and sensed that all of life is a modulating unfolding of that huge power source. Since we could never survive looking straight into the source of creation, it gently reveals itself through the unfolding universe of stars, colors, mountains, waters, music, animals, humans, plants, the full variety of things created. This experience

with love reminded me of that vision. Since we could not survive the full confrontation with love's power, it gets unfolded through daily events of interacting and caring for one another—lunch, laundry, recreation, conversation, homework. This is the gradual, more tolerable experience of love's energy. I had never begun to understand love until that moment. The sentimental feeling we call love is not even a shadow of what love is. Love is an astonishing, incomprehensible power locked into every atom of creation, and is the stuff between them that holds it all together.

As I have experienced schism after schism in my human relationships, my heart has cried out to an apparently deaf universe, "What about the love?" There is all of this hate and hurt, yes! But what about the love? Is it not more powerful and more real? Does it not overwhelm and put to shame these transient details of conflict that will be gone like so much detritus tomorrow? Why is everyone in the kingdom asleep, while love cannot make it through these briars?

In our age of luxury and convenience, we have gotten weak and forgotten the rewards of endurance and hardship. Love is not a soft, feel-good kind of experience, though it certainly has those moments. As Rumi (1993) writes:

The way of love is not  
a subtle argument.

The door there  
is devastation. (p. 13)

Rainer Maria Rilke (1975) concurs, saying:

The demands which the difficult work of love makes upon our development are more than life-size, and as beginners we are not up to

them. But if we nevertheless hold out and take this love upon us as burden and apprenticeship, instead of losing ourselves in all the light and frivolous play, behind which people have hidden from the most earnest earnestness of their existence – then a little progress and an alleviation will perhaps be perceptible to those who come long after us; that would be much. (p. 33)

Jung once said that people need churches to protect them from God. I believe that similarly psychologists need psychology to protect them from the psyche. And people need carefully defined roles in relationships that will protect them from love. The raw power of God, psyche, and love are more than can be endured until the heart is so wide open that all experience can be contained within it and fear is barely a memory.

As humans, I believe we are just as guilty of projecting love and happiness outside of ourselves as we are of projecting evil and darkness. God is love, but not I. They are happy, but not I. Just as we look on the screen of the violent movies and see the evil as outside of ourselves, so do we look on the screen of the stories of love and long for, but never fully realize love in our lives. Now I begin to understand why. We have barely begun to understand what love is. It is a nuclear capability, and an utter devastation of the small person we have been taught to believe that we are. Even as we long for love, we avoid it like we avoid the plague. We have not yet figured out how to fully let it in, or fully give it. It is an immeasurable, uncontrollable power.

It will be a daunting task to begin to make love conscious, and integrate it as a personal potential and responsibility. Can we love enough to allow the full

range of our humanity to emerge, without hiding big parts of it in cultural and religious shadows? Can we relinquish the illusion of domination and control imagined through the thinking of the head, and face the wildly fierce terrain of the heart with courage and confidence? The consequences of long avoidance of this work have brought us to a dangerous precipice.

Love me as I am, all of me.  
 Don't hide. Allow me to see and love you as you are, all of you.  
 I have darkness and will fail as often as I succeed.  
 I acknowledge as much for you.  
 Mistakes are every day occurrences. We can strive to forgive.  
 Even God is still becoming.  
 And the very laws of the universe are changing.  
 There is space in the heart for all of it.  
 I look to walk the way of the heart.

The way of the heart walks with feet on the earth and stays close to her. The head will lie, but the heart will not. The head gets lost, but the heart knows its way. The head can wander into moral ineptitude, but the heart cannot. The head projects, but the heart contains. The head condescends, but the heart equalizes. The head is the servant, and the heart is master.

The birth of the thinking of the heart is a phenomenal challenge to the status quo, to the structures of individual and collective physical and psychological life. So it is, and so it will be until enough individuals see the wisdom, survive the suffering, and work out the changes that will inevitably occur as the brain in the head becomes coordinated with that of the heart. I think it will be a new era for us all.



## Chapter 4 The Language of Ritual

To the extent that the bold generalization [“we have had 100 years of psychotherapy and the world is getting worse”] is true, one major reason, I believe is that the forms of therapy that [James Hillman] was referring to were not and are not experientially intense and profound enough to mediate the deep psychological transformation that a society or civilization would need to become better, compared with, for example, the power and transformative effect that take place in indigenous rites of passage. It is very difficult for talking therapies to sufficiently mediate the depth of psycho-physical, spiritual, cellular transformation that can provide a way for an entire culture, as well as for an individual, to move into a radically different mode of existence. A death and a re-birth are required, and that is precisely what those initiatory transformations of indigenous cultures and of ancient mystery religions did mediate.

-Richard Tarnas

Pre-civilized cultures all over the world are known to use regular and intentional performance of ritual as part of daily life. Not only is each major life transition mediated by a powerful ritual, but day-to-day responsibilities, activities, and relationships are sustained by symbolic performances that invoke the assistance of unseen powers and presences. A larger reality than that perceived through our common senses is continually acknowledged, connected to, and communicated with through ritual processes.

Some years ago I had a very memorable dream:

I am alone near some trees by a lake. I have a concern (I do not remember specifically what the concern is when I awaken) and I decide to do a ritual on behalf of this problem. I dream up an idea for it, and perform a small ritual by the lake. While still in the process, I look up and see an enormous piece of material (the size of a small island) falling through the sky, heading for ground. I think it is from outside of this planetary system. It lands in the lake, bobs a few times, and then turns upside down. I know that this material could be a big blessing for our planet, but that somehow its powers will be mitigated very shortly if it

stays upside down in the lake; maybe the water will destroy its properties. Suddenly a huge hand (the size of a multi-storied building) bursts up out of the lake and turns the material over so that it is right side up. I am in awe. The material starts to stabilize, but then flips upside down again. The hand again rises out of the lake to correct it. It flips over again, and the hand corrects it. This happens three times until finally the material is secured in the right position. Its potency is preserved and is now available. I feel an enormous sense of relief. Then I realize that this astounding intervention was a result of the little ritual I had just performed. I hadn't even consciously known why the ritual would be needed, but having followed the impulse to perform it, its energy was then available to activate this help. I feel wonder and respect for the colossal power of a simple ritual rightly performed.

In the decade or so since the event of this dream, I have learned and experienced very much about ritual, and its creative use has become a way of life for me. Though I cannot often see its effects as I did in the dream, I sense that not only my life but also the larger life of the planet is positively affected by simple, sincere ritual practice. And I believe that departure from the use of ritual has produced tragic results individually and collectively the world over.

This chapter will not be a formal study of ritual as it is used and thought about in various religions and cultures, as there are marvelous resources already available for such a study. Rather, in the pages that follow I will attempt a heuristic description of my own journey of discovery. I have realized ritual to be a language spoken by the universe, a language that can be learned and utilized in order to engage in creative dialogue with great energies and intelligences.

Passage through a birth canal to enter life on this earth; nourishment offered by the breast; seeds popping through the ground and growing into food, wood and shade; daylight and starlight; seasons and weather patterns; sexual



urges and orgasms—all of these are rituals we experience, and a language that speaks deeply, eloquently, and profoundly to us. If, as humans, we do not understand this as a language that we are called upon to gain knowledge of and learn to awarely and responsibly speak in response, that which is spoken to us in these ways can seem like one big monologue, a never-ending harangue over which we have no impact, no power to effect. Until the language of ritual is recovered, it feels on some level as though we are being spoken to constantly, but have not yet understood that we have the power to speak in response and thereby effectively and creatively shape our life and the world.

Just as words are symbols that signify realities far greater than themselves, and their use communicates and creates worlds, so are gestures performed in ritual symbols that signify, communicate, and create realities. And just as a person would have to learn Chinese in order to be influenced by or make use of the language, so must the language of ritual be learned. Tragically, for modern humans, ritual seems to be a forgotten language. Its tremendous power to inform, influence and create lays largely dormant. We are being communicated to constantly, but we don't understand any more than I understand Chinese. Lack of training in the language has kept us out of touch with tremendous power. But maybe if we come to realize what has been lost and begin to pay careful attention, just as a child learns a language by watching and listening, so might we recover the language of ritual.

*I Am Spoken To*

An opportunity presented itself to travel to Africa with a small group of people in the summer of 1997, and I felt overwhelmingly compelled to respond. Deep within I was experiencing a hunger, maybe better described as a starvation, which I sensed could possibly be addressed in Africa. The sensations I was feeling that drew me to make this journey didn't have words then, and I am challenged to find words for them now. A cellular level starvation. Or dehydration. I wanted to go deep into Africa. Deep. Into. Africa. Bury myself in her. Marinate. Saturate. I was experiencing a numbing unspoken desperation. This was not a casual trip. The closer I got to her heart, the more anxious I became for her. I was shaken to the bone. This was about survival. But still there were no words. There were only silent but visceral sensations.

On the way there, we had two overnight flights. I do not sleep on airplanes. Nor could I sleep once we got there. It was all too much, too stimulating at a profound level. Our third day in Kenya, we were taken in small numbers for 5-day stays in tiny rural villages. The people of these villages had never seen white people, never known plumbing, electricity, or a single modern amenity. They live in huts. They work the land. Carry water. Chop wood. Cook in iron pots food they grow themselves, over the fires they build with the wood they chop and in the water they carry from the river. If they are fortunate, they have a goat or a cow for milk.

In my life I have never known such warm, generous, enthusiastic hospitality. The heart energy of these people came streaming through the pores of their glowing skin, broad smiles, and sparkling black eyes. They wanted to touch my white skin and blond hair, and touch they did. I was crushed by a curious love—pure, fresh, clean, unedited, unembarrassed, without any guile at all. Books could be written about these 5 days—an endless unpacking of simple impressions, images, feelings, perspectives.

Just as I arrived in the village, the *moment* I arrived, a tooth that had been worked on before I left began to rage with pain. The dentist had said that maybe it would need a root canal, but we would wait and see. At this moment, in this place, the tooth decided to let me know that a root canal was necessary. Anyone who has ever felt this pain knows it is like a long, sharp needle piercing through the head. The fact that the pain began the moment I arrived in the village got my attention. I had not slept for nearly 5 days, and this pain made sure that I barely slept during the next 5.

I was in an altered state of mind, to say the least. A doctor who had come on the trip had some codeine, which I took every 4 hours. It barely took the edge off the pain. However the glory of the beauty surrounding me was unmitigated by this physical experience. These rich landscapes, the smell of the earth, the songs constantly pouring through the people, the physical labor we were allowed to participate in, the smell of the fire in the cooking huts as the women stirred the pots and the children blew through reeds to keep the fires going, as

the elders sat watching like pillars of power along the edges of the motion—all of this overwhelmed my small body. Sweating, hurting, working, aching, I had never felt so alive. A small bowl of cool water with which to bathe myself in the sun felt like the greatest luxury I had ever had. I cut myself, got a deep gash in my leg. Blood had never looked so rich and powerful and wonderful to me.

On the day that we were leaving, just as we were about to rejoin with the other travelers who had been in different villages and all board together a bus to return to the site of our gathering, my tooth stopped hurting. It just stopped. The pain was over. It had started to hurt the very moment I arrived, and stopped hurting the moment I was leaving. The timing was unmistakably noticeable and dramatic.<sup>9\*</sup> What was addressing me?

It occurred to me that this entire experience bore an uncanny resemblance to a traditional initiatory rite of passage. The stages of such a rite are well described by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1909/1960). He noted that these rites universally display a three-stage sequence: “separation, transition and incorporation” (p.3). In the separation stage, the initiate is removed to a far away place, one that is as unfamiliar as possible. Often sleep deprivation is part of these rites so that the psychological state is loosened, open and unfamiliar. In some cases, pain is inflicted during the transitional stage, and the body is cut or marked. Psychotropic substances are sometimes employed. The person is

---

<sup>9\*</sup> My dentist later explained what happened. The nerve in the tooth was dying, and the pain began to rage to signal its distress. It took five days for the nerve finally to die, and when it did, the pain simply stopped. The physical event was explained. The timing of it's beginning and ending was too stunning to ignore or dismiss.

symbolically kept outside of the conventional order and taught a new mode of existence. In the incorporation phase, the individual returns to the established order but is considerably changed. Often the rites take 5 days.

All of these elements and more were precisely and definitively apparent in my village experience, as if they had been conscientiously, carefully, thoughtfully planned. But who had arranged them? I could not help but feel that there was a distinctive presence of some kind that had prepared this process for me, and I had willingly, though unwittingly, passed through it. I would never, ever be the same.

As I reflected back upon it all, each moment of every day seemed loaded with a dynamically communicative symbology; every minute was like a big dream within the bigger dream of the entire event. As Victor Turner writes of the Ndembu ritual context: "almost every article used, every gesture employed, every song or prayer, every unit of space and time, by convention stands for something other than itself. It is more than it seems, and often a good deal more" (1963, p. 15). Nothing seemed to be just what it was; all of it was much more, and each symbol was bursting with volumes of information. Every internal or physical sensation contained stories within stories. Turner explained that the ritual "connects the known world of sensorily perceptible phenomena with the unknown and invisible realm of shades. It makes intelligible what is mysterious and also dangerous" (p. 15). There is much that could be spoken about, and much that could never be spoken about in these days. The sense of danger was

intense. It was clear that the world as I had known it was ending, and the “I” that had been its inhabitant was dying also. Though I instinctively trusted this process with my whole being, nothing about it felt safe.

Jung (1944/1953) says that “the rites are attempts to abolish the separation between the conscious mind and the unconscious, the real source of life, and to bring about a reunion of the individual with the native soil of his inherited, instinctive make-up” (p. 137). The process reunites the conscious personality with the ground of his being, and reintroduces lost parts of the Self—parts without which life is only half lived, if lived that much; parts that though they are not previously consciously known, are instantly more familiar and comfortable than the developed parts. But these parts are not trained in the ways of civilization. And our world does not recognize or appear to want them. There even seems to be an unspoken, unconscious taboo against them. As simple as they might be, they constellate an instinctive fear in civilized humans, and in civilized parts of the self. Their arrival initially feels like, and is, death. It is death to a certain mode of existence, certain ways of thinking and being, but only because these aspects have been split off for so long. The self, and the world, that has been built without integration of them is ultimately unsustainable, and has to die.

Death is part of life. Death is sacred. Death acutely enhances life. But our culture of modernity has come to suppress its reality, to fear, to deny, dread, run from it, and hide it. Author and theorist Luigi Zoja (1989) remarks:

Our society . . . is so lacking in death rituals that death has often been perceived as the great repressed theme of our century, comparable to the sex taboo of the last century. . . . Death and initiation are archetypally related terms. Not only have death and initiation both been repressed, but they belong to the same area of repression. (p. 58)

Coming home from Africa, attempting to assimilate my experience of initiation and death in a completely uncomprehending world, with no guides, no elders, no community to recognize what had taken place and support me was an experience I not would wish on anyone. It felt at times like madness. I was frightened. The beauty of this absence of physical guides, however, is that in order to survive I was forced to find supports in the invisible worlds. As these assistances are discovered they become increasingly intelligible, accessible, conversant, and reliable. I needed these helps in order to breathe some moments.

Immediately after my return from Africa, within 3 short months, life as I had known it dissolved. My older daughter, then only 15, left the country due to a marvelous invitation to study abroad for a year. My younger daughter, 11, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes and was, overnight, insulin dependent. And my husband, who had always been my closest friend and confidant, was suddenly, incomprehensibly no longer available to me. A world of deception and betrayal began the details of which I did not discover for quite some time, yet I felt it on a cellular level, like being hit by a truck, every minute of every day, without being able to see what it was that was hitting me. I thought I was going mad. This was not a symbolic death. This death was very, very real. And my life was not dying a natural death. It was a holocaust.

The only solace I could find in the chaos and madness was that miraculously I was able to retain a sturdy inner awareness that there was meaning, a creative purpose to all of this, even as the annihilating and terrifying crush rolled relentlessly on. Thomas Berry (1988) describes his notion that in our society at large there is emerging a “shamanic dimension of the psyche itself” (p. 212). In much greater number, modern personalities who are susceptible to this emergence may have to undergo some level of the ordeals that have previously given birth to true tribal shamans. This is taking place in individuals and in the collective at large.

Even though I developed anxiety attacks, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and a variety of other painful symptoms out of this ordeal, I sensed the sacredness of the journey. I became sensitive to the fact that many persons across the culture are experiencing, or may soon be called to experience, such traumas—but that there is a reason. Something huge is breaking down in the old, untenable mode of being, and across the globe people may have to give birth to other dimensions of psyche.

Of the future shaman’s ordeal, Mircea Eliade (1958) writes:

I should like . . . to stress the fact that the psychopathology of the shamanic vocation is not profane; it does not belong to ordinary symptomatology. *It has an initiatory structure and signification*; in short, it reproduces a traditional mystical pattern. The total crisis of the future shaman, sometimes leading to complete disintegration of the personality and to madness, can be valuated not only as an initiatory death but also as a symbolic return to the precosmogonic Chaos, to the amorphous and indescribable state that precedes any cosmogony. Now, as we know, for archaic and traditional cultures, a symbolic return to Chaos is equivalent



to preparing a new Creation. It follows that we may interpret the psychic Chaos of the future shaman as a sign that the profane man is being “dissolved” and a new personality being prepared for birth. (p. 89)

Though overwhelmed and devastated by this experience, I realized that this rite of passage had been prepared for me in response to my longing, hunger, and sense of starvation. I also came to realize that it was precisely the depth of my own self-betrayal, self-deception, and self-abandonment that had powerfully constellated these experiences to meet me on the outside. They served as accurate mirrors of my own failures, and were prescriptive of the inner work that needed to be done. Even with the awareness, however, I found myself thrust into a process that, though I knew it was designed for my healing, felt phenomenologically like a nightmare I could not wake up from. The few hours I managed to sleep at night were my only respite. The second I awakened I was in the nightmare again, like being thrust into cold water. I could not bear the sense of helplessness. I had to find a way to respond.

### *I Talk Back*

Two years after the return from Africa, a conference was created so that persons who had undergone the journey could rejoin with one another, and speakers could address relevant issues in our look forward. At this conference I was to meet the Nigerian friend I have mentioned in previous chapters, Eze Anamalechi. Eze was hired as a ritualist, to prepare ritual space and conduct rites for the group. He hung around the margins of the meetings barely noticed, it seemed, but my attention and interest were on his presence more than on

anything else there. Finally, during one of the dinner breaks while he sat beating on a drum, I sat down next to him as he struck the rhythms. At first he seemed uncomfortable with my presence and ignored it. That was ok. I stayed right where I was. I was tuning in to him, and he to me. Finally we spoke and he tried to teach my awkward hands how to beat the drum. You move your shoulders like this. You beat it like that. He was polite and kind as he tried not to laugh at me. I never felt so pathetically, soullessly white. Where was the rhythm? Buried way, way too deeply to be of any use in this effort.

Before the weekend was over, Eze told me that before he came to this gathering, the Mother had said to him that “someone will come.” He said to me, “You were the only one, the only person here to cross the margin and enter into this space.” I didn’t know quite what that meant, but I felt a calling. I said, “I wish that I lived up here [in Seattle], so that I could learn from you.” He looked straight into my eyes and said, “How much does a plane ticket to Seattle cost? What is it worth to you?”

When I returned home, through e-mail and the telephone we began the conversations that would commence a relationship of several months, over which time I would travel to Seattle three times to meet with him and his beautiful wife Anika, who assisted and supported me throughout. As I emptied out my story to Eze over several beers in a bar in Seattle—feeling as if I was in another time and space altogether—he concluded our initial conversation with a

loud slap on the table saying, "This calls for radical ritual. Are you ready to die?" I thought it over for about 1 ½ minutes and heard myself say, "Yes."

Over the course of the next many months I made the trips to Seattle, spending 3 days each time in ritual process with Eze. In between times we were in touch regularly and I had a number of tasks to work on, all requiring digging deeply into the psyche, with specific rituals to be performed in response to what was contacted. The process permeated everything, inside and out, during that period. Eze explained to me that the details and events of the rituals that I underwent should be kept completely to myself, and instinctively I know this is true. During those months life as I had known it did, indeed, die. The ritual was a containing activity to help me find strength and meaning. It was acausal, I believe, not causal; but the arrival of this opportunity at just that time could not have been more perfect or profound. Nature was looking out for me, truly, and I knew it.

I believe that anyone who makes a sincere intention to reconnect to the indigenous mind will be led to the people, the rituals, and the situations in life that will assist this process. Nature is very ready to respond to such a desire if the person is truly willing. Inner impulses should be listened to carefully and strongly trusted, staying very close to the guidance of one's own innermost heart and instinct—never giving that power or authority away to another. The meaning of what begins to happen must be held to with vision and with courage.

*Here, At Last*

At the conclusion of my months in process with Eze, just before the reincorporation phase, I decided to go into the woods for a 10-day retreat completely on my own. Eze had recommended that I shave my head before my work with him concluded. As I considered when, how, and why to do this, I knew I needed to get with myself more deeply in order to be completely sincere in what I was doing. I couldn't do such a thing for him, or for anyone else. I had to do it for myself, and to know why. When the idea occurred to me to be alone outside for 10 days, suddenly I was comfortable with his advice.

This part of the ritual I can talk about, and probably will for the rest of my life. Those 10 days are, in my mind, like the "still point of the turning world," in the words of poet T.S. Eliot. "There the dance is," and the rest of my life revolves around this still point of my turning world.

I planned the retreat several weeks in advance, and every single day of those weeks I was in deep inner preparation. There was something like an internal scan system operating constantly. Synchronistically, as I am typing these words, right this moment, my computer's anti-virus system kicked in and is noisily doing its thing in the background. This gives me an image for what was going on inside of me during those weeks. Where was my heart? Was I frightened? I wouldn't do it if I became afraid, I decided. I gave myself permission to back out of the plan at any moment. Was I trying to prove

something? I couldn't do it to prove something to myself or anyone else. Was I feeling proud, or heroic? Any trace of such attitudes would be like a virus that would cause trouble. The scanner was on-going, in the background, fine-tuning my heart and mind in careful preparation for the time away.

My analyst, a woman for whom I have deep admiration, love, and respect, experienced and expressed understandable concern for how I would fare for so many days outdoors on my own in the state that I was in. She called me on the telephone one night and read the following words of Jung's (1944/1953) to me. I believe they helped her as much as they helped me.

As a doctor it is my task to help the patient to cope with life. I cannot presume to pass judgment on his final decisions, because I know from experience that all coercion – be it suggestion, insinuation, or any other method of persuasion – ultimately proves to be nothing but an obstacle to the highest and most decisive experience of all, which is to be alone with his own self, or whatever else one chooses to call the objectivity of the psyche. The patient must be alone if he is to find out what it is that supports him when he can no longer support himself. Only this experience can give him an indestructible foundation. (pp. 27, 28)

Alone I would be. But only to find out that the concept “alone” is an illusion. In reality, there isn't such a thing.

When the appointed day arrived, I was ready, and I knew it. I packed up my car with dried foods, tent, fold-up chair, clothes, supplies. A friend, a woman who agreed to be my ritual partner, came over and shaved my head. Off I went to our ranch home to spend one more night indoors before I began. The next morning I was inside the house and suddenly something tugged at me, like a cord, and I felt myself being pulled. I quickly put on my shoes, went outside, and

began to search for the place where I would stay. After about an hour of searching I found it—a big oak tree in an isolated place. Here I would pitch my tent. This would be my home. Much later I came to understand, or believe, that it was this tree that called to me, got me up out of that house, and pulled me to herself with a strong, direct energy.

As I set up camp, I used sacred substances to bless and protect the space, marking a large circle around me, putting rocks in each of the four directions as I spoke blessings and invoked protective helps. Eze had advised me to do as the animals do—to urinate around the circle so the other animals would understand that this was my space. This I did for each of the 10 days; and I also shed menstrual blood into the ground for the full 10 days. As that space soaked into me, I soaked into it. The cows that grazed those fields had been used to basking in the shade of this tree while they rested; this I knew because I had to clear out their droppings in order to set up camp. But while I resided there, they would come right up to the very edge of my circle, but very politely never crossed the invisible line. Sometimes they would lie down immediately outside the space, chewing grass, looking lazily about, resting and just keeping me company.

A tiny frog took up residence in my watering can. His little face poked out of the spout all day long. When I had to pour water out, he would splat on the ground, but before you knew it he was right back in his comfortable perch happily viewing the world from this moist, newfound home. He was my friend.

I had been grieving almost unendurably in the months prior to this time. Here, in this place, I had the immediate, unexpected sensation that my grief was welcome. It had room to spread out. I did not have to be alone with it. I hadn't realized the extent of a subtle sense of shame and of being out of place the experience of grief had been causing me to feel. Here, the earth held me in the experience and would help me with it. I later read these words of Malidoma Somé (1998) in *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*:

In order to crack open something in yourself to allow you to be aware of the presence of ancestors' spirits, you have to walk in nature with your emotional self, not with your intellectual self. You need to open wide your heart so that you can become moist and drink deeply from the emotional echoes that you receive from the frown of a gnarled tree or the twist of a branch. Seen in this way, nature, the dwelling place of the ancestral spirits, is a vast field of grief. . . . As part of the healing that we all deserve and all need, the natural world calls us to enter in and allow our grieving self to commune with what already exists there. When there is a grief ritual in my village, it happens in nature, in the open air, not in a church or in some clean, well-lit building. Grieving takes place among trees, because grief is exactly the sort of thing that the trees will echo and the earth will absorb most naturally. The expression of grief in the presence of nature brings not only healing, but in the end a much stronger connection with nature and the spirits in nature that witness us. (pp. 54-55)

Held in this space, the roar of civilization was soon a distant memory, and its rhythms and clock had nothing to do with me where I was. Time was a completely different element. This place was teeming with life! We humans just walk through, and in our autism are for the most part deaf and unaware, but I began to very partially awaken—and I can tell you there is a *party* going on out there. I was fascinated constantly, and felt touched to be welcomed and included. After just a few days, I knew I was being spoken to—once very distinctly by the

tree, and another time by a reed. The words came into my awareness like words do in a dream. The messages were clear. These living beings knew me better than I know myself. It is simple for them. I seem very complex to me, but not so to them. Some who are considered experts in the field of psychology would explain that I projected my own mind onto these plants and trees, and was just hearing my own voice reflected back. But that is not how I experienced it, and that is not my belief. I believe they addressed me.

David Wagoner's (Deming, 1996) poem "Lost" was in my mind constantly.

Stand still. The trees ahead and the bushes beside you  
 Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,  
 And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,  
 Must ask permission to know it and be known.  
 The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,  
 I have made this place around you.  
 If you leave it, you may come back again saying Here.  
 No two trees are the same to Raven.  
 No two branches are the same to Wren.  
 If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,  
 You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows  
 Where you are. You must let it find you. (p. 177)

I called my campsite "Here." Whenever I would go off for a walk, as I returned I would say to the tree, "I am Here!" I felt at home. I had previously been very lost. But I was not lost Here. I felt cast out of my human life, but this forest was loving me back into being, nourishing every fiber of my being.

As the days came to a close I sat under this tree, looking at the sunlight on the hills, watching the hawks catch the wind, and the only word I could think of



to describe this time was “blessed.” Of all of the things that might have happened to intimidate, frighten, or disturb me, none of them did. No animals bothered my tent or me. The wind never came up too strongly. It did not rain. It wasn’t too hot. I didn’t even get a mosquito bite! It is notable that the only fear I experienced the whole time was an apprehension of other humans. Snakes, wild pigs, wolves, bobcats, many such creatures might have arrived, but I did not experience any fear of them. I was definitely afraid of humans, though. I was afraid of even the slightest encounter with a mean spirit. Thankfully, even that fear was in vain, and all was well.

I realized that my whole life I had experienced myself as something like a potted plant. My roots were cramped into a little container of extracted soil and could only expand so far before they ran into concrete. But this experience had taken me out of the pot and planted me in the earth. Now my roots were at home, and life would be very different.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1982) writes in the Ninth Duino Elegy:

even if only once:  
to have been at one with the earth, seems beyond undoing. (p. 199)

*Here is the time for the sayable, here is its homeland.  
Speak and bear witness . . . .* (p. 201).

Earth, isn’t this what you want: to arise with us,  
*invisible?* . . . O Earth: invisible!  
What, if not transformation, is your urgent command?  
Earth, my dearest, I will. Oh believe me, you no longer  
need your springtimes to win me over – one of them,  
ah, even one, is already too much for my blood.  
Unspeakably I have belonged to you, from the first (pp. 201, 203).

T.S. Eliot (1943):

Except for the point, the still point,  
 There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.  
 I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.  
 And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time. (pp. 15, 16)

How is it that poets are able to say the unsayable? The poets' words, like spring, are too rich for my blood. They slay me with beauty.

Eze had recommended to me that at the conclusion of my time with him I have a reincorporation ritual, whereby members of my "village," my friends, would acknowledge what I had been through and receive me back into the community in my new status, witnessing and accepting that I have experienced much internal shifting and change. This phase of the ritual is extremely important. I will again draw on the example of the oft used question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? Similarly, if I change internally and no one mirrors, witnesses, acknowledges, or accepts the transformation, did it really take place? For the individual and for the community, this aspect of the ritual grounds and stabilizes, incorporates, what has taken place. As Karl Kerenyi (Jung & Kerenyi, 1949) puts it:

Or, to put it in scientific language, it seems as if there already were in the human plasm – the germ of life we have been speaking of – something spiritual, a compulsion towards the spiritual. What grows out of this compulsion is, like every growing thing, exposed to its environment – and woe to anything that wants to grow when there is nothing in the environment to correspond to it, when no meeting can take place there! (p. 28)

The night before I returned from the woods, a community of women friends gathered at our ranch home to welcome me. Among them was my oldest daughter, a fact that profoundly moves me. As I arrived home, I requested of her that she shave my head newly for this event, before anyone else saw me. She accepted and we laughed and cried at the surreal nature of it all. She wasn't sure if she would ever meet another individual who had bonded with her mother in quite this way!

When I met with everyone, the warmth and love, and the sense of beauty and purpose moved us all into a place that at once felt altered but then again more fully present in that time and place than it is usual to feel. The connection was simple and human, so deeply real. My heart was in flames with appreciation and love for each one present. As a major part of our ritual I spent time telling each one as clearly and articulately as I could, openly, one at a time, the splendor I see in her and how deeply I feel for her. After this, each one spoke to me as witnesses for what they have seen me undergo, speaking very simply and generously from their hearts in honor of the events and the occasion.

Then each of them gave me a small but meaningful gift. One of these needs to be mentioned here. A friend who is an artist, while thinking about me in my time away, created a painting to portray the impression she received and gave me a color copy of it as a gift. The image in the painting depicted the serene face of a woman, with large arms that look something like tree branches coming out of the darkness embracing her face. The woman's hands are holding on to

these arms. At the bottom of the picture she inscribed these words: "*Here you are – at last.*" Here! You are. At last. A synchronicity such as this clarifies to me the intersubjective nature of the field wherein we humans move and live. We are not alone.

This same friend made a comment that still makes me laugh every time I think of it. As we were at the table for the evening meal enjoying lively conversation and delicious food and wine, she must have seen the fading daylight bounce off the skin on my head from my seat at the end of the table. She remarked, "This gives completely new definition to the term 'the head of the table.'"

Regarding the experience of shaving my head, I will only briefly comment, inasmuch as the power of it uniquely defies words. I have said to people, male and female, "If you want to change your psychology dramatically in just a few minutes time, shave your head." It profoundly affects and unsettles a plethora of personal and social issues and values, demanding that they be confronted, if you will, baldly, squarely, and immediately. I have met strong, valiant men who have said they don't think they could ever do it. I have met women who wear their hair just a quarter of an inch long who say they can't imagine that they could make the move to go bald. Some people will do it easily. But I am not one of those. It took me 6 months of resisting the idea, and coming up with the notion of 10 days in the woods alone to come to terms with it, but I am unspeakably appreciative of the effect it had. It is sacred to me. What I

learned is between me and the stars—an imageless, wordless message known by these gods.

While in Africa, something in the universe had spoken to me by mindfully, carefully preparing a rite of passage to put me through. Now I was speaking back by consciously, willingly and purposefully designing and undergoing my own rite. It is as if the universe were asking me, “Are you willing?” And I had to figure out a way to respond and to say, “Yes, I am willing.” My ego was devastated, utterly devastated by the shocking terms of the agreement, and still is. But it also recognizes that there was no room in me, in my life as it was, for the rest of me to show up, survive, and thrive. This radical alteration was unquestionably necessary. The terms had to be accepted. Though I was suffering an irreplaceable loss, the grief of which was unmitigatingly devastating and paralyzing, I was being opened to new possibilities and to new life. Death makes life possible.

#### *Some Perspectives on Ritual*

Tom Driver, in his book *Liberating Rites: Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual*, writes of ritualizing as a work that we do, playful work ideally, but work that creates a pathway between the preverbal, nonrational, nonlogical realm into our conscious, verbal, rational, logical realm. This work creates us, as we create it. He writes:

Everything points to the supposition that our remote ancestors were ritualizing before they became human. This activity became the pathway to the human condition. Ritualization is a way, an experiential way, of

going from the inchoate to the expressive, from the sheerly pragmatic to the communicative. . . . It is not as true to say that we human beings invented rituals as that rituals have invented us. (p. 31)

Mircea Eliade (1958) remarks that “it is through initiation that men [and women] attain the status of human beings.” (p. 3) It is as though we do not even know what it means to be human until we have been able to meet the other parts of ourselves in a conscientiously designed rite of passage that moves us into the fullness of our nature as humans. Without such a passage, we believe ourselves to be the small, adapted version we experience through only having those parts of ourselves mirrored that meet the society and the culture. Society, by definition, by its inherent limitations, cannot introduce us to the rest of ourselves. We only meet and assimilate those parts through symbolization.

Edith Turner (1987) uses lovely words to describe the rituals that she and her husband Victor witnessed among the Ndembu of Zambia. She calls these rituals “concretized poetry,” a language that speaks what words could never say, “achieving a pleasure and social unity that symbolic action alone could encompass” (p. 58).

Victor Turner (1985), in the latter part of his studies, became fascinated with the developing science that is giving increasing understanding of the human brain. He began to explore the neurophysiological effects of ritual in coordinating the various areas of the brain, creating balance and wholeness in individual and community life. The final two essays in his posthumously published book, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience*, detail his

extensive thoughts and research on this matter. Ultimately, he felt that he was “asking questions and making guesses . . . rather than coming up with answers,” (p. 272) but encouraged ongoing attention, observation and study on the subject.

Deep ecologist and author Dolores LaChapelle (1988) offers insight in this regard. She writes:

Sacred ritual takes us out of this narrow, artificial human world and opens us up to the vast unlimited world of nature – both outside in our non-human environment and inside, in our own deeper layers of the older brains and cellular body knowledge. For us in modern times, one of the most important, immediate effects of ritual is that it reduces the more or less continuous inhibition, which the left hemisphere of the neo-cortex exerts over all the rest of the brain. Thus there is increased communication between both hemispheres of the neo-cortex and between that more recent part of the brain and the “older” brains. Jung gave this activity the label of “transcendent function;” because it transcends the narrow limits of the ego. (p. 153)

She explains that psychic and telepathic abilities which urbanized individuals tend to think of as exceptional are actually natural functions of the older brains within us, normal aspects of human functioning that have been culturally repressed. In primitive cultures it was a common use of the senses to know where the gazelle is, for example, because survival depended upon it. As humans have modernized, these capabilities have been allowed to atrophy. They can be revived, however, and ritual is an effective means of reconnecting with unused but potent innate potentials.

Overdependence upon the rational areas of the brain’s functioning, and under use of the powers in the older brains has caused a devastating imbalance in individual and collective life, effecting the tragic imbalance in the biosystems

of our planet. Silencing and loss of otherwise natural perceptions have created a madness from which we now need to recover.

C. Michael Smith (1997) also writes of the impact of ritual in harmonizing the rational hemisphere of the brain, which has become dominant, with what he calls the non-dominant hemisphere. He says:

If the non-dominant hemisphere speaks the language of figure, symbol, gestalt, and image, if it speaks the language of dreams, fantasies, myths, fairy tales, daydreams, active imaginings and delusions and hallucinations, why not seek to speak back to it and influence it on its own terms? This is what shamanic ritual does. It speaks to the psyche, to the World Image, to the non-dominant hemisphere in its own language, and is able to circumvent the linguistic-analytic-rational totalitarianism of the dominant hemisphere, which tends to ignore it. (p. 221)

His idea that ritual is a language by which we may “speak back” to an area of the brain corresponds with my own feeling that I can speak back to the universe itself through ritual. It is a language unlike, but then again much like, any other.

I have learned first hand that our very awareness of a problem and longing for its solution can call forth rituals from the universe in response. Some years ago I read a book written by an author who had researched the impact of Caesarian births on the developing psyches of children who came into the world in this manner. One of her observations was that since one of the first experiences of these children upon entry into this world is failure to complete an effort that has been started, vaginal birth, throughout their lives they tend to experience



blocks and difficulties in completing tasks. This failure is, to some extent, hard-wired into them.

I read this with dismay, inasmuch as both of my daughters were born by Caesarian section. My heart was struck with deep concern and a wondering if there might be anything to do to facilitate healing in this regard. An unexpected and powerful response came within a month.

Right after developing this worry, my oldest daughter went on a school field trip to Yosemite National Park. During an expedition into a cave, Josi got caught in a tiny hole between one section of the cave and another. She could not move backward or forward. She was tightly stuck, and utterly terrified. Her classmates instinctively began to chant to her to move through, move through, move through the hole. Since she could not go backward she just kept pushing her body through. After a significant amount of time and struggle, she made it through to the other side. Her classmates were so uproariously in support of her accomplishment that they celebrated the day as a birthday for her, and before the trip was over marked the event by making an "official" birth certificate with her name, the place, and that date upon it.

I could have tried and tried to think of a ritual to meet my heart's concern for Josi, but never would have come up with anything so precise or dramatic as this spontaneous offering from the universe. Her psyche was given the needed experience, she moved through the tight canal, completed the process, and was celebrated for the achievement. I can only hope that the universe either has or

will design something so effective for my younger daughter, Arlene, whether I am privileged to be privy to it or not. The event for Josi let me know that a heartfelt desire and intention is sometimes all that is necessary to activate a powerful and creative response.

Many years later, when Josi had her wisdom teeth removed, an extraction that felt significant and powerful to me as I held her in her recovery, we looked at those bones, her teeth, in their little box, and they seemed very potent. I suggested to her that we might do a ritual the next day to plant them in a garden in our back yard made in tribute to the feminine deities.<sup>10\*</sup> Josi liked the idea, and we both slept on it. The next morning after she awakened, she asked me if women ever used to do a ritual in which just after giving birth they planted the umbilical cord near a tree. I said I had definitely heard of such a rite. Even though she had never heard of it herself, she had dreamed during the previous night that she was pregnant and was searching for a tree under which she would plant the umbilical cord after the birth. In the dream she experienced some anxiety in that our home situation was in such flux that she didn't know where to find a tree that we will always have access to.

Her receipt of this dream struck me profoundly. Just the suggestion of doing a ritual to bury her teeth connected this young woman to a deep collective

---

<sup>10\*</sup> I created this garden in the middle of the night one night in response to a severe anxiety attack. I dug with bare hands into the dirt, and then began scouring the house for statues and symbols to bring to this outdoor temple. Sometimes the deepest, most instinctual inspirations come out of episodes with anxiety. My over watching superego thought I looked more than a little insane, but I felt very sane. C.A. Meier (1989) writes: "Even in psychosis . . . there [is] a factor at work that we call . . . 'the self-healing tendency of the psyche.'" (p. 2) Spontaneous healing processes rise up out of these nonrational states of mind.

memory of meaningful rituals enacted by women over the ages, in a dream which also spoke to our modern dilemma of being much less permanently connected to Earth and place. The modern psyche is so *ready* to reconnect to the power and memory of these ancient practices and to confront the challenges of reintegrating their use.

A significant symbology we faced as we dug deep into the earth to plant Josi's teeth was in the uncovering of a tight, convoluted web of old root systems that no longer had any life in them. It was very difficult, frustrating, hard work to chop through, disentangle, and extract those outworn and unproductive systems in order to freshen the soil for new planting.

In such ways, the earth offers back to us rich rituals, as we offer ours to her. It is a mutually enhancing, numinous, exhilarating, communicative activity.

Two warnings have come to me regarding the right use of ritual. On more than one occasion, relationships with persons who have shared ritual space with me dramatically ended very shortly afterward. It is as if we picked up a hot, electric wire and got electrocuted. On later reflection I understood that there were severely imbalanced aspects in these relationships that I might never have had the vision, wisdom, or courage to address, but the cleansing force of ritual exposed them unavoidably and took the relationships right out of my life. In one case, deep healing occurred some time later, giving birth to a new, much more conscious relationship of great pleasure to each of us. In another case, healing has yet to occur. These are the risks, maybe the unsought blessings, of ritual practice.

The other warning I will offer out of experience regards the damaging effect of repetitive use of ritual once the meaning and life has gone out of it. When I was in the ministry, I observed a practice of meditating four times a day, and fasting every Saturday. I was very disciplined in this practice, and kept it up faithfully for 17 years. I loved it enormously. It kept my busy, outward focus ever returning to my spiritual heart and kept tuning me into realities larger than my day-to-day occupations.

One day, however, I was sitting talking to my younger daughter, Arlene, looking into her fresh, rosy-cheeked face, hearing her enthusiastic reports, and in the back of my mind kept thinking to myself, "It's time to go meditate. I have to go meditate. I should go meditate." Suddenly I was struck as if by lightning, really. My meditation was taking me *away* from *life*. It was effectively telling my psyche that spirit is over there, in that corner, behind that closed door, but is not as powerfully present in the sweet face of this child or the processes of living life. Though it took awhile to sink in, I came to realize that these rituals that had nourished me wonderfully for so many years at some point had turned against me and were becoming confining and destructive. Their continued use out of habit, after the love and meaning had gone from them, was holding my awareness in something like a vice grip, disallowing growth and entry into life. Subsequently when I tried to meditate, afraid to give up my practice, nausea would come over me. It was making me ill. I had to stop. I learned from this, and from a number of other equally vivid experiences with rituals that had

previously held much power and meaning for me, that when a ritual is working it is extremely valuable. And when it is over it is over. If it is not given up at the right time, its power turns against the practitioner and becomes a negative force. This is true for individuals and for the collective. How many family rituals that once brought joy become long outworn and ultimately destructive if not reimagined? In social and political arenas, humans would do well to consider this.

In designing ritual, there are certain recommended structures for their formation—reported and languaged differently by different authors. Within those structures, however, the freshness of continuous creativity needs to be present to keep the ritual alive and current. Victor Turner (1969), referencing the work of Arnold van Gennep, describes three phases of ritual, as I have previously mentioned, as *separation*, *transition*, and *reincorporation* (pp. 94, 95). In other writings he calls them *preliminal*, *liminal*, and *postliminal* (Turner, p. 166). Malidoma Somé (1993) names the basic structures as *opening*, or invocation of spirit; *dialogue*, or communication with spirit including gestures that meaningfully repeat, and *closing*, thanking and sending spirit away again (p. 90). The authors suggest that if these structures are carefully observed, the power of ritual is safely contained. The rest of the ritual process then comes from the same place dreams come from. Robert Johnson (1986) says, “Each ritual must be custom-made out of the raw material of your own inner self” (p. 105). James Roose-Evans (1994) concurs, saying, “Rituals, like symbols, cannot be invented.

They must well up from within, as dreams do" (p.105). Sobonfu Somé (1997)

encourages those who would attempt to create ritual explaining:

We think that someone must bring a secret book of ritual recipes so that if we have a toothache, we go to page 129, read paragraph two and that will take care of it. When in fact, we ourselves are page 129, paragraph two! So I'm saying trust in yourself, believe in your ability to hear. Just say, "I know these things." (p. 55)

Ritualizing is an innate human capability that has been largely forgotten.

But it is in us, as dreams are in us, and as the older brains are still part of our anatomy. We only need to realize that it is there, and understand its importance to begin the process of recovery, reclamation, and reinvigoration of these potentials.

Many primitive people have been accused of using magic. Magic, like miracles, seems extraordinary when we do not understand the processes that produce it. Rituals are magic. The transformations they produce go beyond anything a linear, rational mode of perception is able to explain. Since scientists are able to make clear what happens when we put a tiny, uninteresting-looking seed into the ground and very soon a fabulous tree or plant breaks through and unfurls itself into space, we do not call this event magic or a miracle. Rituals are just that natural. They are seeds that unfold huge energetic processes in us and in the world. What a tragic loss to have let the use of this language and of these great powers lay dormant. Our species and our planet need the help of magic right now in order to reverse the inertia of extremely destructive trends. In the reclamation of ritual there is great hope.

*Dialogue as Ritual*

During my years as an ordained minister, I officiated at numerous public rituals—worship services, sacraments, weddings, baptisms, funerals, and burials. These rituals were formal, and based upon long history in our social and religious culture. Since resigning from the ministry, I not only do not officiate at such events, but I very rarely attend anything of their nature. Presently there is only one form of public ritual that I utilize, facilitate, and am constantly fed and transformed by, and that is the ritual practice of dialogue.

Dialogue as I speak of it here is a technique for speaking together in a group that was developed by physicist David Bohm. The practice is engaged by participants for the purpose of generating awareness of the nature of thought; for identifying the systems of thought that are running us; for noticing innate, tacit defenses against listening to new thinking; and for having an experience of the field of collective mind and thought of which each individual is merely a part. It is utilized to address the problem of fragmentation in thought—my thoughts working against, rather than in concert with, your thoughts—to establish coherence in our thought systems, and to unfold new meaning for individuals and the collective.

Participants are taught the theory of dialogue and utilize a particular method that allows for respecting and holding together diverse points of view. The power of this practice has amazed and astonished me increasingly over the

years that I have been participating in it. It is not formal, is unpretentious, is always new and fresh—and I have seen minds, hearts and lives radically helped and transformed in very short periods of exposure to it. One student in my college classroom wrote in his mid-term essay, “We have only had four sessions of dialogue so far, and this class has changed my life forever.” This is not uncommon feedback.

I first encountered dialogue at the Parliament of the World’s Religions held in Chicago in 1993. At this event there were, in many cases, the highest, best, most impressive representatives of most every religion or discipline regarding the sacred; and for seven unbelievably high-energy days a person could listen to one speaker right after the other, all day long. Nothing I heard gripped me more compellingly, however, than the plenary held on one of the first nights during which were presented the theory and ideas behind dialogue. This was being offered not as a religion or a religious practice—not at all—but as a tool to be used by the various religious adherents in order to more effectively mediate the diversity of religious thought offered through the week. Dialogue facilitators were on hand, like nurses or doctors, to help sort out heated controversies that might arise.

My fascination for the dialogue more than for any of the religions being represented reminds me of the fascination I felt for Eze more than for any of the speakers at the conference regarding Africa. Both of these were aspects in the margins of these other events, intended to compliment or facilitate what the



focus of the gatherings were about. In each case, for me, the rest of the proceedings were interesting but forgettable, while these marginal elements utterly captivated and attracted me.

Thinking about why this might be so, it occurs to me that both of these offerings served the function of working on the connective tissue, the web, the implicate order rather than focusing upon the things being connected. My attention and interest were less upon what was visible and apparent, and more on where the potentials are for discovering the invisible web or coherence that holds it all together. Ritual and dialogue, and especially dialogue as ritual, create such possibilities.

Not very long after the Parliament, I resigned from the ministry, took training in dialogue, and began teaching and facilitating it in a variety of venues. I also began work on a doctorate in depth psychology. The dialogue work and the study of depth psychology began to weave together in my thinking and experiencing—each field contributing powerfully to the other in my mind. I believe that each of these endeavors has very much to offer the other.

There are a number of valuable approaches to the practice of dialogue, but it was the method developed by David Bohm, many of whose ideas I discussed in the previous chapter, that I studied and utilize. In his latter years, Bohm became interested in articulating a philosophical application of his physics, and his passion for dialogue developed. The idea originally occurred to him in two ways. While observing the behavior of cells under a microscope, he noticed that

most cells have an impenetrable membrane, so that when they encounter one another they simply bounce off of each other. He noticed that by contrast, other cells open up their membranes to those they encounter and share information. It occurred to him that human thought works in a similar way. For the most part, in the business of living our lives our thoughts are simply bouncing off of each other's rather than opening up to share information. Bohm observed an inertia in the tendency of thought to maintain itself rather than transform itself—even if the thought is clearly outmoded, proven false, dysfunctional or even destructive.

In his field of science, he realized that researchers who were supposedly devoted to the on-going discovery of truth and reality instead had a strong tendency to become so personally invested in the systems of thought they adhered to that they were dismissive and discounting of clear information that could disprove or alter their theories. If a reputation is built on a theory, or a life's work built around a certain idea, it is understandable that conflicting information would be unwelcome and disconcerting. But, in Bohm's observation, the discounting of new thought goes on at such a tacit level that most often humans do not even have conscious choice about whether they will open themselves to it or not. Thought systems begin to run us, rather than us running them.

Bohm spoke and wrote extensively about the physics of thought, thought as an element in our physical reality. We take in thought like we take in oxygen—invisibly and for the most part completely unaware of how it functions in us. Exactly like those just described scientists, our worlds are built upon an

investment in systems of thought that we have ingested and developed, largely at a tacit, unconscious level. We think those thought systems are just reporting to us how things are, rather than realizing that they *create* how things are. How we think about something creates how it is. If we can change our thought, we change the world. But we rarely understand this about the nature of thought. As Bohm remarks, thought creates the world and then says it didn't do it. It would have us believe that it is objectively telling us what is so, not making it so.

Like the cells Bohm observed under the microscope, he noticed that for humans when thoughts considered "other" come our way they generally bounce off our own. Our membranes rarely open to receive information that would alter the infrastructures of systems we have developed. New thought is automatically dismissed as odd, is discounted and barely even noticed. In some cases, if the alternate thought is felt as a threat, we instinctually defend our thinking as if we were defending our own selves and our world; neurophysiological responses arise and we unconsciously act out of them.

In this way essential information is distanced from each human's awareness, and is defended against as if it were the enemy. Bohm found the practice of dialogue to be a very effective means for addressing this problem; a problem that he felt is the very root of grave and destructive behavior that is causing humans to work against rather than with each other and the natural world. Dialogue as a method exposes the tacit systems of thought we hold, and the incoherence between the systems that arise in the room full of practioners. In

most cases it simply takes this awareness for change to begin to occur, for new thought, new intelligence, and new coherence to arise.

The dialogue method is profound in its simplicity, but more difficult to do than it sounds. A group of people gathers together in a circle and begins to speak with each other without an advanced agenda. Initially there is a facilitator who is familiar with the theory and the method who helps the group to get started, but the facilitator's intent is to work himself out of a job so that the group becomes leaderless. At first as the persons adjust to the method and each other, exchanges will be awkward and seem trivial or merely polite, but before long something else starts to occur. Topics arise in the collected psyche like dreams arise in the individual psyche. To me, the process is very much like dreaming together and out loud.

Every character in a dream has significance, and every voice in the dialogue circle is significant. Those gathered try to find the impulse from which to speak that is similar to that authentic place from which dreams arise. And each tries to listen deeply to the other with the same kind of interest that a depth psychologist pays to dream figures. If an individual or the group is fascinated by or resists an idea or opinion, the intent is to develop an inquiry that helps to discover and articulate why. Every opinion, even those diametrically opposed to one another, is allowed to be heard with equal respect and interest. Rather than attempting to disprove or cancel out opposing opinions, skills for inquiry into them and understanding of them are developed. This is not the norm in human

interaction. When Saddam Hussein asked President George Bush for a public debate, the news media reported the possibility that these leaders may engage in a “verbal duel.” They would use words to try to conquer rather than to understand one another. Sadly, this verbal behavior is unconsciously engaged almost everywhere, even by the most lauded minds, and even in people one would expect to be very conscious.

In a letter, Jung (Edinger, 1996) expressed his frustration with persons who have a subjective experience and then form it into a “truth”; they then assume to know, and automatically presume that anyone who does not believe as they do simply does not know. What develops is a crowd of believers who each announce their own particular truth. He observes:

Instead of saying: To me personally it seems so, he says: It is so, thus putting everybody else automatically in the wrong.

Now in my estimation it would be more human, more decent, and altogether more appropriate if we carefully inquired beforehand what other people think and if we expressed ourselves less categorically. It would be more becoming to do this than to believe subjective opinions and to damn the opinions of others as fallacies. If we do not do this, the inevitable consequence is that only my subjective opinion is valid. (pp. 123, 124)

The technique of dialogue advises participants to realize that we do experience our opinions as truths. It asks that we behave exactly as Jung suggests, stating a subjective opinion clearly, while holding in mind that ours is simply one point of view. A method of inquiry is used to invite other ways of thinking about the same issue. Each person attempts to listen openly and respectfully to the variety of thoughts that arrive in the room without

categorically canceling any out, but rather holding them all together. The tension between opposing points of view can be difficult, but it can also be exhilarating if an attitude of inquiry and unfailing respect is maintained.

In Chapter 3, I described Bohm's findings, which partly explain why this is so challenging for us. Chemicals emitted in the brain produce fierce defense mechanisms when our thoughts feel challenged. Our ways of thinking and familiar thoughts become addictive. When thinking in our habitual patterns, chemicals are released in the brain that produce an effect similar to that of morphine. Unfamiliar thoughts, on the other hand, cause the endorphin levels to drop, generating anxiety and sometimes panic. For these reasons, and for the reason that people in a dialogue circle might unwittingly trigger each other's most unconscious and intractable psychological complexes, deep listening in dialogue requires conscious effort and practice, a courageous willingness to be influenced, and a consistent focus on the intention of the process.

There are a number of priceless advantages to putting oneself through such a challenge and for staying with the discomfort and uncertainty that may be experienced in the process. One is to recover the art of truly thinking together. One way to describe this is as follows. If 20 people witness a given event, object, or incident—if each is isolated from the other and asked to describe what was witnessed, chances are that 20 significantly different accounts will be garnered. Is one of these accounts true? None? Only some? Or might all of them have their truth? What happens if we put all 20 versions together, giving each equal value

in validity? Every perception is like a piece in a jigsaw puzzle—seen separately, who could know that they belong to the same picture? But when they are meaningfully assembled, a larger picture or reality will become visible that would never be imagined by looking at just one of the pieces. Such is the inherent limitation of thinking alone rather than together—it is like reviewing again and again the information contained on just one piece of a puzzle.

Participants in a dialogue quickly notice how greatly similar viewpoints are appreciated and valued, whereas dissimilar ones are irritants or are disregarded and disrespected. The inertia of our personal thought systems causes us to hold more strongly to our own points of view and to collect only information that will reinforce them. Although it is important and helpful to clarify a personal standpoint, to voice it and value it, the dialogue method also encourages that individuals suspend their opinion long enough to allow other standpoints equal articulation and dignity in the collective field of thought. As this effort is made, not only does the collective mind become more apparent, but other faces and voices in a dialogue group may become mirrors for lost, forgotten, or split-off parts of the self. The multiplicity of the psyche is recovered, and practitioners are introduced to their own selves in fascinating and revealing ways.

Jung (1998) suggests:

You can never come to your Self by building a meditation hut on the top of Mount Everest; you will only be visited by your own ghosts and that is

not individuation: you are only alone with yourself and the self doesn't exist.

That individualistic kind of development leads to isolation and death because one's life is no longer connected with the life of mankind. Life in one, single isolated individual cannot be maintained because the roots are cut off; our roots are in mankind and if we give up that connection we are just like a plant with no roots. (p. 93)

In his book, *Sources of the Self*, philosopher Charles Taylor (1989) similarly remarks:

One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it . . . .

I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors: in one way in relation to those conversation partners who were essential to my achieving self-definition . . . .

The drive to original vision will be hampered, will ultimately be lost in inner confusion, unless it can be placed in some way in relation to the language and vision of others (pp. 35-37).

The paradox acknowledged here is that in such a process we discover our collective identity, even as individual identity is sharpened and clarified. As many voices are encouraged to speak in an atmosphere of careful listening and safety granted for each contribution, the uniqueness of each voice is more clearly realized as it takes its place in the increased visibility of a larger whole of which each is only a part.

The tragedy in most group experiences that do not utilize such a method is that the voices of one or two participants are valued or considered superior, while other participants do not allow their voices to be heard, or worse, feel pressure to conform to the dominant members' ideas or visions, devaluing their own. Our psyches are molded to function this way from very early on. In most



family systems and systems of education, thinking is deferred to external authorities; valuing one's own is little developed or encouraged. Buckminster Fuller used to describe his experience of arriving in the classroom as a curious young boy and being consistently told, "Don't pay any attention to your own thinking. Shut up and listen to what I am telling you." His own fresh perceptions and original observations were not only never asked for, but he was discouraged from respecting them in any way. Fuller often stated his belief that most children are born geniuses but become de-geniused in the process of education. This early pattern of honoring the "expert" over one's own perceptual capabilities is tacitly carried forward through much of life, and is unconsciously engendered in most social and political structures. One external voice is honored over all of the rest who are considered less perceptive or less competent. The diversity of the psyche itself is tragically undermined in these ways.

The root of the word *education* is *educare*—which means "to draw out." Education's original intent was to draw out what is innately known. Socrates is reported to have taken a small boy untrained in mathematics, and by asking him the right questions in the right order drew out of him complex understanding of mathematical theory. Our classrooms have tragically reversed this idea—silencing, devaluing, and submerging innate, original knowledge and perception in favor of pushing in someone else's concepts or way of thinking. I sat in a public auditorium at a recent conference watching as "mind" was projected onto the "expert" on the stage, while a room full of intelligent people

sat silently. I was uneasy. It felt like a ritual of disempowerment, one which we have been undergoing all of our lives. Though I would love to listen to this accomplished person in dialogue, in this situation the question occurred to me: what is it to me what that man thinks? Why does he not seem curious to know how the rest of the people in the room perceive things? What might be learned if we were to assemble all our perceptual worlds with his *included* rather than so weightily considered?

Education, even in the highest, most hallowed halls, is for the most part presentation style rather than participation style. "Shut up and listen," engage in a token break-out session, and then go home and think alone while you read more of the "experts" and write from a personal perspective. Assimilation and regurgitation of another's vision rather than genuine drawing out of original and collective vision is the norm.

This model of education perpetuates a monotheistic and hierarchical model of the psyche, wherein one or two internal value systems and voices assume domination over all the rest. The practice of dialogue challenges this structure, internally and externally. Less heard and less valued voices, when deeply listened to, have much to offer. Until I began to practice dialogue, I had never realized how much my internal world had silenced and devalued so many parts of myself so that I could fit into the structure of life and culture in which I was placed. The more I engaged in dialogue externally, the richer it became internally. I naturally began to listen to, inquire into, and consider the needs of

marginalized parts of myself. And a dialogue increasingly opened between nonhuman intelligences and myself also. A gradual cure for human narcissism and autism becomes possible. It is a deep encounter with otherness.

In the last class of the quarter at the college where I teach a course entitled “Dialogue and the Physics of Thought,” I mentioned to the students that I had just read accounts of aboriginal rites of passage in which the young people are assisted by the whole community—in activities such as lying on the ground with an ear to the earth for days at a time while the elders pound the ground with large poles, placing the youths into hypnogogic states, allowing for new awareness of the spiritual dimension and an experience of expanded consciousness to take place. I asked the students if they felt the lack of such initiations for our youth. To my surprise, one student sat on the edge of his chair and declared that he felt that this group of students had just experienced something very similar to such a rite in my class, and he thought everyone should have such an experience. The others in the room seemed to concur.

The great achievement of the West is the development of the individual. Tribal consciousness had no such concept. But the notion of the individual and of individualism has gotten out of hand, like a cancer, and needs to recover awareness of the individual’s connectedness to the larger whole.

In discussing the evolution of our new brain, incorporating the old into the new, Joseph Chilton Pearce (2002) adjures:

. . . in order to transcend our present state we must be incorporated into a higher order of operation. But individuality itself is what is lifted up into that new order, for an individual self was (or is trying to be) the unique achievement of our particular evolution. (p. 30)

Dialogue work actually adjusts and administers brain chemistry to assist individuals and the collective mind in this needed incorporation.

Jungian analyst J. Marvin Spiegleman, in a lecture to the Analytical Psychology Club of Los Angeles on October 5, 2001, explained his belief that a new world myth is afoot in the development of Western consciousness. Over several thousand years, it's myth has gone from the concept of a collective chosen people (the Jews), to a chosen One (Jesus), back to a chosen many – the six million who died in the Holocaust of the Jews, which he believes to be the chief religious event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11\*</sup> He stated his conviction that the newer dispensation will be a combination of both collective and individual chosenness, of community and individuation, but its achievement is not yet.

Edward Edinger (1999) writes of the need to move from individual to “collective individuation.” He writes, “One way or another, the world is going to be made a single whole entity. But it will be unified either in mutual mass destruction or by means of mutual human consciousness” (p. 174). We can each do our individual work, but until we do things differently *together*, not much will be accomplished.

---

<sup>11\*</sup> This particular belief expressed by Dr. Spiegleman can be extended, in my mind, to the tragically under acknowledged holocaust of the Armenians, as well as those of many, many other tribes and peoples in the last centuries.

The highly acclaimed movie *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard, 2002) celebrates the accomplishment of mathematician John Nash. His breakthrough theory of governing dynamics exposed the incompleteness of Adam Smith's premise upon which all of modern economics had been built—that the best result for everyone comes from each individual doing what is best for one's self; individual ambition serves the common good. Nash was able to prove that this is not so, that utilizing this thinking, individuals end up blocking each other and canceling each other out so that no one wins. His new theory proved that the best result comes when individuals figure out how to do what is best for one's self *and* the larger whole.

Each of these scholars is articulating a breaking awareness in Western thought that the individual is a delusion and a reality both at the same time. We are one with everything and distinct from everything, both at the same time. As legendary physicist Niels Bohr once said, "an ordinary truth is one whose opposite is false; but a GREAT truth is one whose opposite is also true" (Dossey, 1999, p. 32).

Dialogue is a ritual that powerfully assists in mediating an experience of great and opposite truths. But more importantly, heart space among participants is opened and deeply affecting. Very soon people are revealing important stories and awarenesses that, they often say, never in their lives have they had the courage to tell or the space where they would be respectfully heard. Alongside of the daily human concerns richly articulated, almost invariably the content also moves in and out of primal, instinctive insights that rarely find expression.

Unusual experiences, dreams, déjà vu's, dying moments of a parent or friend, the most poignant experiences of a life are articulated in these little circles. What has been marginalized is revived, bit by bit, and a greater wholeness, individually and collectively, becomes possible. I have unfailingly found in my work with this practice that the thinking of the heart finds its voice. "The mysterious equations of love," which John Nash spoke of in the acceptance speech for his Nobel Prize, are revealed. Nash stated that the most important discovery of his career was that it is only in these equations that any true logic or reason will be found.

As we know, love is not always a feel-good experience—it is demanding, rigorous, and exacting as well as thrilling, soothing, and ecstatic. Like the dream image of the tiger born through the heart, love can be playful and gentle or fierce and wild. The heart space of dialogue contains all of these vicissitudes as well.

Bohm (1996) believed strongly in the need for this work. He wrote, "I'm suggesting that there is the possibility for a transformation of consciousness, both individually and collectively, and that whether this can be solved culturally and socially depends on dialogue" (p. 46). Experience tells me that this scientist has articulated a scientific means to the way of the heart and the indigenous mind.

Can the psyche go through the tremendous processes involved in reawakening the indigenous mind without mirroring, support, and careful containment? I do not believe so. Without these, an individual alone could get truly lost. I propose dialogue not only as an activator for the heart and the natural mind, but as a strong means of support and containment for groups of

individuals as they make their way through challenging transformational processes.

I could not help but think very strongly of dialogue all through the following words spoken by Brian Swimme (1995) in his lecture series, *Canticle to the Cosmos*:

Every species has habitat. And the habitat of the human is language. Where do we go to reinvent the human? We have to go to the universe. How do we go to the universe? Where do we go for that source of power? All of us want to know how to go to the source, how to go for power. And that traditionally is provided by the great spiritual disciplines. And the spiritual disciplines are constantly being reinvented. Somehow or another, all of us know how to do that. We do! We haven't been able to articulate it well enough and work with it, but as we do we will very definitely put into play at a very fundamental level an overriding, multicultural, planetary spiritual discipline – a process for drawing forth the promise of each person. (Tape #9)

Dialogue is the simplest of rituals, available to anyone, anywhere, any time. Personally I have never participated in a discipline that more powerfully places the human in his habitat of language; drawing forth, making articulate and visible, the profound promise of each participant; creating a space for persons of many cultures (which my classrooms unfailingly contain) so that they may speak to, deeply listen to, hear, witness, mirror, and reflect one another; demonstrating vividly the rainbow hues of captivating differences and always astonishing similarities. I believe dialogue practice to be a new spiritual discipline to meet our dramatic and current planetary needs. It causes me time after time to fall in love all over again with my species. Unlike listening to a

lecture or sermon, reading a book, watching a movie, or witnessing an artistic performance, all of which place a person on the outside looking in, dialogue puts the individual right inside the field of intense energies—to rigorously experience in ritual form the grand human passions, conflicts, tenderness, and noble beauty—exquisitely demonstrated and safely contained. It is all-inclusive, celebratory, and uniquely human. I believe that this practice holds great potential for helping humans to move into the next stages of renewal needed to create a more promising future.

### *Ritualizing Life*

As humans become more fluent in the language of ritual, even the simplest and most mundane activities of life can be performed as playful, meaningful, loving ritual. The power of ritual to influence internal and external reality can be creatively harnessed. An on-going dialogue between invisible powers and visible manifestations will take place.

Cycles of death and rebirth occur daily, sun rises and sets, breath moves in and goes out, nature's gift of food is prepared, enjoyed, utilized, and discarded by the body. Relationships flourish and recede. Every vicissitude of living is speaking the language of ritual. We join the conversation as we generate rituals that allow us to participate dynamically in creating the life we live.

One of the most common causes of the pervasive states of anger, violence, depression, and despair in modern individuals is the sense of powerlessness that



is felt, the feeling of incapacity to have any significant impact in shaping our singular or collective life. With the language of ritual lost to consciousness, huge powers lie dormant in the psyche. If it can be recovered, a new participation in great possibilities and creative potentials can be reclaimed. The human mind is a part of the mind of nature. It is powerful beyond our present understanding. The human heart is part of the heart of creation, and is a channel for the love that moves the universe. These immense powers are granted not so that we will “shut up and listen” but so that we will stand up, participate, and create. It is a right and a responsibility each human carries.

Conscious participation in regular ritual practice establishes an intelligible connection between the mind and hearts of individual humans with each other, and with the potencies of the universe. This correspondence, when not utilized, has left us alienated, lost and confused. As it is revived, we can slowly begin to recover our place in the order of things and become partnered with the awesome creativity of the universe in its endless unfolding of life’s mystery and beauty.

Chapter 5  
The Indigenous Mind

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

-T. S. Eliot

*The Human's Original Equipment*

In the years since beginning to investigate the processes involved in reawakening indigenous sensibilities in the Western psyche, I have become increasingly convinced that as humans we are, each and every one, endowed with phenomenal equipment with which to know and to sense worlds within worlds, realms inside of realms. Primal peoples used to detect easily from the smell of the wind or the dirt what weather patterns would be arriving; they understood messages imparted by the calls of birds; they communicated with tree, plant, rock, river. These and a vast array of similar skills were not magical to them; they were utterly natural. Children learned them from the time they were born.

The civilizing process over the last centuries has caused humans to defer to technologies outside of our own original equipment for information, and to forget that we ever even had such capabilities. It seems so much more sophisticated to look to the TV, computer, or newspaper to figure out the weather than to smell the wind or dirt. Though we are fully equipped to carry out

uncountable functions that would astonish and seem like magic to the modernized mind, we have for some reason chosen to stop developing and utilizing these capacities. By closing down in this way, we have separated ourselves from the world we live in, from the community of life, from each other and from our own selves. Our autism, as Thomas Berry (1988) refers to the current state of the human, is profound and tragic, and its damaging consequences reach into the very genes of humanity and the cell structures of the earth.

In one of my deep meditative days alone in the wilderness, pressing questions about life and who am I were burdening me intensely, and I sent the inquiries out to the universe as soon as they surfaced in my consciousness, hoping for some response. Finally it hit me squarely that the answers are not “out there” to be delivered to me at the whim of some external mind or power. They are inside of me. I do not need to apply to someone or something outside of myself; I need to discover how to listen to what is built right into the equipment of my own mind and body. It is all here. Nothing is missing. My make-up is the same make-up as everything outside myself. It is all one thing. We do not have to spend years in meditation or read libraries full of books to get to information to which we already have access. Such ideas are a consequence of the processes of mind over generations that have separated us from ourselves. The mind is formidable, obviously, but it *can* be understood for what it is, and for its definitive limitations.

In his book entitled *The Holotropic Mind*, Stan Grof (1993) recounts a philosophy professor's experience in a nonordinary state of consciousness during which he was given to understand that the workings of the sophisticated intelligence that brought our universe into being can be accessed if we will just learn how to receive it. This intelligence is, "nothing other than your own being, it is a matter of learning how to be awake at more and more levels of 'your' own being, or Being itself" (p. 154).

Religions, especially Western religions, are based upon the concept of the human's fundamental depravity and need for redemption. God is an external power, and external authorities that work on behalf of this male God are sought out for wisdom and guidance. The human's innate potencies and vast potentials are ignored, even denigrated, as we assume that we are ignorant, weak nothings and that power and all good things come from outside of ourselves. Joseph Chilton Pearce, in his book *The Biology of Transcendence* (2002), states that "historically our transcendence has been sidetracked – or derailed altogether – by our *projection* of these transcendent potentials rather than our development of them" (p. 2). "Handed down through millennia," he writes, "our mythical and religious projections take on a life of their own as the cultural counterfeits of transcendence" (p. 2). Thomas Berry also (1988) points us back toward ourselves. He suggests that what we need is what he calls "inscendence" rather than transcendence. Regarding the current global crisis created by our autism, as we

are “closing down the major life systems of the planet” (p. 206), he strongly advises:

We must go back to the genetic imperative from which human cultures emerge originally and from which they can never be separated without losing their integrity and their survival capacity. None of our existing cultures can deal with this situation out of its own resources. We must invent, or reinvent, a sustainable human culture by a descent into our prerational, our instinctive, resources. Our cultural resources have lost their integrity. They cannot be trusted. What is needed is not transcendence but “inscendence,” not the brain but the gene. (pp. 207-208)

He continues:

The difficulty generally with this proposal is that our genetic endowment is considered to be a mere physical determination of our being, not also our richest psychic endowment, our guiding and inspiring force, especially when the cultural process has entered into a destructive pathology.

This pathology is manifest in the arrogance with which we reject our role as an integral member of the earth community in favor of a radical anthropocentric life attitude. (p. 208)

I can impart a personal story that illustrates very simply something of what I believe these writers are describing, in terms of the integral nature of the earth community and the psychic endowment of our own physical make up. It happened on a Saturday afternoon not long after my ex-husband had moved out of our family home. My youngest daughter had caught a gorgeous lizard with a luminescent blue tail, and we had created a home for it in a box on our kitchen counter. After several days both of my daughters and I concluded that this captivity was cruel and we should let the lizard loose again, but my youngest asked if we could wait until her Papa could see it before we let it go.

And so it was that on this afternoon he came to see and appropriately marvel at the lizard. As we took it outside to release it to its freedom, we stood as a foursome on the patio that had been shared as a family for so many years. I was at the time so completely traumatized by the splitting apart of the family that the naturalness of this moment contrasted with what I knew in my mind, that our family would never again be a unit, caused me to feel weak, as if I might faint. The girls later told me that they spoke to me but I could not register their words. I was struggling for composure. As the three of them chatted away about something, I stood looking out at the horizon trying desperately not to seem desperate, and not to collapse. Just then, the lizard came next to me and placed its body firmly against my bare foot, with its head lifted up looking in the direction of the horizon along with me. We were latched together like this for several moments, and something like an electric charge passed through my whole body. Suddenly my mind was clear, the anxiety dissipated, I was at ease and felt very calm. The lizard left, never to be seen again, and I turned around to join in the conversation.

The subtlety and the power of this transaction have never left me. As I later reflected upon it, though it does not match anything I rationally understand about interspecies communication, I felt that possibly this creature had lived in our home long enough to sense, in its way, something of what was going on in our house. In my moment of need, I cannot help but feel that it somehow understood, intentionally came to me, and made it possible for something very

powerful to pass through me. This may sound like a crazy transference to most who read this, but it feels simply so to me. I felt seen, understood, effectively cared for and loved with such acute perception by that lizard. This small creature is as much a part of the workings of the great, sophisticated, universal mind and intelligence as is any human. I cannot deny this experience. It and a number of others have opened me to the mind of nature that is communicating constantly if we will just receive it. This form of communication is not rational; it is prerational. It does not come through the brain, but through the cells, the genes. Vast worlds of intelligence and tremendous love are lost to us if we do not reawaken the innate powers of these modes of perception. Our anthropocentrism will have to be reconsidered.

### *Two Kinds of Thinking*

C. G. Jung (1912/1956), in his essay entitled "Two Kinds of Thinking" describes the difference between what he called "directed thinking and dreaming or fantasy-thinking" (p. 18). Directed thinking occurs in words and is for the purpose of communicating, of bridging what is inside to the outside. "So long as we think directedly, we think *for* others and speak *to* others" (p. 12). This thinking is linear, adapted, and functional. Heidegger called it "technological thinking" (Palmer, 1969). Levi-Strauss (1966) called it "mind cultivated or domesticated for the purpose of yielding a return" (p. 219). The other aspect of mind Levi-Strauss referred to as "savage mind," mind in its untamed or natural state. He remarked that though the two kinds of mind co-exist and interpenetrate, the

over-development of the domesticated mind threatens the savage mind with extinction. Jung expressed a similar concern, saying that the use of directed thinking has produced what he describes as a “readjustment of the human mind” (p. 16). This mind is a modern acquisition unknown to the ancients who thought more mythologically and symbolically. The first kind of thinking is difficult and exhausting, according to Jung, whereas the second is effortless, spontaneous. “The one produces innovations and adaptation, copies reality, and tries to act upon it; the other turns away from reality, sets free subjective tendencies, and, as regards adaptation, is unproductive” (p. 18).

The poet Rumi muses upon the dialectic between these different aspects of mind in a poem entitled “Two Kinds of Intelligence.”

There are two kinds of intelligence. One acquired,  
as a child memorizes facts and concepts  
from books and what the teacher says,  
Collecting information from the traditional sciences  
as well as the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.  
You get ranked ahead and behind others  
in regard to your competence in retaining  
information. You stroll with this intelligence  
in and out of the fields of knowledge, getting always more  
marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one  
already completed and preserved within you.  
A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness  
in the center of the chest. This other intelligence  
does not turn yellow or stagnate. It is fluid,  
and it does not move from outside to inside  
through the conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is the fountainhead  
from within you, moving out. (Santorelli, 1999, pp. 58-59)



When I was in Africa, we rode out into the wilds of the Serengeti Plains to watch the animals in their vast habitat. As I saw herds and herds of wild animals—hundreds of giraffe, elephant, zebra, gazelle, and so many others—making their way across the immense plains, I noticed a little thought cross my mind. “Who takes care of them when they are sick?” It causes me both to laugh and to cry at the ridiculousness of the fact that this question would even occur to me. These enormous animals, with their grand instinctual natures, having survived millennia in the wilds of nature might need a human person with a little stethoscope if they get a toothache? I had only really seen wild animals in zoos before! You mean they get along ok without our providing for them with a comfy cage, a team of doctors, and someone to feed them?

Though I can joke about it, the fact of being in the presence of all of this overwhelming wildness did something to me that I cannot reverse, not that I would want to. The event might be likened to someone who has never seen a mirror before suddenly faced with his or her own reflection. I suddenly saw myself, the never before known wild expanses of earth and animal that are as much a part of who I am as the domesticated part I had previously only seen reflected. When I came home I felt caged myself, like the wild animals are on our continent. No wandering herds of animals on open plains here, and no place for that just-discovered part of me to find, express, and explore itself either. It was the beginning of a deeply conflicted and depressive period.

What we have done to wildness and wilderness—tragically, disrespectfully, and ultimately self-destructively overtaking and domesticating it—that is what we have done also, I believe, to the aspect of mind that is our natural, indigenous mind; the savage mind described by Levi-Strauss, the dreaming or fantasy thinking that Jung illuminates. We have crowded this mind out, plowed it down, and made it nearly impossible to survive or thrive in the fields of thought that have overtaken our lives. This thinking is caged, forgotten, thought to be quaint or cute for curiosity seekers, a holiday trip that we never have time to make.

In an interview, author Martin Prechtel (Jensen, 2001) explained:

Every individual in the world, regardless of cultural background or race, has an indigenous soul struggling to survive in an increasingly hostile environment created by that individual's mind. A modern person's body has become a battleground between the rationalist mind – which subscribes to the values of the machine age – and the native soul . . . .

What is indigenous – in other words, natural, subtle, hard to explain, generous, gradual and village oriented – in each of us has been banished to the ghettos of our heart, or hidden away from view on reservations . . . .

And this indigenous soul is not something that can be brought back in “wild man” or “wild woman” retreats on the weekend and then dropped when you put on your business suit. It's not something you take up because it's fun or trendy. It has to be authentic, and it has to be spiritually expensive. (pp. 12-13)

The truth of how expensive it is for the individual to recover the undomesticated, uncontrollable, wild inner territories of his own indigenous mind is intuited by most enculturated people, I believe, and because of this there is a running away, a putting off, an anxiety and a great fear associated with doing

this work. In it, the ego is taken from its throne, the emperor has no clothes, the utter incompetence and fragility of the self that is adapted to the dominant culture is shockingly exposed. Since most humans in the culture have over the generations become so completely identified with the ego and the adapted self, they have forgotten the other vast terrains of their own being. When the ego is threatened, *they* feel threatened. When the ego is discovered to be limited and incompetent, *they* feel humiliated. They do not begin to understand the grandeur of what is left in them when these only recently developed psychological structures are loosened and begin to fail. When that house falls down, there is still land and sky!

### *The Ego*

The much-maligned aspect of the human self that we call the ego has become a problem inasmuch as our psyches seem to have become confused about what this attribute is and what it is not. The ego is an organ of manifestation for the Self. It is, according to Jung, a projection of the Self into time and space. The ego is not the wine; it is the glass that holds the wine. Wine needs the glass in order to be served, but the glass is not what infuses us with spirits. The wine is. As Jung (1963/1989) remarks, "God cannot be experienced at all unless this futile and ridiculous ego offers a modest vessel in which to catch the effluence of the Most High and name it with his name" (p. 215). The ego is "futile and ridiculous" insofar as it misunderstands itself, thinks it is the wine and not the glass, and deludes itself into believing it has the power to control,

dominate, shape, and decide upon the workings of the Self. Because the ego is so often foolish, underdeveloped, unwise, and confused, Jung explains “everybody would like to be quit of this odious adjunct, which is precisely why in the East the ego is explained as an illusion and why in the West it is offered up in sacrifice to the Christ figure” (p. 214).

If humans are that aspect of the Earth and the universe that has brought forth the unique capability of conscious self-awareness, a development that allows the universe to reflect upon itself, to know itself, then the job of the ego has been to serve this process by separating out so that it can reflect. The ego is an instrument for differentiation and thus self-discovery and self-reflection; useful similar to the way it is useful to isolate a cell in order to understand not only it, but the whole of what it belongs to. However, as Jungian analyst Don Sloggy has remarked, “The ego forgot its instructions. It was to develop a certain degree of autonomy, strength and power—but not to continue in this trajectory. It was meant to come back and consciously re-connect with the Self” (personal communication September 23, 2003). Just as cancer cells are normal cells that have gotten out of control, so has the ego become like a cancer in the human mind and on the planet, producing much pathology, neurosis, tragedy, and destruction.

It occurs to me that the ego is like a power tool. There is nothing inherently wrong with the tool itself; it is, in fact, an evolutionary advance that is very useful and helpful. Whether the tool becomes a valuable contribution to life

completely depends upon how the tool is used, whether for good or ill. If it is used for murder and destruction, this is not because the tool is bad and must be disposed of. That is not where the problem lies. The ego is not an illusion to be dissolved, or an evil to be sacrificed. It is a valid and valuable instrument to assist nature in the process of differentiation so that greater awareness and consciousness can be achieved. It is a power to be properly understood and utilized. Ego is a very recent development on this planet that got rapidly out of hand, but if we can quickly come to terms with why it has arrived and how to make use of it, it might, like the prodigal son in the New Testament of the Bible, be able to come home to the Self and be celebrated for who it is and what it has learned.

A problem humans face in moving through to the next stages of awareness in regard to the ego is that for some reason there is very much pain involved in its dethronement, and because we hate pain so much we have built fortresses and gathered armies of conscious and unconscious defenses, all prepared to do battle to the death should any threat to the ego be sensed. Humans look with a dark eye upon that which would apparently only bring chaos to the well-ordered world the ego has built, would rob it of power and possessions, and would leave us open to unknown and unknowable forces that we have lost every concept of how to regard or relate to. Even the "God" we have created with our minds is made up of the rules and formulas we understand and know what to do with for the most part, so that we can feel

comfortably in control. We have come to call that which threatens our control and casts us outside of such order “evil.” Evil is, of course, enormously defended against and greatly feared.

I do not want to address here the problem of evil. I only want to suggest that in my experience much of what I had been taught to experience as evil has ultimately redeemed me. The terrifying fear and almost unbearable pain that I suffered as my ego was being demolished and did not have a drop of strength left in it, ultimately and finally seemed due to concepts that I held in my mind – that the ego was “me,” and that that which came to hurt and destroy it was evil and should be defended against at all costs. But when all of my resistances failed and my ego was relativized beyond recognition, was robbed of all power, had lost love, identity, relationships, land and possessions, there was still a “me” left after all—one that I had known all my life but had lost touch with, one that as a child could fly out of my body and back again, one that has natural psychic capabilities and intuitive powers, that lives in the dreamtime and is wonderfully conversant and comfortable with its other logic and laws, one that in this constructed ego world is often considered crazy but which makes me feel, finally, at home in myself. The breakdown was a breakthrough.

But I very much needed to reconstruct an ego so that I could re-engage the world I live in. It was extremely painful and very difficult to do so – similar to the rehabilitation required of someone who has been run over by a train. In my own way, I had to learn to walk, talk, think, feel, and reconceptualize self and

world all over again. I had to develop a new ego and find new ego-strength. Very similar to a physical rehabilitation process, this was a grueling, moment-by-moment, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week, year-after-year effort. But in the process I learned to appreciate tremendously the value of an ego, even while not being so fooled by the concepts humans have developed about what it is.

Without the ego I did not seem to be able to produce or ingest a directed thought. I spent frightening periods of time utterly lost in the wilderness of that other mind. Though I came to know that mind, to fall utterly in love with it, to respect and not fear it so much, I also came to value greatly the power and uses of an adapted ego with its capacity for directed thought, and I worked hard to recover it.

The task ahead for humans, I believe, is to figure out ways consciously to engage a process similar to what I have just endured—that of relativizing the ego so that the indigenous mind can be re-discovered—but to do so with consciousness, to understand what is going on so that we can cooperate, work through the fear and the misconceptions, and to encourage rather than denigrate each other as the process rolls on. I had to be dragged unwittingly and uncooperatively to the undertaking, because I did not begin to understand for a long time what was happening or why. Though the pain was intense, I discovered that *resistance* to pain is much worse than the pain itself. When I could let go of resistance and the idea that it means something is terribly wrong whenever I feel pain, pain actually could be experienced as an amazing,

informing, vitalizing energy. In some cases, it is fear and resistance that create the blockages which make pain “painful.”

Victor Turner (1985) acknowledges the painfulness of what he calls Ego-death, but says that when this takes place, the Self can live more fully in us. He describes it this way:

It requires openness where there was once repression and secrecy. The upper and lower brain, the cultured and the archaic, the left and right, the masculine and feminine . . . must freely communicate. The Many inside us must be One, in harmony . . . if we are to be one with the many outside us. This, I believe, is the psychogenic, even the neurogenic basis for that mode of human interrelatedness I have sometimes called *communitas*, an undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential relationship which may arise spontaneously among human beings. (p. 286)

To Turner’s last sentence I would add that not only does this kind of relationship spontaneously emerge among human beings, but among the self of the one who undergoes this rite of passage and the rest of life – all beings and Beingness itself. Radical dialogue begins.

Ego must come to understand that it is just one voice among many in the individual’s personality, and only for very particular tasks should it be dominant or in charge. In his wonderful book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, David Abram (1996) explains

humans, in an indigenous and oral context, experience their own consciousness as simply one form of awareness among many others. The traditional magician cultivates an ability to shift out of his or her common state of consciousness precisely in order to make contact with the other organic forms of sensitivity and awareness with which human existence is entwined. Only by temporarily shedding the accepted perceptual logic of his culture can the sorcerer hope to enter into relation with other species



on their own terms; only by altering the common organization of the senses will he be able to enter into rapport with the multiple nonhuman sensibilities that animate the local landscape. It is this, we might say, that defines a shaman: the ability to readily slip out of the perceptual boundaries that demarcate his or her particular culture...in order to make contact with, and learn from, the other powers in the land. His magic is precisely this heightened receptivity to the meaningful solicitations – songs, cries, gestures – of the larger, more-than-human field. (p. 9)

I believe that these powers of the shaman are inherent in all humans, and that the shamanic dimension of the psyche itself, as Thomas Berry describes it, wants to be connected to at this crucial stage in the earth's development. It behooves each of us, as individuals, to reflect more earnestly on our responsibility to the whole of life. Landscapes of mind, heart, soul, and spirit too long forgotten call for reclamation.

### *The Dreamtime*

I have been recording and working with my dreams for most of my life. Long before I discovered Jung or had the privilege of being in analysis, I learned from my spiritual teacher, a woman named Ann Ree Colton, about the importance of dreams. She taught me to write them down, every one, and to take them seriously, as seriously as the very voice of God. For nearly 30 years my dreams have been an almost daily source of perspective, guidance, profound insight, and sometimes prophecy.

As the years of doing this work wore on, my day world became a conversation with my night world. Each informed the other so fascinatingly and intricately that as dream extended into day, and day into dream I became

increasingly aware of a twilight space between waking and sleeping. I could dream when awake, and at times have a certain wakeful consciousness in the dream. The dream world is part of my waking world. It is a landscape that can be tuned into even while performing very ordinary wakeful functions. It is always available. In a very real sense, I experience life as a dream and feel that I am never *not* dreaming and being dreamed.

The dreamtime, though, has its own logics, space and “time” that do not mix so well with the man-made world, or with the human person that we have invented in order to function in the mechanized world, run solely by directed thinking. It is a constant source of challenge to find the bridge between the worlds and to navigate them both without losing either one. The rhythm of the dream is slow, and it is in slowing that it is found. The constant hurrying in the life we have created has nearly eliminated the possibility of staying connected to the dream of the world. In an earlier chapter I described the fact that when I was thrust fully into a confrontation with the unconscious, for a long period of time no wristwatch would run when it was on my arm. I tried several and they would run fine when off my arm, but not on it. I can only guess that the electromagnetic field of that world is incongruent with our world of time and space, and when I was too fully in it my whole body was vibrating at a different rate. I had to struggle hard, at a cellular level, to find the way to live in both worlds at once.

The dream world is visible, audible, and sensate, but not through the use of our ordinary sensory equipment. As humans we do have the innate sensing

capacities to be attuned to the world of the dream, but we must find a different mind, a different intentionality, a different beat, a different rhythm of life to find it. I passionately believe it is crucial that this new mind and rhythm be found in order to recover our integrity with the earth community. The dream world provides the guidance to bring us home to ourselves and back into harmony with the planet and each other.

In his book *Voices of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime*, Robert Lawlor (1991) describes the belief of the Aboriginal people of Australia that the earth itself is a dream and is ever dreaming. Just as we first think, or dream, of a loaf of bread before we bring it into manifestation, so is the earth being dreamed, constantly, in the mind of the ancestors which causes it to come into this visible realm. It is all a dream. The Aborigines maintained an awareness of the visible and nonvisible realms at the same time, and understood their continuity. Lawlor explains:

Aborigines do not perceive space as distance. Space for them is consciousness, and, like consciousness, space is divided into two modes. The perceptible, tangible entities in space are like the conscious mind, and the invisible space between things corresponds to the unconscious mind. The term *unconscious* is misleading: the unconscious mind is always conscious; it is a continuum of dreaming. In Western culture, the presence and activity of the unconscious is obvious only during sleep and dreams. For the Aborigines, the unconscious mind is continuous and ever-present, permeating all levels of existence, just as space invisibly fills everything from galaxies to the interior of the atom. (p. 41)

Earlier in this dissertation I wrote of an experience I had just before falling asleep in which the words came to me, as if in a dream, "You have to listen to the

space between heartbeats." I became aware of the beat of my heart like a drum, and between each beat I experienced falling into a vast space—which seemed spaceless and timeless. The space between was wonderful and I never wanted to come back. Each time my heart beat and brought me back to my body I was irritated. This realm felt like a terrible burden compared to the other. But finally I had the thought, "There is a dance here. Get the beat. Find the rhythm."

I recently had a similar dream in which a friend who is a musician and a poet began to tap out a rhythm, instructing me to place my attention on the space between the taps rather than on the taps themselves. At first it was difficult to do this, but as I learned the dream developed a sweet songlike quality. All through the next day, my consciousness felt shifted away from the beat of the burden of this reality into a serene and subtly joyful state, one in which worry and fear had no place and I could feel the rhythm of the dance.

This space between is, I believe, the space that the Aborigines had equal awareness of along with the visible realm. And it is this consciousness that allowed them a communication with nonhuman as well as human forms of life, and kept them in a creative and harmonious relationship with the Earth. The Western mind has lost touch with the in-between realm. Lawlor (1991) writes:

Five hundred years ago, European colonization of North and South America and Australia began, and so initiated the final death blow to archaic consciousness founded in the Dreaming. The archaic world perception, its customs, initiations and languages, had held the invisible realms as an essential part of every moment of daily life. This world view finally sank into an ocean of blood, as an estimated 60 million hunter-gatherers and other indigenous people perished. (p. 51)

Thomas Berry (1999) concurs:

The moment when the Europeans arrived on the North American continent could be considered as one of the more fateful moments in history, not only of this continent but of the entire planet. As we look back on this occasion it becomes increasingly clear that it was a moment of awesome significance, not only for the indigenous peoples, but for all the various plants and animals of this continent. Every living being on this continent might have shuddered with foreboding when that first tiny sail appeared over the Atlantic horizon. (p. 40)

The imported empirical, positivist, rational mode of consciousness began to take over all human and planetary affairs, as the dominant culture presumed it had outgrown the former ways of knowing and being. This kind of mind was like a new virus that the indigenous peoples had no immunity to.

Now this mind-virus, which has invaded all the way into our cells, must be fought internally and externally by those who attempt to recover the indigenous mind and re-open communication between the dreaming world and the rationalist's world. We need "deep cultural therapy" (p. 165), as Thomas Berry (1999) suggests.

Brian Swimme (1995), in his taped lecture series *Canticle to the Cosmos*, explains his belief that certain dispositions and attitudes in the human group on the planet became maladaptive, even sinister; and that their troubled experiences led to institutions and a society that has ultimately poisoned the biosphere. He says:

I think our situation is that we are diseased in various ways. Not only individually, but as a species. Not only as a species but as a planet. And so what is required is a very deep revivification, a very deep regeneration. We need a new mind, we need a new society, we need a new planet. Other

than that, things are fine! I think if the nature of the human mind, the structure of the human psyche is not changed – disaster. If the structure of the industrial society, the institutions, the economics are not changed – disaster. If the poisoning of the planet is not changed – disaster. All of this requires our deep and individual response. (Tape #11)

If you go back into the beginnings, that is where all the creativity is. The movement back to the gene, to the earliest part of life. As time goes on you get more specialized. Go back behind our cultural roles and self-definitions—behind all of those. How can we imagine ourselves? How can we listen to the genetic word? How can we listen to it in a way that is fresh, that isn't fixated by some recent, recent stuff – cultural ideas that have been around for 6,000 years. That's so recent! We've got to go back two million years. We've got to go back twenty billion years. See my point? That's what is required I think. (Tape #11)

I can tell a story that helps me to get a glimpse of what going back two million years, back to our genetic imperative, might be like for us. It tells me that there is another mind and other senses that we indeed have access to.

In the last chapter I described the 10 days alone that I spent in the wilderness in hopes of listening more deeply to myself and the earth during some personally troubled times. Several days into my stay, I was sitting under the tree in the spot that had become my home, "Here" as I had named it, when a voice spoke to me in words that drifted in just the way words are heard in a dream, audible but not with the physical ears. The words said, "This is irritating me. Can you get it off?" I was quite curious about where a message like this might come from and what it could possibly refer to. I looked around a bit, into the stream, across the ground, up into the tree—and there I saw it. I instantly knew what the message was asking. Hanging across a branch of the tree was a large dead limb that had broken away from above and was awkwardly splayed

around a lower limb. I could sense how uncomfortable this was for the tree. Try as I might, I could not remove it myself, so I waited until the 10 days were over and brought women friends, who were there to join with me after the retreat, down to the tree to help remove the branch. As we finally wrestled it away I felt moving all through my body, like a great wind, an enormous sigh of relief that wasn't mine, and a simple message of gratitude. This tree that had sheltered me, consoled me, and kept me company had shown me how to give something back.

Two years later I returned. I was staying alone at a ranch home about a mile's walk from this spot and went to the tree to say hello. When I got there, remembering our exchange, I asked, "What can I do for you?" There was something, and I saw it and did it. I stayed awhile and reconnected.

That night, in the middle of the night, as I slept outside a very thick fog rolled in from the ocean. Suddenly I was out of my bed, putting on my boots and walking toward the tree. That is all I know—not one rational thought or impulse began this action, which surely was not rational since because of the fog and the pitch-black darkness I could not see as far as my feet or even the hands at the end of my arms, and the tree was quite a distance away through wild and uncertain landscapes. I made my way, not even questioning why. On a couple of occasions I heard the suspicious hiss of large animals nearby who did not seem happy about this creature wandering through their territory – but not even a shiver of fear went through me. Finally, after a long walk in which I could not see anything with the eyes, I made it to the tree—without falling down a canyon,

without running into a bush, branch, or trunk of any of the many trees I passed by on the way, without stumbling over the big rocks, without any problem. As I stood next to her, not at all knowing why I was there, words came in from the tree to me, “What can *I* do for *you*?” I wept. And I spoke to her. There were two things that occurred to me to ask about, and one of them was to be able to communicate what I was experiencing in writing. I realize at this moment that I went to bed after typing the quote of Brian Swimme’s above, not at all sure where to go in this writing from there. Recalling the night when the tree drew me to her, I just now got out of bed, awakened in the wee hours, drawn to my computer to tell this story. The mind of the tree awakening me? Maybe she can best reach me when I’m dreaming.

Brian Swimme mentions during his lectures that jellyfish embark on extremely long migrations and arrive at their destinations without a hitch—doing so without eyes and without a brain. Other sensing mechanisms are available to them. I am thinking that similar mechanisms are also available to us. I made it very safely to that tree in the middle of the night without eyes, and, I believe, without a brain. Something else was pulling, moving, and directing me.

When I reflect upon what that is, an answer that occurs to me is love. It was the simple connection of having done a little something for the tree and the tree’s intention to respond that apparently pulled me out of bed in the middle of the night and into the wilds, unafraid and unconcerned, operating out of an entirely different set of capabilities in the genes. It feels that this gravitational



force that bypasses the mind and pulls things together is love. To a tragic extent, over-development of the rationalist mind has crowded out our experience and awareness of the real nature of love. The sentimental feelings between humans that we call love barely provide a glimpse of what love is. Love is the awesome force that organizes and powers the universe. I believe that Westerners, addicted to the illusion of domination and control, are terrified of love because it is not rational and will not come under the authority of our minds. We cannot control it, so we have banished and denied it. We've tried to tame it just as we have caged the tiger and taken away her territory. We have hurt ourselves terribly by following this course. It is love that remains largely unconscious in this world.

Though we may have some control over the beats, we have no control over the space between the beats. Listening to the space between beats, allowing for the power in the dreamtime to inform conscious and waking life, finding the rhythm of the dance between ego and nonego, effort and surrender, control and surprise, rational and instinctual, cultured and archaic sensibilities—finding the delicate balance between the opposites rather than living more out of one than the other—these are the moves toward recovery for humans. By not facing these challenges we have split ourselves, forgetting the fullness of who we are.

Thomas Berry (1999) explains the task ahead in this way:

A new revelatory experience is needed, an experience wherein human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of the Earth process. This awakening is our human participation in the dream of the Earth, the dream that is carried in its integrity not in any of Earth's cultural expressions but in the depths beyond our capacity for active thought. We can only be sensitized to what is being revealed to us. We

probably have not had such participation in the dream of the Earth since earlier shamanic times, but therein lies our hope for the future for ourselves and for the entire Earth community. (p. 165)

And Robert Lawlor (1991) concludes:

The potential of the Dreamtime is still alive within us, both physically and psychologically, and holds the promise of an astonishing awareness that stretches beyond the bounds of our five senses. No objective can be of greater significance for human survival than the recovery of the Dreaming. (p. 385)

*Bring Back the Banished Dionysus*

When I was staying out in the wilderness alone, I had two dreams with the mythical god Dionysus in them—one in which he arrived riding a cloud, coming down closer to the ground, and another in which I saw him darting through the crowd of life there like a silverfish—I just saw flashes of him. This god of sensuousness, ecstasy, and joy—who was banished from Olympus—is also banished from his natural role in our own psychological life by a rigid, repressive, restrictive, puritanical culture that is fearful of the body, that wants to shape and control it at all costs. Since a god can never be killed but will ultimately reappear in some way, due to Dionysus' ejection from conscious life, he returns in obsessions, addictions, and perverted lusts. Much of my journey in recovering the indigenous mind has been to reclaim the role of Dionysian ecstasy in my physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual life. Strong inner and outer taboos have been developed over time which make this a sometimes terrifying endeavor—as facing taboos always feels dangerous and induces anxiety and suffering. But I am convinced that bringing back Dionysus is

urgent work that humans are called to do in order to regain health and balance in every aspect of life.

The myth of Dionysus tells us that as a child, in order to protect the young boy from the rage of Hera, he was temporarily turned into a young goat and sent to a beautiful mountain where he was raised by nymphs, the joyous female spirits of the forests. Robert Johnson (1987) says of this phase of his upbringing:

His teachers were many and varied: The Muses inspired him with poetry and music. The satyrs, half-man, half-goat, taught him the wonders of dance and exuberant sexuality. The sileni, part-horse, part-man, spirits of the springs and rivers, taught him wisdom. Silenus, the intoxicated old man who was Dionysus's predecessor, taught the young god virtue. (p. 7)

Certainly all of these animal/human images suggest that any activation of Dionysus in our psychological life will assist us in awakening the animal nature that is an important part of who we are. Children, not yet fully adapted to our modernized ideas about what it means to be human, know well these parts of themselves. My youngest daughter used to hate it when, trying to be responsible to her spiritual upbringing, I tried to read to her stories from the various scriptures or about saints from the different religions. Yuck. She only wanted animal stories. The only TV she really enjoyed was watching the Discovery channel shows that taught her every thing imaginable about every conceivable animal. She was endlessly fascinated.

One of the most beautiful songs I have ever heard was written by songwriter/poet R. B. Morris (1997). Though the haunting strains of music can't be heard in this medium, nor the soulful quality in RB's voice as he sings it, the

poetry in the lyrics evokes memories of the Dionysian quality of childhood that I wish we would never lose. The song is titled "Pot Hole Street."

I was raised on a pot hole street  
 Had dreamy trees and vacant lots  
 Open fields running back of the fence  
 I saw faces in the clouds  
 I sat and watched them pass  
 I was always hanging out  
 In the leaves of grass

I was king of the world then  
 I held court over wonderment  
 A jungle lord wildly content  
 I swung from limb to limb  
 I swam the sea  
 The wild beasts were my friends  
 It was meant to be

I put feathers in my hair  
 I painted my face  
 I was a warrior  
 I was Crazy Horse  
 I was a man  
 I fought the forked-tongue Yellow Hair  
 When he came to take the land  
 I was the Great Spirit  
 I never knew defeat  
 They killed me under a white flag  
 They were chicken shit

I saw the clear blue eye of time  
 I saw the shadow and the sunshine  
 I sat at the river's edge  
 And dreamed the water round the bend  
 I pushed my raft into the stream  
 I pushed the river into the dream  
 Adrift upon the great Glad Day

The dreamtime was surely a vivid reality to this young person, and the ecstasy of Dionysus not yet banished. The foreshadowing of such may be reflected, however, in his battle with the forked-tongue Yellow Hair who killed

him under a white flag. That holocaust continues as the enculturation and education processes murder this gorgeous element of our wonder-filled psyches.

I remember the daughter I referred to above, Arlene, emphatically saying to me when she was in the second grade, "Mama, they make us sit in little desks all day long and hold pencils. It is not *natural!* We are *children.*" Beginning soon after that, she had so much homework every single night that the quality of time referred to in R. B. Morris's beautiful song became a forgotten era, as it does for nearly every one of us. Apollo is now lord of Olympus, and Dionysus is exiled. The necessity to utilize directed thinking all day long crowds out time, space, and any sense of the validity of dreaming and fantasy thinking. We are, in fact, reprimanded for daydreaming, as though that makes us lazy and useless. These attitudes become internalized, and the pattern is set. An image that never stops haunting me is of recently seeing a young boy, maybe 9 years old, seriously working out on a treadmill at the local gym. I can hardly bear all that that implies.

Refreshingly, in Africa Apollo does not yet hold such sway. Some of my favorite memories of my stay in the rural village in Kenya are of watching the women singing and dancing all day long. They must have known hundreds of songs. At any given moment they were just as likely to be singing as talking, and just as likely to be dancing as walking or standing. Any occasion—from planting, to washing a dish, to stirring the soup—was reason to break out into another song, which they bellowed with rich voices from glowing faces, accompanied by

dances that put every limb and joint of the body into rhythmic motion. One late evening, after rising with the sun that morning, working in the fields all day, carrying water from the river and chopping wood to make the fire, while we were cooking dinner in the kitchen hut I asked one of the women who spoke English, "Aren't you tired?" I was pooped. She looked at me curiously, as if to say that "tired" wasn't a concept she was familiar with. Finally she registered the meaning, and said "Tired? No. We stay in happy place and happy time." And soon they were singing a cooking song while they danced around the fire.

Once they asked the few of us white folk there to sing a song for them. "A song?" we choked. We looked at each other. Surely we all know a song. We tried to come up with something, and fumbled through a few lyrics with our weak voices and stiff bodies. I was never, ever so aware of our poverty as white people. These people who have nothing material, live in huts with dirt floors, never have had electricity or plumbing, and wouldn't know where to put any things if they owned them seemed so rich to me. Rich! And they believe that we, pale and stiff and weak as we are, are rich because we have stuff. Stuff! Oh if we could only share our specific kinds of wealth with each other.

Another very poignant poverty that we suffer in Western culture which became very clear to me during this visit is the lack of physical touch that we experience. My first night there the women were showing me how to wash my filthy feet before I got into bed. The floor of the hut was dirt, so it was a trick to get from the pan of water to the bed without re-soiling the feet. About five

women were helping me, and I think every one of them was touching me in some way the entire time. This was absolutely natural to them. We were all crushed together like a little pile of puppies. Their skin did not smell of perfumes and lotions like ours does. It smelled like earth and body, and was richly wonderful. I noticed that they touched each other constantly, and draped themselves around each other with abandon at any time during the days, especially while they listened or relaxed.

In a classroom of adults that I was teaching here at home, we sat on the floor for a certain exercise. I pointed out the tacitly required two or three feet between each body that we all invariably observe. In Africa, at least where I stayed, the people would be piled together in clumps, naturally and affectionately sitting with bodies nestled together and arms entwined. I understand our reasons for holding personal space and appreciate them in certain ways, but I also believe the skin to be an organ that is made to be touched and stroked regularly for overall health of the system—the nervous, emotional, physical, psychological systems. As a divorced woman, I would have to have a sexual encounter or pay a massage therapist in order to be touched. We just don't do it! If my daughter runs her fingers through my hair I almost faint with ecstasy, the starvation level is so acute. I once saw a child in a hospital who appeared to be an infant. She was in a crib, but she was actually 9 years old. The nurses explained that the child's diagnosis is called, "failure to thrive." Her condition was the result of not having been touched all through her childhood. She did not

grow. I do not think the need for touch changes so radically as we grow toward adulthood. I believe that we are failing to thrive in significant ways because of this deprivation.

In our culture phobias about touching have become so heightened that I could get fired from my job if I touch a student; people are arrested and reputations are ruined for touching. The god that is banished comes back in sick perversions, abusive relationships, rapes, or unholy fondling of children. Something needs to be done.

One of my college students mentioned to me recently that Isaac Newton died a virgin. My heart stopped. Isaac Newton died a virgin! The man whose physics helped to change our concept of the universe from that of a wondrously alive being into a big, soulless machine, and who taught us to think of our bodies and brains as just machines also—this man wasn't having sex! No wonder his physics were so sterile, maybe even rageful. How different might his view of the universe have been if he had allowed himself the experience of true physical intimacy? The fact that we celebrated his physics for so very long may be a result of lost Dionysian life.

I love the sentiments expressed in this poem written by D. H. Lawrence (1964/1977) which he titled "Future Religion":

The future of religion lies in the mystery of touch.  
The mind is touchless, so is the will, so is the spirit.  
First comes the death, then the pure aloneness, which is permanent  
then the resurrection into touch.



At a recent conference, Brian Swimme (2002) spoke frankly to his audience, asking that we consider the fact that nature created in woman a clitoris. This part of the anatomy was designed by nature solely for purpose of pleasure. It has absolutely no other function whatsoever than to induce the experience of pleasure. This fact, he suggested, tells us something about nature's too often overlooked intentions for humans. Possibly, he said, "Our journey as a species may be to explore the erotic depths of moment after moment after moment."

Not long ago the thought occurred to me that if we as humans look to our origins to find out who we are, we should consider that every single human life begins with an orgasm. That is the big bang, the original feeling and impulse out of which every one of us has emerged. Absolutely ecstatic pleasure is the very bottom of our being. Why do we not claim this experience as our most natural right? Why do we fear and restrict its expression? A student told me of a state in our union that still has on its books an official law stating that the use of only one sexual position is allowed by the government. This is, thank goodness, an unenforced law, but nevertheless it has not yet been removed from the books. It is illegal in that state to enjoy or explore any other sexual position than the one the lawmakers decided upon, presumably because it was the least pleasurable and most functional. Why are we so afraid of pleasure?

No wonder we have cut ourselves away from our indigenous minds and the mind of nature, if we are afraid of ecstasy and celebration. As Thomas Berry (1999) puts it:

In accord with indigenous modes of thinking throughout the world we might give a certain emphasis to the need to understand the universe primarily as celebration . . . .

For in the end the universe can only be explained in terms of celebration. It is all an exuberant expression of existence itself (p. 19, 170).

Nature is constantly celebrating, and to be in harmony with her is to be in a certain continuous ecstatic state. During my darkest hours, our rosebush was my teacher. No matter how my heart was breaking, this bush just kept pushing out, generously and profusely, such resplendently colored, magnificently elegant productions that nothing else seemed to matter in the face of such beauty. The message of celebration sent shock waves through my grief. Human worries seemed like they belonged to another, less important realm.

My little dog celebrates all day long. All I have to do is get up in the morning and he runs 20 circles around the house to celebrate the occasion. He practically does cartwheels over the return of my daughter from school, a ride in the car, a visit from a friend, or just our movement from one room to another. It is all so thrilling that his little body can barely contain it. He literally vibrates with excitement. What would happen to us as humans if we turned off the TV and tuned in to this wildly celebratory universe? As in R. B. Morris's song, "I pushed my raft into the stream, I pushed the river into the dream, Adrift upon the great Glad Day."

C. G. Jung (1997) refers to human consciousness as it has been developed as "an autonomous complex" (p. 154), and he writes that the Dionysian

mysteries are to bring people back into connection with the animal nature within, and with nature itself. They bring the various complexes and aspects of the psyche back into connection with a center. He says:

The Dionysian mysteries . . . form a bridge between [the person] and the original primordial man concealed beneath the historical layers of the past . . . . The original pattern is unveiled, the original law is reestablished . . . . The break between man and nature has been abolished, and there is a bridge once more. (pp. 154-155)

His use of the image of a bridge in connection with the Dionysian mysteries intrigued me. While writing this chapter, I had a wonderful dream in which a break out of ecstatic energy occurred on a bridge. Here is the dream:

I am driving to my cabin in the woods and my car breaks down just before I get to a bridge. I get out of the car to walk home. As I cross the bridge on foot lots of people are there also. Suddenly, rather organically, we all break out into song and dancing as we travel across the bridge. It just starts happening, so that is how we travel—joyously dancing and singing together as we go. By the time I get home I feel thoroughly nourished, energized, ecstatic and happy by the energy generated among us. I reflect back on car travel and realize how tragically much is lost by our solitary journeys in cars that do not include the body, singing, dancing, or connection with others. When we arrive at our destinations in cars we feel isolated and depleted rather than full of life like this.

This dream reminds me of the words of my African friend who was so puzzled when I asked her about being tired, commenting that they stay in “happy place and happy time” through dancing and singing. The energy that was firing through my body in that dream seemed inexhaustible and was so very sweet. It was in distinct contrast to the depletion experienced in the car travel—which I imagine is a metaphor for the lonely, functional, noncelebratory, mechanical mode of being we must engage in order to get by in our modern

world. The car travel may also reference directed thinking, which Jung says is depleting and exhausting. Dreaming or fantasy thinking is effortless and energizing. So much vibrant, natural energy is limitlessly available to us, but the over use of directed thinking in order to maintain our mechanized life keeps us exiled from this source. We seem to have forgotten that it is even there.

Thomas Berry (1999) writes of the Sundance ceremony of the Lakota Sioux tribe in North America, explaining that this dance is one of the most dramatic forms of cosmological integration of the human with the universe. It generates enormous amounts of psychic energy which enables that community to accept the difficulties of life with an endurance, equanimity, and perspective that amazes the Euro-Americans. While physical energy is *diminished* by use and by the numbers who use it, he notes, psychic energy is *increased* by use and by the numbers who participate. He adjures that not only must the indigenous peoples be encouraged and allowed to continue their ceremonies, but we should learn from them. "We need to create new liturgies based on the transformation episodes of the evolutionary sequence in the physical, geological, and biological stages of development. In both cases the inner psychic resources of the human venture are restored and increased." (p. 171)

I am convinced that nature herself will generously provide us with inspiration and ideas to create these liturgies in surprising ways, individually and collectively, if we will just turn our attention to the need and the desire. We will have to be visionary and courageous enough to loosen our fearful grasp

upon all things rational, to dethrone the ego, to participate rather than dominate, to be open to new ways of being and living. It will require facing squarely the darkness of who we have become if we are to change course; to loosen our defenses, come out of denial, and then shake it off and move on—just as an animal shakes off an experience and moves on. We will need to forgive and love each other and ourselves in new ways. And we must join with abandon the elaborate celebration of the universe as it unfolds.

*Re-enchanting the World*

It should be said at once that the *completely* profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit . . . . Desacralization pervades the entire experience of the nonreligious man of modern societies and, in consequence, he finds it increasingly difficult to rediscover the existential dimensions of religious man in the archaic societies.

-Mircea Eliade

It is a sad reality that we have created for ourselves, to see and experience the world as soulless, mechanized matter to be plundered and utilized in order to feed an endlessly devouring consumer lifestyle. The insanity into which we have devolved must be seen clearly and bravely confronted. It took women some excruciating centuries to re-convince themselves and the world that we have souls, rights, dignity, and power. Finally our culture is beginning to comprehend the preposterousness of those disastrously deluded concepts regarding the female gender, concepts even espoused by such recent formidable minds as those of Freud and Nietzsche among many others. There is much work yet to be done at a deep, cellular level in order to recuperate from this misapprehension and its

consequences, but at least the effort has begun. Who now will do the same work on behalf of the nonhuman world? It is absolutely as ludicrous and outrageous to believe that this world has no soul, no rights, no dignity or consciousness as it was to believe such about women—but few in our Western world are awakened out of the general pathology. The momentum of the holocaust against this world increases rather than decreases year by year and cannot be sustained much longer. James Hillman (1985) offers this perspective:

The self-knowledge that depth psychology offers is not enough if the depths of the world soul are neglected. A self-knowledge that rests within a cosmology which declares the mineral, vegetable, and animal world beyond the human person to be impersonal and inanimate is not only inadequate. It is delusional. No matter how well we may know ourselves, we remain walking, talking ghosts, cosmologically set apart from the other beings of our milieu. From Plato through the alchemists on whom Jung leans, and for Jung himself, it was not the personal anima alone that counted but also the anima mundi. The work on one's own person aims to open the senses and the heart to the life and beauty of an animated world. (p. 108)

Recovery will occur only as individuals, one by one, take personal responsibility for doing the intensive, difficult work of facing their own delusions and insanity, that which has inevitably developed in the private as well as the collective psyche. We cannot afford to wait for governments or agencies or any forces outside of our own selves, our own hearts, to resolve this. My personal belief is that renewal will be achieved as the indigenous mind is reawakened, its modes of perception revived, and its awareness integrated and interwoven with the mind that has been developed through modernization over the last centuries. I do not at all believe we can or should throw the baby out

with the bath water. The focus and capabilities of this recent mind are extraordinary and valuable, but must now be placed in appropriate relationship to the other brains and to the heart, to more archaic ways of knowing and being.

When a solid intention to do this work is made, great forces of nature rush in to assist. The individual is not alone in the journey. There is much grief to be endured, and many terrors in the utter chaos of transformation, as well as unavoidable pain—but just as vivid as these experiences are the overwhelmingly tender encounters with the raw power of love that is operating the universe—a love that is everywhere present, and which absolutely sees us, cares for us, and wants to be let in. The diabetic suffers because the cells cannot open themselves to receive the sugar that is everywhere in the bloodstream. I believe that the general psychological condition in the modern human is just such a disorder. The sweetness and enchantment of the universe are locked out at a cellular level due to the tragically flawed concepts we hold in the mind.

To rehabilitate, significant ferocity and courage are required. No more good, well-mannered, politely social Dr. Jekyll with an un-integrated Mr. Hyde running rampant. No more longsuffering, virtuous Job with a vicious, amoral Yahweh thundering from without. These forces must be brought into the personality—with consciousness, nobility, and morality. This process utterly shakes down the adapted self. But that self must go anyway if we are to survive, so we have got to cooperate and let it go.

Camelot is over. We tried. Princess Diana, JFK Jr., and my own well-designed life all went down in flames. It is time to piece through the ravages and create something new.

Where does it begin? One place to start is to commit, always and only, to tell the truth, the truth of the heart—which is not always the same as the truth of the mind or the truth of the ego—and to tell it as firmly, gently, and precisely as possible. Never to withhold it. The illusions and delusions we suffer begin with one lie, maybe just a lie to oneself. But the problems proceed from there. One lie needs another to follow it up, and then another, and then a worse one, until the deception is so deep and rampant that personal and collective integrity are not even believed to be possibilities any longer. It is not even aspired to. An aptitude for successful trickery and deception becomes a more sought after skill than truth telling.

The closer I came to the Earth and the nonhuman realm as an intelligent, animated, communicating world, the more thunder I experienced in my heart whenever I tried to lie to myself. The earth holds our capacity for conscience, morality, and integrity, and will bring us home to ourselves if we let her.

One of the most important role models of my life, and a friend of my family's as I was growing up, was R. Buckminster Fuller (1992). In 1927 at the age of 32, Bucky stood at the edge of Lake Michigan ready to throw himself into it so that he could end his life. Suddenly he was struck by the realization of his



personal responsibility to the rest of life on this planet. In a flash he understood that he did not belong to himself, but to the universe. His life was not his to take. Utterly disenchanted with the prevailing, exclusively selfish, human socioeconomic power structures and the governing political system in which he lived, he decided to make the rest of his life an experiment by which he would undertake to discover “what—if anything—a mature individual might be able to do effectively on behalf of all humanity that would be inherently impossible of accomplishment by any political system, nation, or private-enterprise corporation no matter how powerful or well-endowed” (p. 2). His commitment to discover what an average, single individual can do on behalf of all humanity without the help of any of the prevailing power structures began what would be an exceptional life of enormous and effective contributions to science, philosophy, ecology, and nearly every strata of human endeavor because of his grasp and articulation of generalized principles. My mind was continually blown, rearranged, and inspired whenever I heard him speak, but what I remember most about him was the extraordinary, simple, human love that was unfailingly felt radiating like a powerful force field from his highly energetic, very small body.

And I remember the last conversation that I had with him not long before he died in 1983. During dinner in a restaurant he seemed agitated and distracted. I made some inquiries, and he told me that he was honestly worried about whether humans were going to make it in the universe or not. I asked him, “Who

will decide?" He replied, "God will decide." I increasingly realize that God is us. We have to decide.

A point that Bucky forever tried to impress upon people all over the world was that even in the face of his achievements which so impressed others, he knew that he was not an exceptional human in any way whatsoever. This was a very important truth to him. He strongly believed that he was equipped with only very average capabilities and that there was not anything that he had done, or was capable of doing, that any other human being, if the intention was there, could not do probably even better. His accomplishments were a natural result of clear intention and unwavering commitment.

I have always remembered with respect that one of the first promises Bucky Fuller (1981), made to himself at the outset of his life experiment was, in an effort always to do his own thinking, to speak only the truth. He articulated a "driving conviction that all of humanity is in peril of extinction if each one of us does not dare, now and henceforth, always to tell only the truth, and all the truth, and to do so promptly—right now" (p. xi).

This kind of courageous undertaking requires being, in the words of poet e. e. cummings "nobody-but-yourself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—[and it] means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting" (Fuller, 1981, p. xii). Cummings remarked that expressing nobody-but-yourself in words is the work of the poet, and is harder than anybody can possibly imagine. He wrote, "And so

my advice to all young people who wish to become poets is: do something easy, like learning how to blow up the world—unless you're not only willing, but glad, to feel and work and fight till you die" (p. xii). Learning to tell only the truth is a similar challenge. It is the poetry of being nobody-but-yourself.

Learning how to blow up the world is what we do when we cannot tell the truth, because blowing up the world says that the problem is out there, in those guys. Telling the truth means confronting oneself, and, as Jung (1944/1953) writes, "People will do anything, no matter how absurd, to avoid facing their own souls" (pp. 99-101). He commented upon how readily people will practice an esoteric yoga, follow strange diets, learn books by heart, read mystic texts—all because they do not have the slightest faith that the good is already there in their own souls. Here is the paradoxical crux of the problem. I believe it is generally assumed that the fear of facing ourselves, telling the truth about ourselves, is due to the frightening extent of darkness, error, foolishness, and incompetence we have pushed into the shadow and would finally have to admit. These, to be sure, must eventually be owned. But harder than that, for some reason, is mustering the courage required to confront the magnificence and splendor of who we are as humans, and to take responsibility for developing and utilizing our heretofore unacknowledged, astounding potentials.

I remember one time looking at a body as it danced with abandon to some drum music. Suddenly I caught a glimpse of this scene with another kind of eye.

The body appeared to my vision as a solar flare, directly connected to the sun. And the thought occurred to me—how cute that we put suits and shoes on these flamey bodies! To the mind I was in at that moment, it seemed oddly charming, like putting doll clothes on a lizard, that we should dress ourselves up in such ways. Yet we have incongruously come to allow the clothes to become suggestive in our minds of a concept of the self that is so much smaller and more limited than who and what we truly are. To re-enchant the world we will need to discover vastly more of the truth about who we are as humans and hopefully fall deeply in love with ourselves, maybe for the first time. The self-hatred and self-deprecation learned through religious and philosophic traditions that have denigrated nature and the body have thwarted a more complete and lucid self-awareness, and have turned us against our own powers and the world we are blessed to live within.

Awakening to ourselves will not successfully take place without the presence of a radical humility. Perhaps strangely, when I think of the face of this kind of humility I do not see a wilting saint, I see the face of a tiger. It is that kind of vigilance, strength, self-awareness, purposefulness, and raw power that is required to undergo the deconstruction of old conceptual worlds, to revive the sleeping potentials and figure out how to rightfully employ them, to be sure that the new mind and new perceptual powers are utilized only in service to the Self and its intentions rather than in service to the ego, its priorities and desires.

These aptitudes are not personal; they are universal. Any hubris or pride allowed

into the mind will derail the process, and would be not only foolish but also dangerous. It takes radical humility to find the strength to see and say how far we have gone astray, how wrong we have personally been about many things; it takes radical humility to meaningfully endure ego dissolution and the chaos of transformation, and it takes radical humility to open oneself to forgotten powers innate within the human and never to take them personally.

There is so much fear in the world—fear of change, fear of loss, fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of failure, fear of aging. Because of fear we have built fortresses around our thought systems and armies of defense mechanisms prepared to do battle, all of which make it so difficult to consider the impending changes pressing upon the world psyche right now. I think every mood, every sorrow, every worry needs to be sung, should be danced, must be moved through the body rather than denied and frozen into the fear system. A harmony with these multiple natural energies can be re-established.

At this time, the Western world that so condescends to the rest of the planet and presumes to impose its progressive ways upon other cultures must enter an era of radical humility. What have we done? How wrongly have we been thinking? Why are we so afraid? What can we learn from a respectful, inquisitive dialogue with those we have preferred to suppress and conquer—and especially with those parts of ourselves that these outer beings, human and

nonhuman alike, represent? These questions must be conscientiously reflected upon. Soon. Now.

I was very moved when at a recent conference Brian Swimme told the story of a brief dialogue he had with his teacher, Thomas Berry. He confessed to Thomas that he thought he would like to attain enlightenment. Thomas asked him, simply, "Why don't you do something more significant?" Brian inquired about what that might be. And Thomas responded, "Help to give birth to the more viable human."

I felt this articulation as a gift to my own heart and soul, also. The work of giving birth to the more viable human begins within. We must put on our own oxygen masks before we can assist others, but then we must assist others because the plane is going down. For me personally, the labor involved in this birth has not been an easy one, but I do not believe it has to be that way. I will always revere the image of the tiger who walked up to me in my dream, with a baby tiger emerging out of her chest. She was not in pain. She was very peaceful. She lay at my feet so that I could help her birth the baby, and I heard the words "the birth canal of the heart." I was, in the dream, moving into my new home, one on open plains, with no roof on the house to prevent me from seeing the sky. My heart was in great labor, but was being opened to a new life in a welcoming world. The earth in that dream was rich with life and intelligence. The beings there longed for my presence and assistance as much as I did theirs. This world is

ours to enter if we will open our hearts to it. The love it has for us is immeasurable. The celebration of new life is ready to begin. Let's begin.

## References

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Bache, C. (2000). *Dark night, early dawn: Steps to a deep ecology of mind*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Barfield, O. (1979). *History, guilt and habit*. Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press.
- Berry, T. (1988). *The dream of the earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Berry, T. (1999). *The great work: Our way into the future*. New York: Bell Tower.
- Berry, T., & Clarke, T. (1991). *Befriending the earth*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications.
- Bohm, D. (1985). *Unfolding meaning: A weekend of dialogue with David Bohm*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (1994). *Thought as a system*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bruns, G. (1992). *Hermeneutics ancient and modern*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou* (R. G. Smith, Trans.). New York: Collier. (Original work published 1923)
- Childre, D. & Martin, H. (1999). *The heartmath solution*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Cooper, J. C. (1978). *An illustrated encyclopedia of traditional symbols*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Corbett, L. (Speaker). (2001). *Spirituality beyond religion: The direct experience of the sacred*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Corbin, H. (1969). *Creative imagination in the sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* (Manheim, R. Trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1958)



- Dante Alighieri. (1948). *The divine comedy: The inferno, purgatorio and paradiso* (L. G. White, Trans.) New York: Pantheon.
- Deming, A. H. (Ed.). (1996). *Poetry of the American west*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dossey, L. (1999). *Reinventing medicine*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Driver, T. (1998). *Liberating rites: Understanding the transformative power of ritual*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Edinger, E. F. (1992). *Transformation of the god-image: An elucidation of Jung's Answer to Job*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Edinger, E. F. (1996). *The new god-image: A study of Jung's key letters concerning the evolution of the western god-image*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Edinger, E. F. (1999). *Archetype of the apocalypse*. Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company.
- Eliade, M. (1957). *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion*. San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt, Inc.
- Eliade, M. (1958). *Rites and symbols of initiation: The mysteries of birth and rebirth* (W. R. Trask, Trans.). Dallas: Spring Publications.
- Eliot, T. S. (1943). *Four quartets*. San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Forbush, W. B. (1967). *Fox's book of martyrs*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. (Original work published 1926)
- Fox, M., & Sheldrake, R. (1996). *The physics of angels: Exploring the realm where science meets spirit*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco
- Freud, S. (1950). *Totem and Taboo* (J. Strachey, Trans.) New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company. (Original work published 1913)
- Freud, S. (1961). *Civilization and its discontents* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company. (Original work published 1930)
- Fuller, R. B. (1981). *Critical path*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Fuller, R. B. (1992). *Cosmography: A posthumous scenario for the future of humanity*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

- Grof, S. (1993). *The holotropic mind: The three levels of human consciousness and how they shape our lives*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.) New York: State University of New York Press. (Original work published 1953)
- Hillman, J. (1975). *Loose ends: Primary papers in archetypal psychology*. Irving, TX: Spring Publications.
- Hillman, J. (1981). *The thought of the heart and the soul of the world*. Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, Inc.
- Hillman, J. (1985). *Anima: An anatomy of a personified notion*. Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, Inc.
- Hillman, J. (1997). *Dream animals*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.
- Howard, R. (Director). (2002). *A beautiful mind* [Film]. Burbank, CA: Universal Studios.
- Jensen, D. (2001, April). Saving the indigenous soul: An interview with Martin Prechtel. *The Sun*, pp. 4-15.
- Johnson, R. (1986). *Inner work*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Johnson, R. (1987). *Ecstasy: Understanding the psychology of joy*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Jung, C. G. (1933). *Modern man in search of a soul* (W. S. Dell and C. F. Baynes, Trans.) San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt & Brace.
- Jung, C. G. (1953). *Psychology and alchemy*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 12). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1944)
- Jung, C. G. (1956). *Symbols of transformation*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 5). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1912)
- Jung, C. G. (1974). *Dreams* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1975). Letters to Oskar Schmitz. *Psychological Perspectives*, 6(1), 79-95.

- Jung, C. G. (1978). *Aion: Researches into the phenomenology of the self* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1959)
- Jung, C. G. (1985). *The psychology of the transference* (2d ed.). In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The Collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 16). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1946)
- Jung, C. G. (1989). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (A. Jaffe, Ed.), (R. and C. Winston, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1961)
- Jung, C. G. (1989). *Mysterium coniunctionis*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 14). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1963)
- Jung, C. G. (1991). *Answer to Job*. In R. F. C. Hull (Trans.), *The collected works of C.G. Jung* (Vol. 11). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1958)
- Jung, C. G. (1997). *Visions: Notes of the seminar given in 1930-1934 by C. G. Jung* (Vol. 1). (C. Douglas, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1998). *Seminar on Nietzsche's Zarathustra* (J. L. Jarrett, Ed. and Trans.) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (2002). *The earth has a soul: The nature writings of C.G. Jung*. (M. Sabini, Ed.) Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Jung, C. G., & Kerenyi, K. (1949). *Essays on a science of mythology*. New York: Bollingen Foundation, March Banks Press.
- Kalsched, D. (1996). *The inner world of trauma*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Keats, J. (1990). *The Oxford authors: John Keats*. (E. Cook, Ed.) Great Britain: Oxford University Press.
- Kharatidi, O. (1996). *Entering the circle*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Kremer, J. (1992a). The dark night of the scholar: Reflections on culture and ways of knowing. *ReVision*, 14(4), 169-177.
- Kremer, J. (1992b). Whither dark night of the scholar? Further reflections on culture and ways of knowing. *ReVision*, 15(1), 4-11.

- Kremer, J. (1996). Evolving into what, and for whose purposes? *ReVision*, 18(3), 27-36.
- Krippner, S. (1992). Bridging realities: A challenge for the inner shaman. *ReVision*, 14(4), p 168.
- Kristeva, J. (1989). *Black Sun: Depression and melancholia* (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press. (Original work published 1987)
- LaChapelle, D. (1988). *Sacred land, sacred sex, rapture of the deep: Concerning deep ecology and celebrating life*. Durango, CO: Kivaki Press.
- Lasch, C. (1979). *The culture of narcissism*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Lawlor, R. (1991). *Voices of the first day*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions.
- Lawrence, D. H. (1977). *The complete poems of D. H. Lawrence*. (V. de Sola Pinto and W. Roberts, Ed.) Great Britain and New York: Penguin Books. (Original work published 1964)
- Levine, P. (1997). *Waking the tiger – healing trauma*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lowen, A. (1985). *Narcissism: Denial of the true self*. New York: Collier Books.
- Marlan, S. (Ed.) (1997). *Fire in the stone: The alchemy of desire*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Marlan, S. (Speaker). (2000). *The black sun: Archetypal image of the non-self* [Cassette recording]. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Meier, C. A. (1989). *Healing dream and ritual*. Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Däimon Vërlag.
- Morris, R. B. (1997). Pot hole street. On *Take that ride* [compact disc]. Nashville, TN: Oh Boy Records.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology and applications*. Newbury Park, London, and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Palmer, R. E. (1969). *Hermeneutics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

- Pearce, J. C. (2002). *The biology of transcendence: A blueprint of the human spirit*. Rochester, VT: Park Street Press.
- Radin, P. (1953). *The world of primitive man*. New York: Henry Schuman, Inc.
- Rilke, R. M. (1975). *Rilke on love and other difficulties* (J. L. Mood, Trans.). New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Rilke, R. M. (1982). *The selected poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*. (S. Mitchell, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Rilke, R. M. (1996). *Rilke's book of hours* (A. Barrows and J. Macy, Trans.). New York: Riverhead Books.
- Romanyshyn, R. D. (2001). *Mirror and metaphor: Images and stories of psychological life*. Pittsburg, PA: Trivium Publications.
- Romanyshyn, R. D. (1989.) *Technology as symptom and dream*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Roose-Evans, J. (1994). *Passages of the soul: Ritual today*. Shaftesbury, Dorset, Rockport, MA, and Brisbane, Queensland: Element.
- Rumi. (1993). *Birdsong: Fifty-three short poems* (C. Barks, Trans.) Athens, GA: Maypop.
- Saayman, G. S. (Ed.) (1990). *Modern South Africa in search of a soul: Jungian perspectives on the wilderness within*. Boston: Sigo Press.
- Santorelli, S. (1999). *Heal thyself: Lessons on mindfulness in medicine*. New York: Bell Tower.
- Sardello, R. (Speaker). (2000). *The heart of archetypal psychology* [Cassette recording]. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Schwartz-Salant, N. (1982). *Narcissism and character transformation*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Smith, C. M. (1997). *Jung and shamanism in dialogue*. New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Somé, M. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. Portland, OR: Swan/Raven & Company.
- Somé, M. (1994). *Of water and the spirit*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

- Somé, M. (1998). *The healing wisdom of Africa*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Somé, S. (1997). *The spirit of intimacy*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Hills Books.
- Swimme, B. (Speaker). (1995). *Canticle to the cosmos*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Swimme, B. (1996). *The hidden heart of the cosmos: Humanity and the new story*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Swimme, B. (Speaker). (2002). *Allurement*. Conference: The Cosmological Imagination - Transforming World Views for the Planetary Era. Berkeley, CA: Conference Recording Service, Inc.
- Tarnas, R. (1991). *The passion of the western mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Tarnas, R. (Speaker). (2000). *The myth of western civilization*. In: *Psychology at the threshold: An international symposium of archetypal psychology* (Tape Series). Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Torgovnick, M. (1990). *Gone primitive: Savage intellects, modern lives*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.
- Torgovnick, M. (1997). *Primitive passions: Men, women and the quest for ecstasy*. New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Turner, E. (1987). *The spirit and the drum*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.
- Turner, E. (1992). *Experiencing ritual: A new interpretation of African healing*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Turner, V. (1985). *On the edge of the bush*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.
- Van der Post, L. (1955). *The dark eye in Africa*. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc.

- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage* (M. B. Vizedom, and G. L. Coffee, Trans.) Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1909)
- von Franz, M-L. (1980). *Alchemy*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- von Franz, M-L. (1998). *C .G. Jung: His myth in our time*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books. (Original work published 1972)
- Woodman, M. (1993). *Conscious femininity*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.
- Woodman, M. (1998). (Speaker). *Sitting by the Well*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.
- Zoja, L. (1989). *Drugs, addiction and initiation: The modern search for ritual*. Boston: Sigo Press.