

SOUL RECOVERY

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
ON PSYCHEDELIC & SHAMANIC HEALING

EDITED BY BRIAN JAMES

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Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles
is to school an intelligence and make it a soul? A place where
the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways!

John Keats

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Introduction

In my book *Yoga & Plant Medicine* (2019), I proposed yoga as a much-needed complementary practice to the therapeutic use of psychedelics and plant medicines, mainly because I'd personally experienced so much benefit in combining the two modalities. As I wrote then, my yoga practice helped me prepare for and integrate my plant medicine experiences, and my plant medicine experiences helped me go deeper into my yoga practice.

Perhaps I was a little naive in thinking that other folks might be willing to take up a daily practice and stick with it for a number of years (let alone a lifetime). After working with hundreds of people in my counseling practice over the past 8 years and teaching hundreds, if not thousands, of yoga classes in the same period, I can confidently (though admittedly with some sadness) say that it's a rare person who is willing to dedicate themselves to a home yoga practice that includes the disciplines of *asana* (postures), *pranayama* (breathwork), chanting and meditation — all essential ingredients of a yoga practice that actually works

the way it's meant to.

Taking a posture class a few times a week and maybe doing a little pranayama here and there, you'll certainly experience some benefits, but it won't be the radically transformative practice that it's meant to be.

It seems that modern psychedelic practitioners and psychedelic-assisted therapy patients are much more interested in understanding themselves psychologically rather than engaging in (admittedly esoteric) practices that affect transformation through somewhat mysterious means. I shouldn't be surprised — we are, after all, living in a psychological, rather than mythological or theological age. Carl Jung observed that when the myths of Western culture began to fade they were replaced with psychology. Psychology is a modern mythology, with its own pantheon of gods (psychopathologies), origin stories (childhood trauma, chemical imbalances), holy books (the diagnostic manuals and psychology texts) and sacraments (psycho-pharmaceuticals).

The psychology myth has clearly taken root in our culture. There is more psychological information available to the mainstream public than ever before. Even the very young people I meet have a fairly sophisticated understanding of complex psychological concepts, much more so than even a couple decades ago. This is no doubt due to a proliferation of Instagram therapists and a vast archive of YouTube lectures on psychology and psychology-related topics. But knowledge alone doesn't lead to transformation. You still

need to do something to effect change. You have to put theory into practice.

It was only through countless hours of daily practice that I began to understand that the stories of yoga — told through strange and mysterious images of the chakras, inner deities, energy channels in the body and knots in the heart — were myths that were meant to explain, or at least point toward, the otherwise ineffable experience of profound biological and psychological changes the practices catalyze. As Jung explains, “[Myth] gives the ultimately unimaginable religious experience a form in which to express itself...” (*Letters Vol. II, p 482-488*)

Likewise, the revelations and radical shifts in perception I experienced through my work with psychedelics and plant medicines were impossible to rationalize without relying on irrational explanations. But try as I might, I just couldn't fully integrate myself into the mythologies of the traditions I was engaging with. The Santo Daime, a syncretic Brazilian religion with Christian roots, is the first place I encountered ayahuasca, which they use as a holy sacrament in place of wine and bread. The Daime (as it's fondly called by its devotees) developed in the early 20th century after a black rubber tapper encountered indigenous *ayahuasqueros* in the Northwestern Amazon. It offers a rich and beautiful savior myth that positions the ayahuasca vine as the “Second Coming” that will awaken the Christ Consciousness in all who imbibe it, bringing about a global “New Jerusalem” of peace, love and harmony. I could get down with that, but

my budding religious devotion was continually thwarted by the old-school patriarchal Christian ideas that permeate the hymns that you sing throughout the hours-long Daime ceremonies. I just couldn't give in to the idea of a righteous and punishing father figure in the sky to whom we constantly have to pay penance for the "original sin" of being born. Reinforcing that old story, while at the same time drinking a brew that radically opens your mind, seems like one step forward, two thousand steps back.

So, after a few years, I stopped going to the Daime ceremonies and took a break from ayahuasca. I went deeper into my yoga practice and study, and focused on teaching and traveling. In 2016 I published my first book *Harmonic Movement*, which was an attempt to strip away the myths surrounding yoga and give people the straight goods in a clear and succinct method. I thought that if I focused on *methodology* rather than *mythology* it might inspire others to "just do it" and learn how yoga works to effect change through their direct, unfiltered experience — avoiding the fanciful ideas and images that often lead to spiritual materialism and bypassing rather than actual transformation. The book and the method-focused practice videos I made around that time never really took off like I hoped they would, largely because, I think, people *want* a mythology. People love a good story. We are, after all, the myth-making monkeys.

In 2017 I heard the call of ayahuasca once again. This time I wanted to meet it in its natural environment, the Amazon.

So I found a gig teaching yoga at an ayahuasca retreat center in Peru called The Temple of The Way of Light. I probably would have been put off by the name of the place had I not met the new Director of Integration at one of my yoga workshops in Vancouver. She had trained with Dr. Gabor Maté, who's work in the field of trauma and addiction I respected. We vibed, and most importantly, the teaching gig would give me the opportunity to work directly with Shipibo healers, whose gorgeous healing songs I'd been listening to for years. As a lifelong musician, the quality of music in a ceremony can make it or break it for me. The thought of sitting for hours in a highly sensitized state of awareness with canned music or terrible singers terrified me way more than the possibilities of shamanic dismemberment, demonic possession or ego-death.

Down in the Peruvian Amazon I had some truly incredible experiences, but when I looked into the prevalent mythologies for some insight and understanding of what was happening, it was more confusing than enlightening. The Western facilitators had their own ideas of what ayahuasca is and how it works and, as I discovered, there were conflicting myths amongst the indigenous groups that worked with ayahuasca. Was ayahuasca a goddess, or the union of male and female principles? Was it a "plant teacher" or a tool that awakened the "inner teacher"? Were the insights I received "downloaded" from somewhere "out there" or were they "uploads" from somewhere deep inside? Unlike the Santo Daime, there wasn't even a clear myth for me to wrestle with. It was all up for grabs.

One thing that became clear to me during my time in the Amazon is that yoga and the plant medicine shamanism of South America share some key elements in their way of addressing physical and psychological illness and relieving existential suffering. Writing *Yoga & Plant Medicine* in 2019 helped me to work out and integrate some of the ideas I had about how these two traditions complement and support each other, but I was still left with the question of *why* they worked — no doubt a curse of my modern Western mind. Why couldn't I just accept that these practices “just work”? Jungian analyst and author James Hollis told me once that we are the “monkeys who ask *why*?” and, I think that big three-letter question is what the primal urge to mythologize seeks to answer.

Myths are our attempt to make sense of the world and provide answers to the big questions: *Who am I really? What does this all mean? When did this all begin? Where do we go after we die? Why are we here?*

As I write this, I realize that these are the same questions I was taught to ask when writing a report back in sixth grade: *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* I suppose all religions can be traced back to the moment when a mystic comes down from the mountaintop (or out of the jungle) to give a report of their religious experience to the tribe. All religions offer answers to the “5 Ws” through their own myths, which I think of as the field reports of the mystical explorers.

But what happens when the cultural myths that used to

unite us and ease our existential angst fade away, only to be replaced by science, technology and entertainment? Out of all the big questions, science can never offer a good answer to the biggest one: *Why?*

Even the all-powerful modern religion of Science falls short when it comes to a good origin story — the cornerstone of any good mythology. As Rupert Sheldrake once wrote, “It’s almost as if science said, ‘Give me one free miracle, and from there the entire thing will proceed with a seamless, causal explanation.’” Technology and entertainment further reinforce the meaning-deprived myths of modern culture and distract us from the fact that life’s biggest and most concerning questions remain unanswered.

Just as I’d returned to things that I explored earlier in life when I was looking for answers to my midlife existential crisis, namely yoga and psychedelics, my search for a myth that could help me make sense of everything those practices allowed me to experience lead me back to the work of Carl Jung. I’d first tried to read Jung in an early phase of spiritual seeking during my late teens and early twenties, but his writing went way over my head at the time and I put it aside. He always said that his work was meant for people in the second half of life, so I probably just didn’t need it yet or hadn’t had enough life experience for it to feel relevant.

I found my way back to his work through his students and spiritual descendants, particularly Joseph Campbell, James Hillman, Marion Woodman, James Hollis, Thomas Moore

and Robert Moore. I consider them revered teachers and elders who further developed Jung's ideas and devoted themselves to helping us, through depth psychology, find a Western mythology that is relevant to the spirit (and struggles) of our times. I'll be drawing on their vast bodies of work throughout this book, plucking out some gems that will hopefully guide us on our exploration of the intersection of depth psychology, shamanism and psychedelics.

What is Depth Psychology?

Everyone's work that I've mentioned could be considered to fall under the broad banner of *depth psychology*. The qualifier "depth" is required in order to distinguish it from the relative superficiality of the "scientifically validated" cognitive-behavioral approaches that are more widely accepted by mainstream medicine. It's telling that cognitive-behavioral therapy's efficacy is usually measured against the use of psycho-pharmaceuticals, because both approaches tend to treat symptoms rather than underlying causes. Getting to the root of suffering is the domain of depth psychological approaches as well as yoga and shamanism — traditions that are usually dismissed as spiritual New Age nonsense by the rational-materialist mainstream. Again, we come up against the division between science and spirituality, a gap that Jung tried to bridge with his psychology, which has been called a modern "science of the soul."

It wasn't until I encountered depth psychology that I found a framework that could hold all of the strange, wonderful and sometimes terrifying events I'd experienced through my

yoga and shamanic practices. It offered coherent maps and models that helped me better understand myself (*Who am I, really?*) the cause of my suffering (*How did I get here?*) and the way in which my mystical experiences, somatic practices and psychedelic use offered a way out of my crisis and into a more fulfilling, satisfying life (*Where am I going?*).

The depth psychology tradition begins not just with Jung but goes back to his spiritual ancestors Freud, Nietzsche and Goethe, to the Medieval alchemists, and before them to the Gnostics and Ancient Greek philosophers Heraclitus and Plato. As I uncovered this lineage, it gave me the sense that we did indeed have an unbroken Western spiritual tradition to draw from and guide us on our way forward. I no longer felt adrift in a sea of meaningless suffering with no way out.

Depth psychology has provided me with a psychological grounding to support and make sense of all of my wild and untethered ecstatic experiences. In short, it has given me a frame in which I can weave a personal mythology that helps me wrestle with life's big questions. And this is really the driving purpose behind this little book — to offer others who are looking to shamanic practices and psychedelics for healing and transformation some raw material with which they can begin to shape their own personal myth.

I hope that it also inspires the therapists, counselors and coaches who support folks working with psychedelics and other shamanic practices for healing to venture beyond

the *de rigueur* cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy and spiritually-neutered, scientifically-validated approaches that currently permeate the psychedelic space. I want to encourage them to go deeper into their own spiritual practice and broaden their understanding in order to meet their clients where they're at when they emerge from such expansive and paradigm-shifting experiences.

What is Shamanism?

Before venturing any further, let me address another term that I and other writers use throughout this book. The word "shamanism" is a contentious one and has been met with accusations of cultural appropriation directed toward modern practitioners of the so-called "shamanic arts." I've wrestled with this term myself, but have come to an understanding that has allowed me to embrace it, finding no better alternative. The word "shaman" can be traced to Russian and German anthropologists in the 17th century and is most-likely derived from the Tungus word *šaman*, meaning "one who sees." Even this etymology has been contested by famed religious scholar Mircea Eliade who noted that the Sanskrit word *śramaṇa*, designating a wandering monk or holy figure, had spread to many Central Asian languages along with Buddhism and could be the ultimate origin of the Tungusic word (*Shamanism*, *Arkana Books*, p. 495).

Whatever it's murky origins, it's from this word that we get the term shamanism. Rather than get mired in an etymological debate, I suggest that we accept *shamanism* as an English word that describes a wide range of practices across

multiple cultures, just as we use the Latin-derived word *religion* to describe “a social-cultural system of designated behaviors and practices, morals, beliefs, worldviews, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that relates humanity to supernatural, transcendental, and spiritual elements” (*Merriam-Webster*). In many cases, the words religion and shamanism can be used interchangeably, but to me, what distinguishes shamanism from religion is that it is concerned primarily with diagnosing and healing physical and psychological illness through what Eliade called “techniques of ecstasy.” The practice of shamanic healing in tribal society was traditionally carried out by a shaman, who was known by many names depending on the culture.

With the (re?)introduction of shamanic practice to Western culture by anthropologists in the early 20th century and the psychedelic revolution of the sixties, through to the development of Core Shamanism by Michael Harner in the 80s, up to the current psychedelic revival, modern non-tribal people have been given access extraordinary ecstatic states of consciousness through the ingestion of plant medicines and shamanic drumming. This leads us to ask the question, “Does this mean that everyone can be a shaman?”

The root teacher of my yoga lineage Tirumalai Krishnamacharya apparently said, “Anyone who calls himself a yogi is not a yogi.” He recognized that the title *Yogi* wasn’t something that could be self-appointed, but rather, it’s an honorific that is bestowed by one’s teacher or community in recognition of the practitioner’s attainment of certain qualities.

This is why I call myself a “yoga practitioner” rather than “yogi.” Following this, I propose that we reserve the title “shaman” for those who serve the function of healer in an actual community where they live and can be held accountable — rather than the pseudo communities of the traveling “shaman” that are united only by their inclusion on an email list and occasional participation in a weekend ritual. The rest of us who practice the techniques derived from shamanism can, I think, safely call ourselves “shamanic practitioners.” The ethics surrounding where we get our shamanic techniques and substances and how we engage with them is a whole other topic that I don’t wish to concern myself with here. Let me just say that I think it’s the responsibility of every individual Western practitioner who wasn’t born into an authentic shamanic lineage to wrestle with the issues of misappropriation, spiritual extraction, commodification and commercialization, and ultimately come to their own conclusions.

Perhaps by examining the parallels between Western depth psychology and shamanism we might find our way toward a Western tradition that is inspired by non-Western traditions without stealing and profiting from them. It may be a far-reaching hope but, whether we like it or not, Westerners are desperately seeking alternatives to the modern medical and psychotherapeutic models we’ve inherited, so we might as well try to steer things in the right direction by looking to our own spiritual ancestors like Jung, Campbell, Hillman and other depth psychologists.

“For any individual to construct a mature spirituality, it may be necessary to sort through the ruins of many great traditions, East and West, for they all have great wisdom embodied in their stories and exemplary figures. In the end, “the modern” is a person who understands that, for good or ill, the responsibility for spirituality has shifted from tribal religion to the shoulders of the individual.

While this is an enormous freedom, indeed a privilege — a proffering of dignity to the human soul — it is also an intolerable burden for many. Such a person then has to ask what accords with his or her inner reality and reject what may speak to others but not to him or her. Never in recorded history has there been such a mythological crisis for so many; never in human history have so many been free to decide their path and what constitutes authority to them.”

(James Hollis, Living an Examined Life)

Brian James

T'sou-ke Unceded Territory

aka Vancouver Island

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What is Soul?

As it's already been invoked in the introduction, the first idea we'll need to wrestle with is the concept of soul. The existence and nature of the soul has been a hot topic among philosophers and theologians since time immemorial, and it has proven to be a difficult thing for the rational mind to grasp — which is probably why it's been almost completely left out of our post-Enlightenment culture. But some traces remain, and it's those hints that we'll be tracking on our journey of soul recovery.

Although it carries soul (*psyche*) in its name, most of modern psychotherapy (literally “care of the soul”) never allows for its existence, let alone cares for it. The fact that we have to use the word “depth” in order to distinguish the kind of psychotherapy that includes soul from those that don't is just one sign of the loss of soul in our modern Western culture.

Soul has been described throughout the ages as the mysterious element which connects the human to the divine, spirit to matter, and mind to body. Soul is also what connects depth psychotherapy and shamanism, because they share the common goal of repairing and restoring the soul to a state of health and wholeness. Hopefully through this work we can also repair psychotherapy by recentering soul in its theory and practice.

Opposite: Luca Giordano, Psyche Served by Invisible Spirits (detail)

Carl Jung: The Ancient View of Soul

The ancient view held that the soul was essentially the life of the body, the life-breath, or a kind of force which assumed spatial and corporeal form at the moment of conception, or during pregnancy, or at birth, and left the dying body again after the final breath. The soul in itself was a being without extension, and because it existed before taking corporeal form and afterwards as well, it was considered timeless and hence immortal...

...in Latin, Greek, and Arabic the names given to the soul are related to the notion of moving air, the “cold breath of the spirits.” And this is probably the reason why the primitive view also endows the soul with an invisible breath-body.

According to another primitive view the soul is a fire or flame, because warmth is likewise a sign of life. A very curious, but by no means rare, primitive conception identifies the soul with the name. The name of an individual is his soul, and hence the custom of using the ancestor’s name to reincarnate the ancestral soul in the newborn child. This means nothing less than that ego-consciousness is recognized as being an expression of the soul. Very often the soul is also identified with the shadow, hence it is a deadly insult to tread on a person’s shadow.

These indications may serve to show how primitive man experienced the psyche. To him the psyche appears as the

source of life, the prime mover, a ghostlike presence which has objective reality. Therefore the primitive knows how to converse with his soul; it becomes vocal within him because it is not simply he himself and his consciousness. To primitive man the psyche is not, as it is with us, the epitome of all that is subjective and subject to the will; on the contrary, it is something objective, self-subsistent, and living its own life.

(Carl Jung, Collected Works 8, excerpts from The Earth Has a Soul)



James Hillman: On Soul

To understand soul we cannot turn to science for a description. Its meaning is best given by its context.

The root metaphor of the analyst's point of view is that human behavior is understandable because it has an inside meaning. The inside meaning is suffered and experienced. It is understood by the analyst through sympathy and insight. All these terms are the everyday empirical language of the analyst and provide the context for and are expressions of the analyst's root metaphor.

Other words long associated with the word soul amplify it further: mind, spirit, heart, life, warmth, humanness, personality, individuality, intentionality, essence, innermost, purpose, emotion, quality, virtue, morality, sin, wisdom, death, God. A soul is said to be "troubled," "old," "disem-

bodied,” “immortal,” “lost,” “innocent,” “inspired.” Eyes are said to be “soulful,” for the eyes are “the mirror of the soul”; but one can be “soulless” by showing no mercy.

Most “primitive” languages have elaborate concepts about animated principles which ethnologists have translated by soul. For these peoples, from ancient Egyptian to modern Eskimo, soul is a highly differentiated idea referring to a reality of great impact. The soul has been imaged as the inner man, and as the inner sister or spouse, the place or voice of God within, as a cosmic force in which all humans, even all things living, participate, as having been given by God and thus divine, as conscience, as a multiplicity and as a unity in diversity, as a harmony, as a fluid, as fire, as dynamic energy, and so on. One can “search one’s soul” and one’s soul can be “on trial.”

There are parables describing possession of the soul by and sale of the soul to the devil, of temptations of the soul, of the damnation and redemption of the soul, of development of the soul through spiritual disciplines, of journeys of the soul. Attempts have been made to localize the soul in specific body organs and regions, to trace its origin to sperm or egg, to divide it into animal, vegetable, and mineral components, while the search for the soul leads always into the “depths.”

The terms psyche and soul can be used interchangeably, although there is a tendency to escape the ambiguity of the word soul by recourse to the more biological, more mod-

ern psyche. Psyche is used more as a natural concomitant to physical life, perhaps reducible to it. Soul, on the other hand, has metaphysical and romantic overtones. It shares frontiers with religion.

(James Hillman, Suicide and the Soul, 44–45, 47)



Depth psychology, the modern field whose interest is in the unconscious levels of the psyche—that is, the deeper meanings of the soul—is itself no modern term. Depth reverberates with a significance, echoing one of the first philosophers of antiquity. All depth psychology has already been summed up by this fragment of Heraclitus: “You could not discover the limits of the soul (psyche), even if you traveled every road to do so; such is the depth (bathun) of its meaning (logos).” Ever since Heraclitus brought soul and depth together in one formulation, the dimension of soul is depth (not breadth or height) and the dimension of our soul travel is downward.

(James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, xi)



By soul I mean, first of all, a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself.

This perspective is reflective; it mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens. Between us and events, between the doer and the deed,

there is a reflective moment—and soul-making means differentiating this middle ground.

It is as if consciousness rests upon a self-sustaining and imagining substrate—an inner place or deeper person or ongoing presence—that is simply there even when all our subjectivity, ego, and consciousness go into eclipse. Soul appears as a factor independent of the events in which we are immersed. Though I cannot identify soul with anything else, I also can never grasp it by itself apart from other things, perhaps because it is like a reflection in a flowing mirror, or like the moon which mediates only borrowed light. But just this peculiar and paradoxical intervening variable gives one the sense of having or being a soul. However intangible and indefinable it is, soul carries highest importance in hierarchies of human values, frequently being identified with the principle of life and even of divinity.

In another attempt upon the idea of soul I suggested that the word refers to that unknown component which makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, is communicated in love, and has a religious concern.

These four qualifications I had already put forth some years ago. I had begun to use the term freely, usually interchangeably with *psyche* (from Greek) and *anima* (from Latin). Now I am adding three necessary modifications. First, soul refers to the deepening of events into experiences; second, the significance soul makes possible, whether in love or in religious concern, derives from its special relation with

death. And third, by soul I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and fantasy—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical.

(James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, x)



This exploration of the word shows that we are not dealing with something that can be defined; and therefore, “soul” is really not a concept, but a symbol. Symbols, as we know, are not completely within our control, so that we are not able to use the word in an unambiguous way, even though we take it to refer to that unknown human factor that makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, and is communicated in love.

The soul is a deliberately ambiguous concept resisting all definition in the same manner as do all ultimate symbols that provide the root metaphors for the systems of human thought. “Matter” and “nature” and “energy” have ultimately the same ambiguity; so too have “life,” “health,” “justice,” “society,” and “God,” which provide the symbolic sources for the points of view we have already seen. Soul is not more an obfuscation than other axiomatic first principles.

Despite modern man’s unease with the term, it continues to stand behind and influence the point of view of depth psychology in ways that many depth psychologists themselves might be surprised to discover.

What a person brings to the analytical hour are the sufferings of the soul; while the meanings discovered, the experiences shared, and the intentionality of the therapeutic process are all expressions of a living reality, which cannot be better apprehended than by the root metaphor of psychology, psyche or soul.

The terms “psyche” and “soul” can be used interchangeably, although there is a tendency to escape the ambiguity of the word “soul” by recourse to the more biological, more modern “psyche.” “Psyche” is used more as a natural concomitant to physical life, perhaps reducible to it. “Soul,” on the other hand, has metaphysical and romantic overtones. It shares frontiers with religion.

(James Hillman, Suicide and the Soul)



The primary metaphor of psychology must be soul. Psychology (logos of psyche) etymologically means: reason or speech or intelligible account of soul. It is psychology’s job to find logos for psyche, to provide soul with an adequate account of itself. Psyche as the anima mundi, the Neoplatonic soul of the world, is already there with the world itself, so that a second task of psychology is to hear psyche speaking through all things of the world, thereby recovering the world as a place of soul (soul-making).

(James Hillman, Archetypal Psychology)

Thomas Moore: Soul Is Not a Thing

“Soul” is not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance. I do not use the word here as an object of religious belief or as something to do with immortality. When we say that someone or something has soul, we know what we mean, but it is difficult to specify exactly what that meaning is.

Taking an interest in one’s own soul requires a certain amount of space for reflection and appreciation. Ordinarily we are so identified with movements of the psyche that we can’t stand back and take a good look at them. A little distance allows us to see the dynamics among the many elements that make up the life of the soul. By becoming interested in these phenomena, we begin to see our own complexity. Usually we feel that complexity as it hits us unawares from outside, in a multitude of problems and in confusion. If we knew the soul better, we might be ready for the conflicts of life. I often have the sense, when someone tells me anxiously about some knot they find themselves in, that what they perceive as an impossible and painful situation calling for professional intervention is simply the complexity of human life once again manifesting itself. Most of us bring to everyday life a somewhat naive psychological attitude in our expectations that our lives and relationships will be simple. Love of the soul asks for some appreciation for its complexity.

Often care of the soul means not taking sides when there is a conflict at a deep level. It may be necessary to stretch the heart wide enough to embrace contradiction and paradox.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Marion Woodman: The Eternal Part Of Us

Psychological work is soul work....By soul, I mean the eternal part of us that lives in this body for a few years, the timeless part of ourselves that wants to create timeless objects like art, painting, and architecture....Whenever the ego surrenders to the archetypal images of the unconscious, time meets the timeless. Insofar as those moments are conscious, they are psychological — they belong to the soul.... Soul-making is allowing the eternal essence to enter and experience the outer world through all the senses...so that the soul grows during its time on Earth. Soul-making is constantly confronting the paradox that an eternal being is dwelling in a temporal body. That's why it suffers, and learns by heart....Yet, having no tongue, other than the transitory language of the body, it learns to speak in metaphor.

(Marion Woodman, Introduction to Mystic Journey: Getting to the Heart of Your Soul's Story by Robert Atkinson)



Soul Loss

Both depth psychotherapy and shamanism are largely concerned with the same task: to restore the soul to its inherent health and wholeness. When we experience trauma brought on by childhood neglect, abuse, surgery, accident, war or any other violent shock, the soul may leave the body to escape. This produces the phenomenon that psychologists call dissociation and shamans call soul loss. It can be seen as a survival mechanism. When you can't take any more pain, you either "go away" or "lock it away" in order to make it through.

Loss of soul leads to symptoms such as depression, anxiety, addiction, chronic fatigue and existential angst or despair. It's safe to say that most people in modern industrialized cultures experience varying degrees of soul loss, and that soul loss is the root cause of what Charles Taylor called the "Malaise of Modernity." The first step toward recovering soul is to get a sense of what it feels like when soul loss occurs and how that fracturing or wounding shapes our experience.

Opposite: Pablo Picasso, Guernica (detail)

Carl Jung: Loss of Soul

An example of the alteration of personality in the sense of diminution is furnished by what is known in primitive psychology as “loss of soul.”

The peculiar condition covered by this term is accounted for in the mind of the primitive by the supposition that a soul has gone off, just like a dog that runs away from his master overnight. It is then the task of the medicine-man to fetch the fugitive back. Often the loss occurs suddenly and manifests itself in a general malaise.

Occasionally something similar can happen to civilized man, only he does not describe it as “loss of soul” but as an *abaissement du niveau mental*, [early 20th century French philosopher turned doctor and psychologist Pierre] Janet’s apt term for this phenomenon.

It is a slackening of the tensivity of consciousness, which might be compared to a low barometric reading, presaging bad weather. The tonus has given way, and this is felt subjectively as listlessness, moroseness, and depression. One no longer has any wish or courage to face the tasks of the day. One feels like lead, because no part of one’s body seems willing to move, and this is due to the fact that one no longer has any disposable energy. This well-known phenomenon corresponds to the primitive’s loss of soul.

The listlessness and paralysis of will can go so far that the whole personality falls apart, so to speak, and consciousness

loses its unity; the individual parts of the personality make themselves independent and thus escape from the control of the conscious mind, as in the case of anaesthetic areas or systematic amnesias. The latter are well known as hysterical “loss of function” phenomena. This medical term is analogous to the primitive loss of soul.

Abaissement du niveau mental (literally, the lowering of mental level — ed.) can be the result of physical and mental fatigue, bodily illness, violent emotions, and shock, of which the last has a particularly deleterious effect on one’s self-assurance. The abaissement always has a restrictive influence on the personality as a whole. It reduces one’s self-confidence and the spirit of enterprise, and, as a result of increasing ego-centricity, narrows the mental horizon.

(Carl Jung, Collected Works 9)



James Hillman: Losing Our Sense of Belonging

Anthropologists describe a condition among “primitive” peoples called “loss of soul.”

In this condition a man is out of himself, unable to find either the outer connection between humans or the inner connection to himself. He is unable to take part in his society, its rituals, and traditions. They are dead to him, he to them. His connection to family, totem, nature, is gone. Until he regains his soul he is not a true human. He is “not there.”

It is as if he had never been initiated, been given a name, come into real being. His soul may not only be lost; it may also be possessed, bewitched, ill, transposed into an object, animal, place, or another person. Without this soul, he has lost the sense of belonging and the sense of being in communion with the powers and the gods. They no longer reach him; he cannot pray, nor sacrifice, nor dance. His personal myth and his connection to the larger myth of his people, as *raison d'être*, is lost. Yet he is not sick with disease, nor is he out of his mind. He has simply lost his soul. He may even die. We become lonely.

Other relevant parallels with ourselves today need not be spelled out.

One day in Burghölzli, the famous institute in Zurich where the words schizophrenia and complex were born, I watched a woman being interviewed. She sat in a wheelchair because she was elderly and feeble. She said that she was dead for she had lost her heart. The psychiatrist asked her to place her hand over her breast to feel her heart beating: it must still be there if she could feel its beat. "That," she said, "is not my real heart." She and the psychiatrist looked at each other. There was nothing more to say. Like the primitive who has lost his soul, she had lost the loving courageous connection to life—and that is the real heart, not the ticker which can as well pulsate isolated in a glass bottle.

This is a different view of reality from the usual one. It is

so radically different that it forms part of the syndrome of insanity. But one can have as much understanding for the woman in her psychotic depersonalization as for the view of reality of the man attempting to convince her that her heart was indeed still there. Despite the elaborate and moneyed systems of medical research and the advertisements of the health and recreation industries to prove that the real is the physical and that loss of heart and loss of soul are only in the mind, I believe the “primitive” and the woman in the hospital: we can and do lose our souls. I believe with Jung that each of us is “modern man in search of a soul.”

(James Hillman, Insearch, 43–44, 55–56)



Carl Jung: Powers Beyond Our Control

We would laugh at the idea of a plant or an animal inventing itself, yet there are many people who believe that the psyche or the mind invented itself and thus brought itself into being. As a matter of fact, the mind has grown to its present state of consciousness as an acorn grows into an oak or a saurians developed into mammals. As it has been, so it is still, and thus we are moved by forces from within as well as from without.

In a mythological age these forces were called mana, spirits, demons, and gods, and they are as active today as they ever were. If they conform to our wishes, we call them happy hunches or impulses and pat ourselves on the back for

being smart fellows. If they go against us, then we must say it is just bad luck, or that certain people have it in for us, or it must be pathological. The one thing we refuse to admit is that we are dependent on “powers” beyond our control.

It is true that civilized man has acquired a certain amount of willpower which he can apply where he pleases. We have learnt to do our work efficiently without having recourse to chanting and drumming to hypnotize us into the state of doing. We can even dispense with the daily prayer for divine aid. We can carry out what we propose to do, and it seems self-evident that an idea can be translated into action without a hitch, whereas the primitive is hampered at every step by doubts, fears, and superstitions.

The motto “Where there’s a will there’s a way” is not just a Germanic prejudice; it is the superstition of modern man in general. In order to maintain his credo, he cultivates a remarkable lack of introspection. He is blind to the fact that, with all his rationality and efficiency, he is possessed by powers beyond his control. The gods and demons have not disappeared at all, they have merely got new names. They keep him on the run with restlessness, vague apprehensions, psychological complications, an invincible need for pills, alcohol, tobacco, dietary and other hygienic systems — and above all, with an impressive array of neuroses.

(CG Jung, Collected Works 18, para. 553-55)



Carl Jung: Isolated in the Cosmos

Through scientific understanding, our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos. He is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional participation in natural events, which hitherto had a symbolic meaning for him. Thunder is no longer the voice of a god, nor is lightning his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree a man's life, no snake is the embodiment of wisdom, and no mountain still harbors a great demon. Neither do things speak to him nor can he speak to things, like stones, springs, plants, and animals. He no longer has a bush-soul identifying him with a wild animal. His immediate communication with nature is gone forever, and the emotional energy it generated has sunk into the unconscious.

This enormous loss is compensated by the symbols of our dreams. They bring up our original nature, its instincts and its peculiar thinking. Unfortunately, one would say, they express their contents in the language of nature, which is strange and incomprehensible to us. It sets us the task of translating its images into the rational words and concepts of modern speech, which has liberated itself from its primitive encumbrances — notably from its mystical participation with things. Nowadays, talking of ghosts and other numinous figures is no longer the same as conjuring them up. We have ceased to believe in magical formulas; not many taboos and similar restrictions are left; and our world seems to be disinfected of all such superstitious numina as “witch-

es, warlocks, and worricrows,” to say nothing of werewolves, vampires, bush-souls, and all the other bizarre beings that populated the primeval forest.

(CG Jung, Collected Works 18, para. 586)



Carl Jung: Loss of Psychic Roots

If psychic life consisted only in self-evident matters of fact — which on a primitive level is still the case — we could content ourselves with a sturdy empiricism. The psychic life of civilized man, however, is full of problems; we cannot even think of it except in terms of problems. Our psychic processes are made up to a large extent of reflections, doubts, experiments, all of which are almost completely foreign to the unconscious, instinctive mind of primitive man. It is the growth of consciousness which we must thank for the existence of problems; they are the Danaän (Greek) gift of civilization. It is just man's turning away from instinct — his opposing himself to instinct — that creates consciousness. Instinct is nature and seeks to perpetuate nature, whereas consciousness can only seek culture or its denial.

Even when we turn back to nature, inspired by a Rousseau-esque longing, we “cultivate” nature. As long as we are still submerged in nature we are unconscious, and we live in the security of instinct which knows no problems. Everything in us that still belongs to nature shrinks away from a problem, for its name is doubt, and wherever doubt holds sway

there is uncertainty and divergent ways. And where several ways seem possible, there we have turned away from the certain guidance of instinct and are handed over to fear.

For consciousness is now called upon to do that which nature has always done for her children — namely, to give a certain, unquestionable, and unequivocal decision. And here we are beset by an all-too-human fear that consciousness — our Promethean conquest — may in the end not be able to serve us as well as nature.

(CW 8, para. 750)

...loss of roots...is a disaster not only for primitive tribes but for civilized man as well. The life of instinct — the most conservative element in man — always expresses itself in traditional usages. Age-old convictions and customs are always deeply rooted in the instincts. If they get lost, the conscious mind becomes severed from the instincts and loses its roots, while the instincts, unable to express themselves, fall back into the unconscious and reinforce its energy, causing this in turn to overflow into the existing contents of consciousness. It is then that the rootless condition of consciousness becomes a real danger. This secret *vis-a-tergo* [propulsive force] results in a hubris of the conscious mind which manifests in the form of exaggerated self-esteem or an inferiority complex. At all levels a loss of balance ensues, and this is the most fruitful soil for psychic injury.

(C.G. Jung, Collected Works 16, para. 216)



For it is the body, the feeling, the instincts, which connect us with the soil. If you give up the past you naturally detach from the past; you lose your roots in the soil, your connection with the totem ancestors that dwell in your soil. You turn outward and drift away, and try to conquer other lands because you are exiled from your own soil. That is inevitable. The feet will walk away and the head cannot retain them because it is also looking out for something. That is the Will, always wandering over the surface of the earth, always seeking something. It is exactly what Mountain Lake, the Pueblo chief, said to me, "The Americans are quite crazy. They are always seeking; we don't know what they are looking for." Well, there is too much head and so there is too much will, too much walking about, and nothing rooted.
(Carl Jung, Zarathustra Seminar)



Donald Kalsched: Trauma & Loss of Soul

Trauma constitutes an interruption of the normal processes through which an embodied, true self comes into being. The early trauma we are focusing on in this book [*Trauma & The Soul*] is relational trauma because it occurs in the earliest attachment relationship between the infant and his or her mother. When things are bad enough in this primal relationship, the infant dissociates and this effectively interrupts the normal process through which the infant is coming-into-being in dialogue with reality's otherness.

Another way to say this is that trauma forecloses transitional space, which is the intermediate space through which the infant is working out a relationship between the inner and outer world, between affect [emotion] and thought, between the right and left hemisphere, between the body and the mind. Winnicott says that the hungry baby hallucinates the breast (inner world) and that the mother, in her empathy, puts her breast in the place of the hallucination (outer world). At this moment the baby has an experience of creating the world (from inside) and discovering the world (out there) at the same time.

James Grotstein suggests that *trauma is about encountering the world before the baby has had a chance to make it*. In other words, the infant's psychic pain is unbearable and defenses become necessary for survival. The slowly indwelling soul can no longer afford to risk its descent into the body through transitional space. Indwelling ends. Personalization ends, leading to depersonalization. The unfolding process of the soul's incarnation is temporarily suspended, and a second world is pressed into service to provide a mytho-poetic matrix for the soul. But the relationship to the outer world is compromised. The trauma survivor will often describe this experience as being "broken" or as "losing my innocence forever".

When the personality is forced to dis-integrate in this way, it is hard on the soul. The soul cannot thrive and grow in the fragmented personality. Its preferred medium is the psycho-somatic integrate, where all the capacities of the self are

represented as parts of a whole. With the psyche fragmented, the soul cannot indwell in the body — it cannot set up residence as a divine/human principle of inner sustainment. Perhaps it visits occasionally as an unbidden guest, but with only this flickering ghost-like presence of the soul, the person's sense of animation and aliveness is mostly gone. This is because the soul is by definition, this very animation and aliveness — the centre of our God-given spirit — the vital spark in us that “wants” to incarnate in the empirical personality but needs help from supportive persons in the environment to do so — help that is often not available.

Without this help the psyche provides a partial cure of trauma so that life can go on, but there is a great price for this self-cure — loss of soul. Through dreams we can see how the innocence-identified soul has been sacrificed and given up to another world and we can see the spiritual powers that both protect and persecute it there. Considered psychologically, these light and dark powers represent the ambivalence of the defensive system about the process of indwelling. Having experienced the unbearable pain of trauma, the intelligence that seems to inform the defensive system wants to avoid the suffering necessary to come into being — necessary for innocence to gain experience. Accordingly, this intelligence recommends a more mental form of chronic and repetitive suffering over the acute suffering in-the-body required for personal development.

(Donald Kalsched, Trauma and the Soul)



Robert Bly: The Killing of the Inner Warrior

When a boy grows up in a “dysfunctional” family (perhaps there is no other kind of family), his interior warriors will be killed off early. Warriors, mythologically, lift their swords to defend the king. The King in a child stands for and stands up for the child’s mood. But when we are children our mood gets easily overrun and swept over in the messed-up family by the more powerful, more dominant, more terrifying mood of the parent. We can say that when the warriors inside cannot protect our mood from being dis-integrated, or defend our body from invasion, the warriors collapse, go into trance, or die.

The inner warriors I speak of do not cross the boundary aggressively; they exist to defend the boundary. The Fian-na, that famous band of warriors who defended Ireland’s borders, would be a model. The Fianna stayed out all spring and summer watching the boundaries, and during the winter came in. But a typical child has no such protection. If a grown-up moves to hit a child, or stuff food into the child’s mouth, there is no defense—it happens. If the grown-up decides to shout, and penetrate the child’s auditory boundaries by sheer violence, it happens.

Most parents invade the child’s territory whenever they wish, and the child, trying to maintain his mood by crying, is simply carried away, mood included. Each child lives deep inside his or her own psychic house, or soul castle, and the child deserves the right of sovereignty inside that house.

Whenever a parent ignores the child's sovereignty, and invades, the child feels not only anger, but shame. The child concludes that if it has no sovereignty, it must be worthless.

Shame is the name we give to the sense that we are unworthy and inadequate as human beings. Gershen Kauffman describes that feeling brilliantly in his book, *Shame*, and Merle Fossum and Marilyn Mason in their book, *Facing Shame*, extend Kauffman's work into the area of family shame systems and how they work. When our parents do not respect our territory at all, their disrespect seems overwhelming proof of our inadequacy. A slap across the face pierces deeply, for the face is the actual boundary of our soul, and we have been penetrated.

If a grown-up decides to cross our sexual boundaries and touch us, there is nothing that we as children can do about it. Our warriors die. The child, so full of expectation of blessing whenever he or she is around an adult, stiffens with shock, and falls into the timeless fossilized confusion of shame. What is worse, one sexual invasion, or one beating, usually leads to another, and the warriors, if revived, die again. When a boy grows up in an alcoholic family, his warriors get swept into the river by a vast wave of water, and they struggle there, carried downriver. The child, boy or girl, unprotected, gets isolated, and has more in common with snow geese than with people.

It is no wonder that such a child, when a teenager, looks for single rooms, maternal women, gurus, systems, withdrawals,

“nonattachment.” When he is older, thirty or thirty-five, he will still feel unprotected, and be unable to defend himself from other people enraged at their own unprotection. I think it’s likely that the early death of a man’s warriors keeps the boy in him from growing up. It’s possible that it also prevents the female in the boy from developing. We know that Dickens, for example, endured a horrendous childhood, and we also notice that his female characters tend to be sentimental and girlish. It’s possible that these girlish beings are projections of his stunted interior woman, whom his warriors could not protect from the violence all around him.

The inner boy in a messed-up family may keep on being shamed, invaded, disappointed, and paralyzed for years and years. “I am a victim,” he says, over and over; and he is. But that very identification with victimhood keeps the soul house open and available for still more invasions. Most American men today do not have enough awakened or living warriors inside to defend their soul houses. And most people, men or women, do not know what genuine outward or inward warriors would look like, or feel like.

(Robert Bly, Iron John: A Book About Men)





Soul Recovery

Now that we have some idea of what we're talking about when we talk about soul and what the symptoms of soul loss are, we can begin to find our way toward what a process of soul recovery might look and feel like.

The following excerpts offer some insights into the principles that every soul-centered therapy should include, the value of honoring and listening to symptoms, the art of caring for the soul, as well as guidance on how to incorporate "soul work" into everyday life. Wise elders James Hillman, Thomas Moore and Marion Woodman remind us that we don't need to rely solely on the shaman or therapist to help us recover and restore soul, but that we can all become apprentices in the art of "soul-making."

Opposite: Frederic Leighton, The Return of Persephone (detail)

James Hillman: Care of the Soul

The Greek word *therapeia* refers also to care. The root is *dher*, which means “carry, support, hold,” and is related to *dharma*, the Sanskrit meaning “habit” and “custom” as “carrier.” The therapist is one who carries and takes care as does a servant (Greek = *theraps, therapon*). He is also one to lean upon, hold on to, and be supported by, because *dher* is also at the root of *thronos* = throne, seat, chair. Here we strike an etymological root of the analytical relationship. The chair of the therapist is indeed a mighty throne constellating dependency and numinous projections. But the analysand also has his chair, and the analyst is both servant and supporter of the analysand. Both are emotionally involved and the dependence is mutual. However, this dependence is not personal, upon each other. Rather it is a dependence upon the objective psyche which both serve together in the therapeutic process. By carrying, by paying careful attention to and devotedly caring for the psyche, the analyst translates into life the meaning of the word psychotherapy. The psychotherapist is literally the attendant of the soul.

(James Hillman, Suicide and the Soul, 115–116)



James Hillman: Attending to Symptoms

Because symptoms lead to soul, the cure of symptoms may also cure away soul, get rid of just what is beginning to show, at first tortured and crying for help, comfort, and love,

but which is the soul in the neurosis trying to make itself heard, trying to impress the stupid and stubborn mind—that impotent mule which insists on going its unchanging obstinate way.

The right reaction to a symptom may as well be a welcoming rather than laments and demands for remedies, for the symptom is the first herald of an awakening psyche which will not tolerate any more abuse. Through the symptom the psyche demands attention. Attention means attending to, tending, a certain tender care of, as well as waiting, pausing, listening. It takes a span of time and a tension of patience. Precisely what each symptom needs is time and tender care and attention. Just this same attitude is what the soul needs in order to be felt and heard. So it is often little wonder that it takes a breakdown, an actual illness, for someone to report the most extraordinary experiences of, for instance, a new sense of time, of patience and waiting, and in the language of religious experience, of coming to the center, coming to oneself, letting go and coming home.

The alchemists had an excellent image for the transformation of suffering and symptom into a value of the soul. A goal of the alchemical process was the pearl of great price. The pearl starts off as a bit of grit, a neurotic symptom or complaint, a bothersome irritant in one's secret inside flesh, which no defensive shell can protect oneself from. This is coated over, worked at day in day out, until the grit one day is a pearl; yet it still must be fished up from the depths and pried loose. Then when the grit is redeemed, it is worn. It

must be worn on the warm skin to keep its luster: the redeemed complex which once caused suffering is exposed to public view as a virtue. The esoteric treasure gained through occult work becomes an exoteric splendor. To get rid of the symptom means to get rid of the chance to gain what may one day be of greatest value, even if at first an unbearable irritant, lowly, and disguised.

(James Hillman, Insearch, 43–44, 55–56)



Thomas Moore: 5 Principles of Soul Care

Let me provide a list of principles that I follow as I practice psychotherapy as care of the soul and that could help anyone live a more soulful life.

1. Serve the soul rather than the surface needs of life. If your soul is suffering neglect, you will have symptoms. You may feel depressed and your relationships may be hurting. Know the difference between caring for your soul and managing your life.
2. Your symptoms are the raw material for your soul-making. If you are having emotional problems, don't automatically just try to get rid of them. Look at them closely to see what your soul needs. Symptoms are painful and in need of tending and refining, but they contain the essence of what you are looking for.

3. Don't take anything literally but always look deeper. For example, if you drink too much, what is your soul looking for in the alcohol? If you eat too much, what part of your soul is in need of nourishing? Think poetically and never respond on a surface level.

4. Take time for reflection and conversation. Don't be quick to make decisions and go into action. "You don't want to be passive, but thoughtful. Words can heal.

5. Seek another point of view from someone you trust. Consider that your interpretation of what is happening may well be filtered by your own complexes, your confused emotions and the stories you tell to protect you from life. Always have a "therapeutic" resource available—therapeutic meaning healing or good for your soul."

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Thomas Moore: Treating Sicknesses of Soul

I recommend that we reserve the word depression for the clinical, medical if you like, affliction, and use more ordinary and more precise words for other experiences such as sadness, hopelessness, discouragement, and loss of meaning. These are sicknesses of the soul that we can treat with soulful methods.

If you have chronic anger, explore your life history to find

times when your anger was justified but not expressed well. Then, instead of just venting your anger, weave its strength and power into your daily life.

Thus, there are at least two ways to care for your soul: Discover moments in the past when your soul got stuck on a particular issue, and try to work it through. A second way is to find those activities and resources that will nourish your soul in the present: craft, art, play, friends, animals, travel, gardening, service . . .

All of this is therapy the way Socrates used the word: it keeps your soul healthy and vital, and that is the best way to prevent soul sicknesses like depression and frustration. Every day you have choices. You can do things that wound your soul, like being dominated by the work ethic or compulsively seeking more money and possessions, or you can be around people who give you pleasure and do things that satisfy a desire deep inside you. Make this soul care a way of life, and you may discover what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*—a good spirit, or, in the deepest sense, happiness. (*Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul*)



Thomas Moore: The Mythology Of Our Illness

Illness is to a large extent rooted in eternal causes. The Christian doctrine of original sin and the Buddhist Four Noble Truths teach that human life is wounded in its

essence, and suffering is in the nature of things. We are wounded simply by participating in human life, by being children of Adam and Eve. To think that the proper or natural state is to be without wounds is an illusion. Any medicine motivated by the fantasy of doing away with woundedness is trying to avoid the human condition.

With this larger dimension in mind, we could examine our lives to see how our actions might be offending the very roots of our existence. We could look for self-contradiction and self-alienation. I don't mean to suggest personal guilt for our symptoms, but we could look to our physical problems for guidance in aligning our lives with our natures or, mythologically speaking, with the will of the gods. We could do this as well as a society. If we are killing ourselves by smoking, then what are we trying to accomplish with this activity? If cancer is cell growth gone berserk, then is there a god of growth who is being dishonored by our economic and technological fanaticism about growth? By discerning the divine principle deep in our activities, we might find the "cure" of our illness. The ancient Greeks taught that the god who heals is the same god who brought the disease in the first place.

Looking into the mythology of our illnesses, we could consider them from a religious point of view. The idea is not so much to bring religion to suffering as to see that suffering inspires religion. Our wounds remind us of the gods. If we allow sickness to lead us into wonder about the very base of experience, then our spirituality is strengthened. Accepting

that we are wounded, we enter life differently than if our only concern is to overcome the wound. When we respond to the mysterious appearance of an illness, we live with responsibility to fate.

If the gods appear in our diseases, and if the gods are wounded in our Iliadic battles (life's warfare), then it makes no sense to avoid life in order to avoid its wounds. We could find new, deep value in illness, without masochistically indulging in it. We could risk the battle. In our psychological lives, too, we could hold off our palliatives and our techniques for relieving suffering long enough to find the god who has been struck and to reestablish harmony in our relation to that god. Illness offers us a path into the kind of religion that rises directly from participation in the deepest levels of fate and existence.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Donald Kalsched: The Indwelling Soul

Within the psychotherapeutic dialogue there are moments in which a soul-full mystery at the center of personality is glimpsed or shared by both participants. Often these moments are occasioned by intense suffering, where the patient finds the courage to bear some of the pain of his or her traumatic past — perhaps witnessed for the first time. In so doing, he or she breaks through to a wider perspective (wholeness) and a place of self-acceptance, beyond blame

or victimization. Or perhaps therapist and patient together have weathered an emotional storm and found their way through a frightening conflict to a place of calm and understanding where love flows once again. Often, such moments arise when we are moved by a deeper meaning or larger perspective than the ego's usual orientation. Perhaps the uncanny wisdom of a dream emerges into consciousness between the therapeutic partners, filling them with a sense of appreciation for the psyche's deep intelligence and beauty. Or perhaps a "synchronous" event occurs, filling both analytic partners with a mysterious sense of the hidden spiritual/material connections that transcend the otherwise clear boundaries between self and other.

Whatever its form, such moments are universally healing and transformative. They lead to the strengthening and personalization of the soul — its "indwelling" in the body. The indwelling soul confers a feeling of being real — a sense that we have a God-given right to be here. At its best, then, psychotherapy is partly a spiritual discipline helping both parties participate in this world as a potential space in which both material and spiritual energies support each other toward the goal of what Jung called individuation — realizing your destiny, becoming who you really are, becoming an ensouled person.

(Donald Kalsched, Trauma and The Soul)



CG Jung: Outgrowing Your Problems

I had always worked with the temperamental conviction that at bottom there are no insoluble problems, and experience justified me in so far as I have often seen patients simply outgrow a problem that had destroyed others. This “outgrowing,” as I formerly called it, proved on further investigation to be a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient’s horizon, and through this broadening of his outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out when confronted with a new and stronger life urge. It was not repressed and made unconscious, but merely appeared in a different light, and so really did become different.

What, on a lower level, had led to the wildest conflicts and to panicky outbursts of emotion, from the higher level of personality now looked like a storm in the valley seen from the mountain top. This does not mean that the storm is robbed of its reality, but instead of being in it one is above it. But since, in a psychic sense, we are both valley and mountain, it might seem a vain illusion to deem oneself beyond what is human. One certainly does feel the affect and is shaken and tormented by it, yet at the same time one is aware of a higher consciousness looking on which prevents one from becoming identical with the affect, a consciousness which regards the affect as an object, and can say, “I know that I suffer.”

When I examined the course of development in patients who quietly, and as if unconsciously, outgrew themselves, I saw that their fates had something in common. The new thing came to them from obscure possibilities either outside or inside themselves; they accepted it and grew with its help. It seemed to me typical that some took the new thing from outside themselves, others from inside; or rather, that it grew into some persons from without, and into others from within. But the new thing never came exclusively either from within or from without. If it came from outside, it became a profound inner experience; if it came from inside, it became an outer happening. In no case was it conjured into existence intentionally or by conscious willing, but rather seemed to be borne along on the stream of time.

What did these people do in order to bring about the development that set them free? As far as I could see they did nothing (*wu wei*) but let things happen. As Master Lü-tsu teaches in our text, the light circulates according to its own law if one does not give up one's ordinary occupation. The art of letting things happen, action through non-action, letting go of oneself as taught by Meister Eckhart, became for me the key that opens the door to the way. We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this is an art of which most people know nothing. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, never leaving the psychic processes to grow in peace. It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of all things. To begin with, the task consists solely in observing objectively how a fragment of fantasy develops.

Nothing could be simpler, and yet right here the difficulties begin. Apparently one has no fantasy fragments—or yes, there's one, but it is too stupid! Dozens of good reasons are brought against it. One cannot concentrate on it—it is too boring—what would come of it anyway—it is “nothing but” this or that, and so on. The conscious mind raises innumerable objections, in fact it often seems bent on blotting out the spontaneous fantasy activity in spite of real insight and in spite of the firm determination to allow the psychic process to go forward without interference. Occasionally there is a veritable cramp of consciousness.

If one is successful in overcoming the initial difficulties, criticism is still likely to start in afterwards in the attempt to interpret the fantasy, to classify it, to aestheticize it, or to devalue it. The temptation to do this is almost irresistible. After it has been faithfully observed, free rein can be given to the impatience of the conscious mind; in fact it must be given, or obstructive resistances will develop. But each time the fantasy material is to be produced, the activity of consciousness must be switched off again.

In most cases the results of these efforts are not very encouraging at first. Usually they consist of tenuous webs of fantasy that give no clear indication of their origin or their goal. Also, the way of getting at the fantasies varies with individuals. For many people, it is easiest to write them down: others visualize them, and others again draw or paint them with or without visualization. If there is a high degree of conscious cramp, often only the hands are capable of fan-

tasy; they model or draw figures that are sometimes quite foreign to the conscious mind.

These exercises must be continued until the cramp in the conscious mind is relaxed, in other words, until one can let things happen, which is the next goal of the exercise. In this way a new attitude is created, an attitude that accepts the irrational and the incomprehensible simply because it is happening. This attitude would be poison for a person who is already overwhelmed by the things that happen to him, but it is of the greatest value for one who selects, from among the things that happen, only those that are acceptable to his conscious judgment, and is gradually drawn out of the stream of life into a stagnant backwater.

At this point, the way travelled by the two types mentioned earlier seems to divide. Both have learned to accept what comes to them. (As Master Lü-tsu teaches: “When occupations come to us, we must accept them; when things come to us, we must understand them from the ground up.” One man will now take chiefly what comes to him from outside, and the other what comes from inside. Moreover, the law of life demands that what they take from outside and inside will be the very things that were always excluded before. This reversal of one’s nature brings an enlargement, a heightening and enrichment of the personality, if the previous values are retained alongside the change—provided that these values are not mere illusions. If they are not held fast, the individual will swing too far to the other side, slipping from fitness into unfitness, from adaptedness into

unadaptedness, and even from rationality into insanity. The way is not without danger. Everything good is costly, and the development of personality is one of the most costly of all things. It is a matter of saying yea to oneself, of taking oneself as the most serious of tasks, of being conscious of everything one does, and keeping it constantly before one's eyes in all its dubious aspects—truly a task that taxes us to the utmost.

(Carl Jung, Collected Works)



Marion Woodman: Soul Work

Psychological work is soul work. Psychology is the science of the psyche, of the soul. Having looked at so many dreams for so many years, I cannot deny that a process guides the soul. By soul, I mean the eternal part of us that lives in this body for a few years, the timeless part of ourselves that wants to create timeless objects like art, painting, and architecture.

In the first half of life, we live mainly in terms of doing. We find out who we are through going to school, pursuing a career, marrying, having children, and raising them. In the second half of life, we are pushed toward a deeper consciousness of who we are, an identity in terms of being, an identity based not on the ego but on the soul.

Soul-making is allowing the eternal essence to live and

experience the outer world through all the senses—seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting, touching—so that the soul grows during its time on Earth. Soul-making is constantly confronting the paradox that an eternal being is dwelling in a temporal body. That’s why it suffers, and learns by heart. Soul hears with eternal ears, sees with eternal eyes, smells with eternal nose. Yet, having no tongue, other than the transitory language of the body, it learns to speak in metaphor.

When it comes to pain, we don’t want it; so we avoid it in any possible way we can. I see this culture in terms of addictions. An addict can be blind to the death wish that is killing him, or he can open his eyes and choose life. As people on this planet we can do the same thing—we can choose to live in the Garden or we can destroy it. We can either stupidly proclaim that we are all-powerful; there is no miracle out there; there is no life force that we have to bow to. Or we can humbly acknowledge that there is an incredible mystery creating all those different life forms.

One thing has been distilled in my consciousness. By whatever name we call the two magnets that create this balance of energies in our bodies and in our planet—masculine/feminine, Shiva/Shakti, Yang/Yin, Spirit/Soul, Transcendence/Immanence, Doing/Being, we are now responsible for making space for the healing of body, soul, and spirit. We are being directed in the evolutionary process by divine guides through our dreams, our symptoms, our planet.

New values are emerging—feminine values and masculine

values that are free of patriarchal abuse. A totally new harmonic lies ahead in the new millennium.

If we believe in a divine order, then everything, everything on the Earth, is part of that divine order. We're all little sparks of One Soul. We are "ensouled" on this planet. And once that comes through to consciousness, we understand what love is. The atoms are held together by love; love is the glue that holds it all together. Maybe that's what the new millennium will be about, realizing that we are all ensouled in One Soul.

I do believe in Divine Providence. I don't think that the globe could have evolved this far only to be annihilated. My sense is that this chaos that we're going through could go on for a long time yet—that maybe we're only at the beginning of the real chaos. But when we finally come to our knees, something else will happen. We might realize that we are one people inhabiting one country—that we are all part of One Soul. That we do belong. That we are all part of one cosmos.

True creativity, true soul-making, comes from that deep communication with what Jung would call the archetypal world. That's where the real nourishment is. When we connect with our souls, we connect with the soul of every human being. We resonate with all living things.

(Marion Woodman, Soul-Making is When Time Meets the Timeless)



Body & Soul

If the soul is, as Jung and countless philosophers and mystics claim, the mysterious invisible force which animates the body, then it follows that one of the best and most immediate ways to connect to and recover soul is by recovering the intimate connection with the body we naturally enjoyed before the mind-body split occurred as a result of the influence of culture, religion, or traumatic event.

While many therapists and spiritual practitioners now recognize the need to repair the mind-body connection, contemporary depth psychologists like Thomas Moore and Marion Woodman go further to suggest that what connects mind and body is the soul. From their perspective, the embodied soul (and the images it produces) offers us the clearest path to recovering psychological and physical health. As Moore states in his popular book *Care of the Soul*, “The body *is* psyche.” Thus, caring for the body is an important aspect of soul care and recovery.

Opposite: The Abduction of Psyche by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (detail)

CG Jung: Consciousness & The Body

Now, this third center, the center of emotions, is localized in the plexus solaris, or the center of the abdomen. I have told you that my first discovery about the Kundalini yoga was that these chackras really are concerned with what are called psychical localizations. This center then would be the first psychical localization that is within our conscious psychical experience. I must refer again to the story of my friend, the Pueblo chief, who thought that all Americans were crazy because they were convinced that they thought in the head. He said: "But we think in the heart." That is anahata (heart center or chakra).

Then there are primitive tribes who have their psychical localization in the abdomen. And that is true of us as well; there is a certain category of psychical events that take place in the stomach." And if one is very angry one says, "Something weighs on my stomach." And if one is very angry, one gets jaundice; if one is afraid, one has diarrhea; or if in a particularly obstinate mood, one is constipated. You see, that shows what psychical localization means.

Thinking in the abdomen means that there was once a time when consciousness was so dim that people noticed only the things that disturbed their intestinal functions, and everything else simply passed by the board; it did not exist because it had no effect upon them.

(CG Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga)

When we have disagreeable thoughts or feelings, our stomachs get upset. We still get jaundice (related to liver) when we repress a violent anger, and every case of hysteria has trouble in the digestive organs, because originally the most profound and important thoughts were down there. So those are three localizations of consciousness that are still to be traced historically, as it were.

(CG Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga)

...For instance we say, "You know in the head, but you don't know it in the heart." There is an extraordinary distance from the head to the heart, a distance of ten, twenty, thirty years, or a whole lifetime. For you can know something in the head for forty years and it may never have touched the heart. But only when you have realized it in the heart you begin to take notice of it.

(CG Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga)



The gods have become diseases; Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room.

(CG Jung, "The Collected Works," vol. 13, #54)

The divine thing in us functions as neuroses of the stomach, or of the colon, or bladder – simply disturbances of the underworld. Our gods have gone to sleep, and they stir only in the bowels of the earth. For our idea of God is abstract and remote. One hardly dares to speak of it. It has become

taboo, or it is such a worn-out coin that one can hardly exchange it.

(CG Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga)



Thomas Moore: The Body Is The Soul

The human body is an immense source of imagination, a field on which imagination plays wantonly. The body is the soul presented in its richest and most expressive form. In the body, we see the soul articulated in gesture, dress, movement, shape, physiognomy, temperature, skin eruptions, tics, diseases—in countless expressive forms.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Thomas Moore: Image & The Body

Psychoanalysis has made elaborate attempts to chart connections between psychological experience and physical ailments, but generally both psychology and medicine have been reluctant to read these poetic connections. In the fifteenth century, Marsilio Ficino made the observation that Mars dissolves the intestines. Today, with different language but perhaps with the same insight, we think there is a relationship between repressed anger and colitis. On the whole, however, we have only an unsophisticated understanding of the relationship between a particular physical symptom and

the emotions.

Symptom is close to symbol. Etymologically a symbol is two things “thrown together,” whereas a symptom is things that “fall together,” as if by accident. We think that symptoms appear out of nowhere, and we rarely make the move of “throwing together” the two things: illness and image. Science prefers interpretations that are univocal. One reading is all that is desired. Poetry, on the other hand, never wants to stop interpreting. It doesn’t seek an end to meaning. A poetic response to disease may seem inadequate in the context of medical science, because science and art differ radically from the point of interpretation. Therefore, a poetic reading of the body as it expresses itself in illness calls for a new appreciation for the laws of imagination, in particular a willingness to let imagination keep moving into ever newer and deeper insights.

I recently had an experience which in a small way shows the relationship between body and image. I had been feeling a pain in my lower left side. The doctor wasn’t sure what it was, but since it didn’t worsen over several weeks he suggested watching it closely and not administering any heroic treatments. I agreed completely. Instead, I went to a couple who practice a mild form of massage and who are sensitive to the larger life contexts in which pain presents itself.

It was my first visit, so they asked me some general questions. What do you eat? How is your body doing in general these days? Is there anything going on in your life that you

see is related to your pain. If the pain could speak, what might it say?

I appreciated the fact that this session began with a contextualizing of the pain. I found that this simple dialogue had a profound effect on me. It set me in the direction of observing the world surrounding the pain and of listening to its poetics.

Then, as I lay down on the massage table, the two of them, one on each side, began their gentle rubbing. Quickly I fell into deep relaxation. I drifted off to a place in consciousness far from that little room in my little village. My senses were picking up sounds around me, but my attention had sunk into an area sheltered from life.

I felt their hands move along my body, slowly and without much pressure. Then I felt fingers on the place of the pain. I expected to rise from my retreat and to protect myself against their touches. Instead, I remained in that area of distant consciousness.

Suddenly, several large, brightly colored, imposing tigers leapt out of a cage. They were so close that I couldn't see their entire bodies. Their color was more brilliant than anything that could exist in the natural world. They seemed at once playful and ferocious.

One of the massagers said, "How does it feel when I touch you there?"

I said, "Tigers have arrived."

"Speak to them," she said. "Find out what their message is."

I'd love to have found out, but it was obvious to me these tigers had no interest in speaking English to me. "I don't think they talk," I said.

Even though I was talking to the woman massaging me, the tigers remained playing in the little piece of jungle that had opened up in the dimly lighted room. I didn't make friends with them; they were obviously not about to become pets. But I watched them for quite a while, awed by the strength and brightness of their huge bodies. When the massage was over and the tigers had gone home, I was told that animals frequently make an appearance in that massage room.

I left thinking that I should spend several weeks at least wondering about this visitation. The main things I felt from these tigers were courage, strength, and self-possession, qualities of heart I certainly needed at the time. Not their meaning, but their presence, seemed to give me confidence and strength. Long afterward, when I became aware of that pain again beginning to insinuate itself, I recalled the tigers and drew some courage from them. I also thought I could learn from them to show my true colors, with some brilliance and bravado.

When we bring imagination to the body, we can't expect dictionary-type explanations and clear solutions to prob-

lems. A symbol is often defined and treated as though it were a superficial matching of two things, as in dream books that tell you that a snake is always a reference to sex. More profoundly, though, a symbol is the act of throwing together two incongruous things and living in the tension that exists between them, watching the images that emerge from that tension. In this approach to symbol, there is no stopping point, no end to reflection, no single meaning, and no clear instruction on what to do next.

There can be no thesaurus of body imagery. My treatment was less a work to remove pain and more a stimulation of my imagination, so that I could reflect more richly about my body and my life. This is what a symptom is: body and life falling together as if by accident. The response is to contain that coincidence.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Thomas Moore: Soulful Exercise

In a former time, exercise was inseparable from experiencing the world, walking through it, smelling it and feeling it sensually, even as the heart got its massage from the exertion of the walk. Emerson, a great New England walker, wrote in his essay “Nature”: “The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I

to them.” In this Emersonian exercise program, the soul is involved in the perception of an intimacy between human personality and the world’s communing body.

If we could loosen the grip we have on the mechanical view of our own bodies and the body of the world, many other possibilities might come to light. We could exercise the nose, the ear, and the skin, not only the muscles. We might listen to the music of wind in the trees, church bells, distant locomotives, crickets and nature’s teeming musical silence. We could train our eyes to look with compassion and appreciation.

Soul is never far from attachment to particulars; a soulful body exercise would always lead us toward an affectionate relationship to the world. Henry Thoreau, who exercised his body in the context of making a retreat at Walden Pond, writes: “I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized.” Body exercise is incomplete if it focuses exclusively on muscle and is motivated by the ideal of a physique unspoiled by fat. What good is a lean body that can’t hear Thoreau’s owls or return a wave to Emerson’s wheat? The ensouled “body is in communion with the body of the world and finds its health in that intimacy.

A soul-oriented yoga might go through its many postures and forms of breathing while paying attention to the mem-

ories, emotions, and images that arise in conjunction with physical motion and posture. Inner images are as important to the soul in exercise as images from nature and culture are to the person on a walk. Often yoga is performed with the ideal of transcendence. We want to get our bodies trimmed down to match a perfect image of ourselves. Or we want physical or psychic powers that go beyond the normal or what we are accustomed to. Behind the practice of yoga might be a perfectionist fantasy or images of purity. But soul is not about transcendence. Soul-yoga wants more intimacy between consciousness and the soul, between our body and the world's body, and between ourselves and our fellow human beings. It basks in the imagination its methods bring, without expecting images and memories to take it toward any goal of improvement.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Donald Kalsched: Enspiriting the Body

...the work of depth psychology promotes the soul's indwelling by reconnecting somatic (sensate) and mental (imagistic) aspects of experience and that the subjective sense of this connection is one of both aliveness and meaning. By enspiriting the body, the Spirit turns the body into a living body — an ensouled body. At the same time, by embodying the Spirit, the body helps ground the Spirit in time and space, making it real. Spirit and matter appear to seek each other through the psyche and the place where they meet is the human soul.

(Donald Kalsched, Trauma and the Soul)



James Hillman: Walking With Soul

I have found in my own work with people that during periods of acute psychological pressure, walking was an activity to which they naturally turned; walking not just in idylls of the woods and mountains or by the sea, but simply around the city for hours in the early morning or at night.

Prisoners circumambulate the yard, animals exercise in their cages, the anxious pace the floor. One goes for a walk. Man is homo erectus; he is in his element when vertical. More, the agitation of the whirling motion of the mind is placed into an organic rhythm by walking, and this organic rhythm takes on symbolic significance as one places one foot after the other, left/right, left/right, in a balanced harmony.

Thus the wild spiritual adventure within takes on the deliberate movement of the pilgrimage, even if only around a confined space. So in dreams, the symbolism of walking rather than driving or being driven in a vehicle, or even riding a bicycle or an animal, is an “improvement.” It reflects man’s contact with the earth directly, his freedom to wander up and down it, and his continually alternating standpoint of left/right, left/right.

(James Hillman, Inhuman Relations)



James Hillman: Kundalini, Sex & Transformation

Alteration of consciousness does not leave the body out. How much more helpful it would be if we could understand these body changes in the way in which Gopi Krishna did, as necessary preparations for enlarged consciousness. If the body is the carrier of consciousness, it too must be altered. Yet, though Gopi Krishna understood this, each alteration he sensed brought fear. It seems as if there is a deep animal fear, a kind of biological resistance, to these changes, as if the body would rather not leave the paths of its instinctual ancestry. The animal in us shies and panics.

Perhaps this tells us something about symptoms. Perhaps they have to do with the fear of change and thus represent the conflicts caused by the new man coming into the old vessel of the body. By this I do not mean that with “re-birth” all symptoms disappear. But I do mean that the symptoms occurring concomitant with psychic change are protective as pain is protective. They hold us down and within our slow evolutionary patterns of the body without whose fear and symptoms we might go up and out of the body altogether in some foolish liberation above all symptoms that would actually be suicide.

A major change in body concerns sexuality. A re-organization of the sexual impulse would seem required for every transition in planes of consciousness. Initiation rites at puberty, and marriage rites, as well as the vow of chastity for those entering religious orders, all point to the im-

portance of sexual changes in connection with changes in states of being. The Kundalini serpent power is supposed to lie curled asleep at the base of the spine in the region of coccyx, anus, and prostate; opinions differ as to its exact locus. It is intimately connected with sexuality, so that the transformation of sexuality through internalization becomes a necessary activity, even the major opus in the discipline.

This is an idea can be found in yogic, alchemical, and shamanistic practices. It is also the basis of Taoist sexual practices. Freudian analysis, too, can be seen as a ritualization of sexual life for the sake of its transformation, especially since in its orthodox form “acting-out” is discouraged during an analysis. The principal idea is simple: semen is that fluid in the body most highly charged with *prana*. Occult anatomy envisages a direct connection between the genitals and the nervous system, either via brain and spine or via the blood. Loss of seed means loss of that vital essence that is the source of the living liquid light. Semen must therefore be discerned and discharged upward rather than outward, thereby adding to the internal circulation of *prana*. Bharti speaks of the difference between Buddhist and Hindu attitudes. The former, as the Taoists, retain the semen; the latter discharge it (left-hand path of Tantrism) as sacrifice. In each of these varied traditions one idea stands out: the transformation of consciousness requires the transformation of sexuality that takes place through ritual.

Our text refers to unusual ferment in the genital parts and to the production of an increased abundance of semen. This

runs contrary to the usual notions that yoga is an ascetic discipline through which the sexual impulse is depotentiated. Just not! And we can understand why chastity and continence and other sexual mystiques (including the orgy and black mass) belong archetypally to the discipline of the “holy man.” It is not that he has less sexuality than others, but more. (For example, an early sign of the call to shamanism among the Native American Mohave people is frequent childhood masturbation.) The “holy man” as “greater personality” implies the endowment of greater sexuality; therefore, the transformation of it raises all sorts of problems, answers to which have been formulated in various esoteric techniques and disciplines, West and East, of which chastity and the ritual copulation of tantric maithuna would be opposite poles of the same archetypal formulation.

It is not infrequent in analytical practice that phases of obsessive sexuality (sexual dreams, fixations on the genitals, sado-masochism, masturbation, nocturnal emissions) occupy the center of the stage for a time. Reduction of these events to Oedipal conflicts is not alone sufficient. If a process of transformation is truly going on, then it will affect a person’s sexual life, drawing his attention to his sexuality, and sexuality as such (which then takes on the numinous power of a god, formulated long ago in other cultures as the Lingam, or as Priapus). The ground of possibility for any transformation of sexuality is the recognition of it as an impersonal power. The *maithuna* aspect of tantric yoga makes this clear. It is not *my* sex and *my* pleasure and *my* orgasm; it is a force that flows through me, a force of play, joy, and

creation. By separating the personal out of it, one can listen to it, obey or deny it, note its fluctuations and intentions—all of which means relating to it objectively. Once this step has been taken, the transformation at which our author hints, including seed retention, ejaculation control, and other practices described by Van Gulik and Gaston Maspero become less a matter of personal suppression, an adolescent battle between good and evil, than a detached game, at once religiously sacrificial and erotically educative.

(James Hillman, Commentary on Gopi Krishna's Kundalini)



CG Jung: Don't Run Away From the Body

People who are not consciously aware of the body suffer from a certain unreality of life in that inter-relatedness through participation mystique; they don't know when they are hungry, and they neglect the simple functions of the body. I had a case, a girl of twenty-eight, who no longer heard her steps when she walked in the street. That frightened her and she came to me. She dreamt that she was riding in a balloon—not in the basket but on top, high up in the air—and there she saw me with a rifle shooting at her from below. I finally shot her down. She was that girl I have told you about who never had seen her body. I suggested that she must bathe once in a while, and then she told me she had been brought up in a nunnery where the nuns taught her that the sight of the body was sin, that she should always cover her bath tub with a linen, so she never

saw herself. I said: “Now go home and undress and stand before your long mirror and look at yourself.” And when she came back, she said: “It was not so bad after all, only I think my legs are a bit too hairy!” That is the truth, that is the way people think and feel when they have such symptoms.



The spirit consists of possibilities—one could say the world of possibilities was the world of the spirit. The spirit can be anything, but the earth can only be something definite. So remaining true to the earth would mean maintaining your conscious relationship to the body. Don't run away and make yourself unconscious of bodily facts, for they keep you in real life and help you not to lose your way in the world of mere possibilities where you are simply blindfolded. This is of course a somewhat one-sided teaching, and to a person who is nothing but the body, it is all wrong. You must not forget that by far the majority of people are nothing but body. This teaching, therefore, is only valid for those who have lost it, who have been deceived by the spirit—like Klages, for instance, who defined the spirit as the enemy of the soul, the soul being the life of the body, because he assumed that most people had lost the reality of the body as he had lost it. But as a matter of fact there are plenty of people who are entirely in the body, and to those one ought to preach early Christianity, or heathen gods at least, because they haven't an idea of a spiritual possibility.

(C. G. Jung, Nietzsche's Zarathustra)

Marion Woodman: Matter Is Our Mother

I think to get to the core of the problem, you've got to look at what we have done to the body, what we have done to matter in our culture. The Latin word *mater* means "mother." Mother is she who cherishes, nurtures, receives, loves, provides security. When the mother cannot accept her child in its peeing, puking, animal totality, the child too rejects its body. It then has no secure home on this earth, and in the absence of that primal security it substitutes other mothers: Mother Church, Mother Alma Mater, Mother Social Insurance, even Mother Food, which it also cannot accept. A desperate love/hate relationship develops. The terror of losing Mother equals the terror of being buried alive in her. Without the security of the body home, the individuals must rely as best they can on these substitutes for the maternal security they do not have. More than that, if the body is rejected, its destruction becomes one's *modus operandi*. The fear of cancer does not make an addictive personality stop smoking.

In the absence of the nourishing mother, whether personal or archetypal, people try to concretize her in things, as if to make present what they know is absent. Ironically, what they capture is not a presence that they always experience as absent but the absence itself. Think of how people try to photograph everything, tape-record it, try to capture and hold an event in a static state. That's what I mean by "concretize." Like the evil witch who turns everything to stone.

I went to see the pope in Toronto, and after he passed by, the woman in front of me burst into tears, crying, "I never saw him!" She had a camera and had been so busy taking pictures of him that she never "saw" the man she came to see. By concretizing the moment, she missed it. The person she came to see is caught in the picture, but the picture reminds her only of absence. She was absent from the experience.

Think of tourists jumping out of a bus at the Grand Canyon. They snap pictures, but they never arrive at the Grand Canyon. They don't open themselves to the experience. Inwardly they are not nourished by its grandeur. The soul in the body is not fed. It's like slides filed away in a box that no one, even you, wants to look at.

William Blake says the body is "that portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses." I live with that idea. I sit and look out my window here in Canada and the autumn trees are golden against the blue sky. I can feel their "food" coming into my eyes and going down, down, down, interacting inside, and I fill up with gold. My soul is fed. I see, I smell, I taste, I hear, I touch. Through the orifices of my body, I give and I receive. I am not trying to capture what is absent. It's that interchange between the embodied soul and the outside world that is the dynamic process. That's how growth takes place. That is life.

Most people do not feed their souls, because they do not know how. Most of us in this culture are brought up by par-

ents who like the rest of society are running as fast as they can, trying to keep up financially, socially and every other way. There's a drivenness that the child is subjected to even in utero. In infancy the child is expected to perform. Often the parent isn't able to receive the soul of the child, whatever the little soul is, because the parent doesn't take time to receive or doesn't like what the child is. Many parents are too interested in seeing that the child will have dancing or skating lessons, a good education, and be at the top of the class. They are so anxious about all they are trying to "give" to the child that they do not receive from the child.

The child, for example, comes running in with a stone, eyes full of wonder, and says, "Look at this beautiful thing I found," and the mother says, "Put it back outside in the dirt where it belongs." That little soul soon stops bringing in stones and focuses on what it can do to please Mommy. The process of growth turns into an exercise in trying to figure out how to please others, rather than expanding through experience. There's no growth without authentic feeling. Children who are not loved in their very beingness do not know how to love themselves. As adults, they have to learn to nourish, to mother their own lost child.



You can experience the healing that's going on through the love that exists between two people; you can see the light in the other's body and you can feel it in your own. It's a huge energy.

When we talk about the feminine, conscious femininity, I think we're talking about light in matter, embodied light, the wisdom of the body, not a dark mass. And, just as in physics matter moves toward light, in the psyche unconsciousness and the darkness of matter is wanting to move toward light. Think of the French Impressionists painting the light in a flower, the light in trees, in an apple, in matter that's what I call conscious femininity. We come to an awareness of our subtle body in our material body and that's the container strong enough to take the penetration of disembodied light.

If people go into a religious trance disconnected from body, the body starts to shake; they can't control it and they go out of consciousness. Whereas, if they are well grounded in the body, and consciousness of that body is firm, they can receive powerful spiritual light. That's how I image the androgynous soul receiving spirit. That's where real creativity happens.

(Conscious Femininity: Interviews With Marion Woodman)



Robert Bly: Re-Tuning the Body

During the long months the son spent in the mother's body, his body got well tuned to female frequencies: it learned how a woman's cells broadcast, who bows to whom in that resonant field, what animals run across the grassy clearing, what the body listens for at night, what the upper and lower

fears are. How firmly the son's body becomes, before birth and after, a good receiver for the upper and lower frequencies of the mother's voice! The son either tunes to that frequency or he dies.

Now, standing next to the father, as they repair arrowheads, or repair plows, or wash pistons in gasoline, or care for birthing animals, the son's body has the chance to retune. Slowly, over months or years, that son's body-strings begin to resonate to the harsh, sometimes demanding, testily humorous, irreverent, impatient, opinionated, forward-driving, silence-loving older masculine body. Both male and female cells carry marvelous music, but the son needs to resonate to the masculine frequency as well as to the female frequency. Sons who have not received this retuning will have father-hunger all their lives. I think calling the longing "hunger" is accurate: the young man's body lacks salt, water, or protein, just as a starving person's body and lower digestive tract lack protein. If it finds none, the stomach will eventually eat up the muscles themselves. Such hungry sons hang around older men like the homeless do around a soup kitchen. Like the homeless, they feel shame over their condition, and it is nameless, bitter, unexpungeable shame.

Women cannot, no matter how much they sympathize with their starving sons, replace that particular missing substance. The son later may try to get it from a woman his own age, but that doesn't work either.

(Robert Bly, Iron John: A Book About Men)



Dreams & Visions

One of the biggest obstacles that modern Western shamanic practitioners and psychedelic explorers face early on is the question of what to do with the strange and fantastic visions we are confronted with in states of ecstasy. Depth psychology, particularly the Archetypal Psychology developed by James Hillman and his colleagues, offers an approach to working with dreams and visions in a way which honors the autonomous guiding spirit of the images they contain.

Imagination, because it speaks the language of soul through symbolic images and visions, is another connective tissue between depth psychology and shamanism. The Imaginal or Archetypal Realm of the depth psychologist *is* the Other World of the shaman. Whether through dreamwork, shamanic journeying or the practice of Jung's active imagination, engaging with the images that arise from the unconscious and allowing them to have a life of their own is a way to communicate directly with soul and, through that dialogical relationship, recover parts of our wholeness that have been lost, repressed or abandoned.

Opposite: William Blake, The Song of Los

Carl Jung: Interpretation of Dreams

As most people know, one of the basic principles of analytical psychology is that dream-images are to be understood symbolically; that is to say, one must not take them literally, but must surmise a hidden meaning in them. This ancient idea of dream symbolism has aroused not only criticism, but the strongest opposition. That dreams should have a meaning, and should therefore be capable of interpretation, is certainly neither a strange nor an extraordinary idea. It has been known to mankind for thousands of years; indeed it has become something of a truism. One remembers having heard even at school of Egyptian and Chaldaean dream-interpreters. Everyone knows the story of Joseph, who interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, and of Daniel and the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar; and the dream-book of Artemidorus is familiar to many of us. From the written records of all times and peoples we learn of significant and prophetic dreams, of warning dreams and of healing dreams sent by the gods. When an idea is so old and so generally believed, it must be true in some way, by which I mean that it is psychologically true.

For modern man it is hardly conceivable that a God existing outside ourselves should cause us to dream, or that the dream foretells the future prophetically. But if we translate this into the language of psychology, the ancient idea becomes much more comprehensible. The dream, we would say, originates in an unknown part of the psyche and prepares the dreamer for the events of the following day.

According to the old belief, a god or demon spoke to the sleeper in symbolic language, and the dream-interpreter had to solve the riddle. In modern speech we would say that the dream is a series of images which are apparently contradictory and meaningless, but that it contains material which yields a clear meaning when properly translated.

(CG Jung, Collected Works)



James Hillman: The Soul Of The Image

There is an invisible connection within any image that is its soul. If, as Jung says, “image is psyche,” then why not go on to say, “images are souls,” and our job with them is to meet them on that soul level. I have spoken of this elsewhere as befriending, and elsewhere again I have spoken of images as animals. Now I am carrying these feelings further to show operationally how we can meet the soul in the image and understand it. We can actively imagine it through word play which is also a way of talking with the image and letting it talk. We watch its behavior—how the image behaves within itself. And we watch its ecology—how it interconnects, by analogies, in the fields of my life. This is indeed different from interpretation. No friend or animal wants to be interpreted, even though it may cry for understanding.

We might equally call the unfathomable depth in the

image, love, or at least say we cannot get to the soul of the image without love for the image.



James Hillman: Letting The Image Speak

Our method can be done by anyone in analysis or out. It requires no special knowledge—even if knowledge of symbols can help culturally to enrichen the image, and knowledge of idioms and vocabulary can help hear further into the image. By letting the image itself speak, we are suggesting that words and their arrangements (syntax) are soul mines. But mining doesn't require modern technical tools. (If it did, no one would ever have understood a dream or an image until modern psychology came along!) What does help mining is an eye attuned to the dark. (We shall have to take up later the question of training, how to catch the eye to read the image, the ear to hear it.) ...

After this we can now essay a statement about what it is that makes an image archetypal. We have found our axiomatic criteria—dramatic structure, symbolic universality, strong emotion—not required in our actual operations with an image. We have found instead that an archetypal quality emerges through

- (a) precise portrayal of the image;
- (b) sticking to the image while hearing it metaphorically;
- (c) discovering the necessity within the image;

(d) experiencing the unfathomable analogical richness of the image.

Since any image can respond to these criteria, any image can be considered archetypal. The word archetypal as a description of images becomes redundant. It has no descriptive function. What then does it point at?

Rather than pointing at something, archetypal points to something, and this is value. By attaching archetypal to an image, we ennoble or empower the image with the widest, richest, and deepest possible significance. Archetypal, as we use it, is a word of importance (in Whitehead's sense), a word that values.

Should we carry this conclusion over to other places where we use archetypal, to our psychology itself, then by archetypal psychology we mean a psychology of value. And our appellative move is aimed to restore psychology to its widest, richest, and deepest volume so that it would resonate with soul in its descriptions as unfathomable, multiple, prior, generative, and necessary. As all images can gain this archetypal sense, so all psychology can be archetypal when it is released from its surface and seen through to its hidden volumes. Archetypal here refers to a move one makes rather than a thing that is. Otherwise, archetypal psychology becomes only a psychology of archetypes.

(James Hillman, A Blue Fire)



James Hillman: Persons

The persons I engage with in dreams are neither representations (simulacra) of their living selves nor parts of myself. They are shadow images that fill archetypal roles; they are personas, masks, in the hollow of which is a numen....

The former teacher, or my professor, in a dream is not only some intellectual potential of my psychic wholeness. More deeply, this figure is the archetypal mentor, who, for now, in this dream, wears the robes of this schoolteacher or that professor. The childhood love in my dreams is not only a special feeling tone that I may rediscover and unite with now as I age. More deeply this youth from then, living in remembrance, is the archetypal kore or puer who comes in the shape of this or that personal memory. In dreams, we are visited by the daimones, nymphs, heroes, and gods shaped like our friends of last evening... .

In their names are their souls—an individual's name and his *Ba* were interchangeable, as if we only get our true names from the underworld in relation with death. To see through a dream-person into his or her psychic reality requires an attentive ear to names.

Even when they have no names or are named only functionally or situationally, these names can be imagined as epithets. So we get the unknown woman, the cashier, the mechanic, the owner.

We get figures doing things: the running boy, the driving woman, the worrying brother. Then, should we put capital letters on these figures, we approximate the epithets of the gods: The Man in the Shirt, The Sunburnt Girl, The Huge Black Cop.

(James Hillman, Dream and the Underworld, 60–63)



James Hillman: The Snake Is Not A Symbol

Often I begin a workshop on animal images with the snake. The snake works like a charm, freeing people of their insidious notions of snake symbolism and, therefore, of animal symbolism in general. The questions I ask sound like this: “How do you understand a snake image?” “What does a snake mean?” “What’s your interpretation?” I have assembled and condensed the replies:

1. The snake is renewal and rebirth, because it sheds its skin.
2. A snake represents the negative mother, because it wraps around, smothers, won’t let you go, and swallows whole.
3. It is the animal embodiment of evil. It is sly, shifty, sinister, fork-tongued, and it is cursed by God to slide on its belly because of what it did to Eve and Adam. The Book of Revelations says that the serpent is the Devil himself.
4. It’s a feminine symbol, having a sympathetic relation

with Eve and goddesses in Crete, India, Africa, and elsewhere.

5. The snake is a phallus, because it stiffens, erects its head, and ejects fluid from its tip. Besides, it penetrates crevices.

6. It represents the material earth world and as such is a universal enemy of the spirit. Birds fight it in nature and heroes fight it in culture.

7. The snake is a healer; it is a medicine, and we see it still on the signs of pharmacies. It was kept in the healing temples of Asclepius in Greece, and a snake dream was the god himself coming to cure.

8. It is a guardian of holy men and wise men – even the New Testament says that serpents are wise.

9. The snake brings fertility, for it is found by wells and springs and represents the cool, moist element.

10. A snake is Death, because of its poison and the instant anxiety it arouses.

11. It is the inmost truth of the body, like the sympathetic and para-sympathetic nervous systems or the serpent power of Kundalini yoga. That's why the sophisticated folk medicine among native Americans, South Asians, Chinese, and Africans, for instance, relies on parts of snakes for remedies.

12. The snake is the symbol for the unconscious psyche – particularly the introverting libido, the inward-turning energy that goes back and down and in. Its seduction draws us into darkness and deeps. It is always a “both”: creative-destructive, male-female, poisonous-healing, dry-moist, spiritual-material, and many other irreconcilable opposites, like the figure of Mercurius.

This twelfth interpretation of the snake takes all the other eleven and turns them into steps in a program in which the snake is finally explained by the final step: the unconscious psyche.

What has really been said by this last term that is not better said by the image itself, its fascinating flickering tongue, its rattle or hiss and quick strike, its reticulated glistening skin, its coil and sidewinding, the panic rising on sudden sight of it? Why must we exchange the living image for an interpretative concept? Are interpretations really psychological defenses against the presence of a god? Remember: most of the Greek gods, goddesses, and heroes had a snake form – Zeus, Dionysus, Demeter, Athene, Hercules, Hermes, Hades, even Apollo. Is our terror of the snake the appropriate response of a mortal to an immortal?

For instance, a black snake comes in a dream, a great big black snake, and you can spend a whole hour of therapy with this black snake, talking about the devouring mother, talking about anxiety, about repressed sexuality, and all the other interpretative moves that we therapists make. But

what remains after all the symbolic understanding is what that snake is doing, this crawling huge black snake that's sliding into your life. The moment you've caught the snake in an interpretation, you've lost the snake. You've stopped its living movement. Then the person leaves the therapeutic hour with a concept about "my repressed sexuality" or "my cold black passions" or "my mother" – and is no longer with the snake.

The interpretation settles the emotional quivering and mental uncertainty that came with the snake. In fact, the snake is no longer necessary; it has been successfully banished by interpretation. You, the dreamer, don't need the snake anymore and you then form the habit of not needing dreams anymore either once they have been interpreted. Meaning replaces image; animal disappears into the human mind.

There are various ways of keeping the snake around. It can be imagined as a felt presence and talked with; it may need to be fed and housed, painted and modeled. It can be honored by attentions, like recalling it several times during the day: by "doing something for it" – a physical gesture, lighting a candle, buying an amulet, discovering its name. It can be brought closer by visualizing it, sensing its skin, its strength. Now imagination replaces meaning, and the human mind gives itself over to the animal presence.

This is the psychological and imaginative work of animating the image, giving a life-soul back to the snake that may have been removed from it by your desire to understand

it. The snake may have no objection to being understood. It may be pleased with your turning to herpetology books about snakes, by your visit to a zoo to watch them, by your reading of ancient serpent mysteries. But whatever you do, consult with the snake first so that you do not insult it by following your own plan without recognizing its arrival in your life. Its arrival is a summons to divert your intentions from yourself at least partially toward it.

Animating the image – that is the task today. No longer is it a question of symbolic contents of dreams. Over a hundred years ago Freud brought us back to the old traditions of symbolism and the old traditions of dream meanings; then Jung explored these symbolisms and meanings even more widely and deeply. But then both Freud and Jung made a move that we no longer want to repeat. They both translated the images of animals into crystallized symbolic meanings. They didn't let what appeared express itself enough, but moved toward satisfying the rationalizing – and often frightened – day-world mind. “This means that.” Even Jung's method of active imagination, which does animate the image, is less for the sake of the animal's soul than for yours, the dreamer's. “Pinned and wriggling on the wall,” said T.S. Eliot about the modern mind's mode of operation. Eliot's image suggests the psyche's butterfly unable to wing its way beyond diagnostic labels and interpretative meanings.

Once you've translated the great snake into your omnipotence fantasy or penis envy, or you've translated it as a mother symbol, the Great Mother, you no longer need

the image, and you let the image only say one thing, in two words: “Great Mother.” Then it disappears. You don’t want that black snake really anymore. You want to work on your mother complex, your personality, and so on. This still leaves the soul unanimated. That is, unalive. The images are not walking around on their own legs. They’ve been turned into meanings, as Aniela Jaffé wrote about Jung whose main myth was the myth of meaning. Now, let’s try to leave meaning, and the search for meaning, and the meaning of life, so as to stick with the animal image.

In our eagerness for conceptual meanings, we ignore the actual beast. We are no longer astounded by its facts, or wonder over its presence – that, for instance, a snake dislocates its jaw to swallow an animal larger than itself, that its digestive system works without chewing, without teeth or gizzard or cud, like a rhythmic peristalsis that squeezes its meal against the snake’s backbones, crushing its prey into a digestible pulp. Or, for instance, the fact that its discarded skin after shedding appears to go on shedding.

Lives without meaning hunger for meanings, and psychologists feed the hungry with the living presences of animals. Patients as carnivores, devouring the flesh of their dream animals to satisfy their gluttony for knowledge. Or, have we psychologists become taxidermists, disemboweling the snake, stuffing it with concepts, and preserving it as a carefully fixed meaning?

(James Hillman, Animal Presences)

James Hillman: Stick to the Image

The psyche is not unconscious. We are, we patients, we analysts. The psyche is constantly making intelligible statements. It's making dreams and symptoms, it's making fantasies and moods. It's extraordinarily intentional, purposive. But the system of therapy has projected "the unconscious" into the patient's psyche, which, then because of opposites, means that the analyst must be conscious. Both patient and analyst tend to believe this system. But the point is that consciousness floats; a psychic fluidum, as Mesmer might have called it, wrapping around and all through the analytical session. It doesn't belong to either party. Sometimes the patient has an insight, and another moment the analyst is conscious by simply being reticent, and another moment the consciousness is really in the image.

For instance, a black snake comes in a dream, a great big black snake, and you can spend a whole hour with this black snake talking about the devouring mother, talking about the anxiety, talking about the repressed sexuality, talking about the natural mind, all those interpretive moves that people make, and what is left, what is vitally important, is what that snake is doing, this crawling huge black snake that's walking into your life ... and the moment you've defined the snake, interpreted it, you've lost the snake, you've stopped it, and then the person leaves the hour with a concept about my repressed sexuality or my cold black passions or my mother or whatever it is, and you've lost the snake. The task of analysis is to keep the snake there,

the black snake, and there are various ways for keeping the black snake... see, the black snake's no longer necessary the moment it's been interpreted, and you don't need your dreams any more because they've been interpreted.

But I think you need them all the time, you need that very image you had during the night. For example, a policeman, chasing you down the street ... you need that image, because that image keeps you in an imaginative possibility ... if you say, "Oh, my guilt complex is loose again and is chasing me down the street," it's a different feeling, because you've taken up the unknown policeman into your ego system of what you know, your guilt. You've absorbed the unknown into the known (made the unconscious conscious) and nothing, absolutely nothing has happened, nothing. You're really safe from that policeman, and you can go to sleep again.

Your interpretation protects your sleep. I want to let the psyche threaten the hell out of you by keeping that policeman there chasing you down the street, even now as we talk. The policeman is more important than what we say about him: I mean the image is always more inclusive, more complex (it's a complex, isn't it?) than the concept. Let's make that a rule. That's why "stick to the image" is another rule in archetypal psychology. So who is the policeman? Is he guilt, or is he the sense of the law, is he the sense of order, is he the sense of the city, the polis? Has he something to do with an inherent structure of consciousness that wants something from you, or reminds you of something,

calls you to him? Otherwise he wouldn't be chasing you. You need to keep the policeman there so that you can learn what he is up to and what keeps you running, and running in the street, into the street.

The images are where the psyche is. People say, "I don't know what the soul is," or "I've lost my soul" or whatever. To me the place to look when you feel that way is immediately to the images that show where you are with your soul in your dreams. "I don't know where the hell I am, I am all confused, I've just lost my job ... everything is happening." Where do you look when you feel that way? ... The place to look is not only to your feelings, not to your interpretations, not ask help from a third person necessarily, but ask yourself what were you in the image? Where's your imagination? That immediately locates you somewhere, into your own psyche. Whereas the introspection doesn't help at all, chasing one's shadow, questioning why did I do this, why do I do that and why did they do this. An instant turmoil: the Hindus call it *vritta*, turning the mind on itself like an anthill. But when you have an image of an anthill you know where you are: you're in the middle of an anthill, they're going in fifty different directions at once, but the ants are doing something. It seems desperate to me only because I say it shouldn't be an anthill. But an anthill has an internal structure, it is an organization. So the gift of an image is that it affords a place to watch your soul, precisely what it is doing.



Of course, if instead of the language of concept—the ant-hill is your confusion (and then you think, “Oh, I always get confused; when somebody leaves me, I get confused; when I get rejected, I don’t know where I am; I just walk in a thousand different directions”—and you begin with subjectivism, that subjective importance about yourself). Instead of that kind of language, you can talk to the confusion in the language of the image, which is an anthill. The ants are swarming: some are going up, some are coming down, some are carrying eggs somewhere, some are taking care of I don’t know what, carrying a dead one. . . . There’s a great deal going on, let’s see what the ants are doing. And I am not thinking about confusion anymore, I’m watching the phenomenon, and seeing phenomenologically what is happening. I am no longer caught in my own subjectivity. I’m fascinated with what’s going on, and this attentiveness is quieting. I can see it scientifically—watch as a naturalist does. The phenomenologist of the psyche is also a naturalist of the psyche, watching the way it produces what it produces. I might see the ants suddenly all eating each other up. It’s no use saying that is a destructive scene that’s happening: I have to wonder about purposefulness, too.

Let’s watch: maybe the psyche is taking care of the problem by itself. We don’t know in advance; we have to stick with the image, stay in the imagination. “Oh, oh, they just started crawling on my feet, eating my feet. I can’t stand it. They are crawling up my legs. I’m going crazy.” Now the image is vividly coming to life. Still, stay with it, what is your reaction? I can brush them off, I can run around in circles. I can

get a dish of honey to attract them elsewhere. I can sing them an ant song. You see, I can do something in relationship to the actual thing that is happening. But what I don't do, won't do is interpret the ants. You saw that move—"They're crawling up my legs. I'm going crazy"—that shift from image to interpretation—and that makes you crazy.

The hermeneutic move made the craziness. Who says you are going crazy? What you actually feel is the ants crawling up your legs. Then there are other questions to be put into this scene. I mean you have to locate yourself in it, extend the terrain a bit, not a lot, not too much, but a bit. Have you stepped on the ants, have you tried to cross their path, have you put your foot unknowingly into an anthill? Step away! It's a certain animal movement. An animal sense of living. This is the active relation to the image that we want to get going through therapy.

(James Hillman, Inter Views, 53–56)



James Hillman & Thomas Moore: Let the Creatures Be

James Hillman: People have animals in their lives, that's the first thing. These are either animals they live with – dogs, fish, a bird in a cage – or they are animals they remember – images from their childhood, fantasies, animals they saw in the zoo, or crushed on the road. The question for a psychologist is, why are these animals so important?

Thomas Moore: And it seems people are fascinated, too, by films and books about animals.

JH: True. Look at cats: something like six of the ten current bestsellers are about cats. What's going on? Plus *The Black Stallion*, and *Bambi*, and all the Disney animals. And what are animals doing in dreams?

Lots of people, especially children, dream of animals – bugs, spiders, snakes, horses.

In most societies the animals were once gods. They weren't representations of gods; they were the gods. There was a divinity in the animal. I think we still feel that, especially in dreams. People occasionally have a dream in which an animal talks to them or saves them. A polar bear swims through the ice to rescue a dreamer or a man gets on the back of a horse and is saved. Being saved by an animal makes the dreamer feel that there's something special or holy about them.

Animals were gods because they were eternal. The American Indians saw the buffalo that appeared in the spring as the same buffalo that had disappeared in the fall. The animals went down into the earth and then came back up again, like the sun. We see the same sun rise every morning; they see the same animal always returning. That absolute perfection – that the animal is always the same – is a divine quality. So of course if you kill one to eat it, you have to propitiate it, to go through a ritual.

TM: Because it is more than human.

JH: But in our culture animals have become less than human.

TM: I remember an uncle of mine, when I was a child living on a farm, who knew animals very well. He was able to make little noises and the animals would respond and do what he wanted. It was almost magical. I think that like many people he felt animals can do many things that humans can't. We rely on them to know what the weather will be like, for instance. So there's a feeling that they are in fact more than human.

JH: But if you look at our Western tradition, we've had 2000 years in which animals were degraded. In Rome, they were property and you could do anything you wanted with them. It was a special law; they were like slaves. In the Christian world, animals did not have souls. By the sixteenth or seventeenth century, animals were machines. The

Cartesians said that animals didn't have sense – they didn't even have sensation. It wasn't just that they couldn't think and therefore they were inferior. According to the Cartesians they couldn't feel. So it didn't matter if you kicked them. The noise they made was no sign of being in pain because they couldn't feel pain. One Cartesian argued that when he played his organ it made more noise than his cat did when he kicked it. Did that mean the organ hurt more? Animals were machines

Why couldn't we allow the world, as in Japan or Egypt or even Greece, to be a continuum in which all things belong together? One Japanese critic said the only reason the West eats so much meat is because in our culture there's an ontological difference between animals and men. And so we can kill them with impunity. But in a culture where there's no ontological difference you have to ask the animal's permission. Otherwise it would mean genocide or fratricide.

TM: The classical scholastic approach was to look at the animal soul.

JH: But the soul was inferior because it didn't have reason. A great deal of Western psychology in the last one hundred years has been devoted to showing the ability to reason in animals. An octopus can go through a maze; whales sing; dolphins have an extraordinary language. In fact, we're now beginning to try to understand ourselves by watching animals. Psychoanalysts say that when people dream of animals, they reveal their animal nature. If you dream of a pig,

it shows you that you're piggish.

TM: It seems like a way of protecting yourself from the animal. If you can say the animal is there because you're piggish you don't have to stand apart and look the animal in the face.

JH: Right. You don't have to take the animal as other. It's part of you, so you deal with your piggish nature. But what about the pig? Where did it come from? It would be very different for, say, an Egyptian who dreamt of a pig. He wouldn't immediately say, "that's my piggish nature." He would say that he was visited by a pig – just what a little child would say. A child will come in in the morning and say, "There's a pig in my room" or "I saw a wolf last night, don't let the wolf come back tonight." Neither the Egyptian nor the child would say, "This is my piggish self" or "I'm being wolfish."

TM: Isn't the presence of the animal without interpretation what comes through in Christian iconography and the sculpture of other religions, where you are face to face with a boar or an eagle or a snake? In the Aesculapius cult there actually was a snake in the temple. You can't say this is a symbol.

JH: No. And that's so important, because you were healed by the appearance of the god in snake or dog form. The dog came into your dream or your night vision and licked your wound and you were healed. No one took your dream down

in the morning and then said, “That dog is a symbol of your underworld, your dark, doggy nature. You’ve been cut off from your instinct and therefore you dreamt of a dog, but now that you’ve found your instinct again, you’re better.” To them, it would have been a genuine appearance by the god in animal form. That’s so distant from the way we think. We look at them chiefly as representing our lower, instinctual nature.”

TM: Which has to be bridled in some way like the animals.

JH: Or let out for a good run or fed well so you have a nice healthy instinct. There are even case studies where the images get more and more humanoid, and therefore the therapist thinks the case is getting better and better until the animals have been done away with. The Navaho, by contrast, would say that the world begins with bugs, creeping creatures. They’re the lowest level of things, not in the sense of inferior but in the sense of providing a foundation. Yet when we dream of bugs, we think we’re going “bugs” or crazy.”

I’ve collected dreams with animals in them since 1958. One of the major motifs is the dreamer trying to eradicate the animal. Another one is the dreamer seeing the animal as more dangerous than it turns out to be, But rapprochement with the animal is crucial.

TM: We could take the animal’s point of view in the dream. If you’re not taking the dreamer’s position, often there’s no

indication of danger.

JH: Even in a dream where it seems the behavior of the animal is dangerous you still have to see what the dreamer is doing to make the animal pursue him. An American Indian goes out hoping an animal appears to him. Being chased by an animal needs to be seen in a much wider cultural context than our Western tradition. It could be a demon that needs to be released like the frog in the fairy tale. Or the fox that stops a young boy on his way through the forest and turns out to be the king in disguise. Being pursued or held up or questioned by an animal means that animal has something to tell you. It wants something. It may want to bite you just to get under your skin, or to make you aware of your animal nature.

TM: It may bite, it may sting. But that doesn't mean that the proper reaction is to run away or exterminate it.

JH: We pay a terrible price for this extermination. My own little fantasy is that if we could change the dreams of Americans in regard to insects we would have much less toxic waste. There are statistics in California on how much money is spent on insecticides and pesticides, And there are studies indicating that if these chemicals were not used, the crop loss would be less than the money spent on spraying. Of course, some of our fruit wouldn't look as if it was made of wax. But the fear of the bug – the fear of a crawling thing – gives us overkill. If you live in another culture, like India, you live with bugs all the time, To the Bushmen,

according to Laurens van der Post, the chief of the animals is not the lion or the elephant but the praying mantis. And to the Navaho, as I said, the world starts with an insect. In Hindu mythology insects are extremely important.

TM: What's behind this fear of insects?

JH: They have an autonomous life. They go about in their own way. They have an autonomous psyche. And we have the feeling that insects will win out and take over the world. We are afraid of that autonomy – it's beyond the ego's control. You can't talk to an insect, you can't make it change its mind, you can't pet it. The more independent the animal – snakes, for example – the more anxiety associated with them. Yet that is also a key aspect of divinity. To the ancient Egyptians the fact that the animal was autonomous was evidence of its sacredness. To us it means the animal is somehow demonic.

One side of our attitude toward animals is anxiety. The other reveals itself in excessive sentimentality.

TM: I was impressed in my childhood by my uncle who had no sentimentality about animals. They lived in their world, he lived in his. At the same time he would probably defend his horse with the same vigor that he would defend himself. So there's sentimentality toward animals on one side and distrust of animals on the other. These attitudes tend to go together.

This brings to mind another polarity, the blending of man and animal in religion and mythology. I was struck by the image from Greece of Chiron, the great educator and healer who was half horse and half man. In a sense our whole history of medicine goes back to that horse-man.

JH: This is a tough one. There are also images like the Minotaur where you have a bull's head and a human body. If you look at Greek images of the Minotaur, or some of Picasso's drawings of it, you get this terrible feeling – it's so sad it makes you cry – of being caught inside that bull's head. It's as if everything that goes through your own mind gets trapped in that bull and can't get out. That's an image of a monster, which is quite different from Chiron. Why are certain things monstrous?

Why is the animal-human combination in some cases monstrous and in others divine?

TM: In popular culture we have films of men and women turning into wolves. And there's a great deal of sympathy for them while at the same time you see all the "beastly" things they do.

JH: In one way it belongs to a destiny to be lost or caught in an animal, to enter the animal's totem. I don't know if you ever read *The Last of the Just* by André Schwarz-Bart about the Jews during the Occupation. It's one of the great books of the postwar period. There's one long chapter about how he becomes a dog. He lives life as a dog. You don't

know whether he's imagining it or whether he is a dog or whether he is "as if" a dog. But it's part of a destiny, like Lucius's destiny to become ass.

There's a shamanistic tradition in which to become the animal is part of the experience. That we really need to understand. The American Indians took animal names so often – Sitting Bull, Running Deer, Black Elk. Is it to take on the power of the animal?

TM: Would it also be to have some of the animal's autonomy, so you're not just operating out of reason?

JH: You can yield to that autonomy. You can let the animal speak through you. But that autonomy, of course, is divine.

TM: That makes it a little clearer why getting rid of the animal is a secularization of psychology, because then you reduce all behavior to that rational part.

JH: You lose the otherness.

TM: Maybe that was expressed by philosophies that said every human being had an animal soul, and even by modern philosophy, which talks about the human being as a symbol-making animal.

JH: The way we define ourselves defines the animals. If we define ourselves in terms of our senses, then we begin to see the animals as gods. They know everything about the senses.

But we define ourselves as homo rationalis. That means the animals are inferior because we define ourselves in terms of what they don't really have.

TM: Do you think the argument religious people have with evolutionary theory is that it connects them with animals? Isn't that how they usually put it – "We're not monkeys"?

JH: It's partly what the monkey symbolizes. In each major culture the monkey carries the shadow of the culture. In the Middle Ages monkeys represented drunkenness. In Jewish religion they represented lasciviousness. The monkey in India is a redeemer, but he's also a crafty trickster. Even Heraclitus remarked, "We are to the gods as the monkeys are to us." If we were closer to the horse than anything else, Darwin would probably be widely accepted.

TM: What do you think about symbolic studies of animals? I've noticed that more books are coming up about animals in mythology and religion.

JH: If study is a way of getting closer to the divinity of the animal, then I think it's important. It's like trying to know the nature of the god. The paths of revelation are many, and one of them can be through study. It's only when study becomes knowing that it doesn't work.

TM: As we talk we're not making much of a distinction between the animal we look at and the one of the imagination.

JH: I don't want to make a big distinction between the two. If we think they're different then we've divided the world into subject and object. I would rather think that the animal out there is also a psychic fact. When you look at a Chinese or Japanese painting of, say, a duck or a heron, is it an absolute copy of nature or is it a psychic image? There's no difference. If I go to the zoo and watch a tiger, it's like being with that tiger in a dream.

TM: Would that apply to pets?

JH: I think the pet has become an anthropomorphized animal, a little freak. It's completely in the human world. That's no longer an animal as totem or fetish or familiarus or tribe member. It's like having a dwarf or a eunuch, as in the Middle Ages. I don't think it's the same as with your uncle. He didn't have pets. Those were animals.

But there are different ways of having pets. Some people's pets put them in touch with the animal world. I can think of one case in particular where the animal was the representative of the spirit world. It gave signs that were very important; the animal actually had second sight or something. It was the mediator to the other world in the shamanistic sense. The other world may not be so remarkable. It may be just what's on the other side of the wall where the cat goes out at night. Maybe that's one reason why people have pets. It's related to a religious activity. Whether they know it or not, they are still in the cult.

(James Hillman, Animal Presences)

Thomas Moore: Healing Dreams

In his book on Asklepios, the Greek god of medicine, Kerényi reproduces a fascinating ancient sculpture that shows a doctor treating a man's shoulder. In the background, as though in a dream (entirely appropriate to Asklepios, who healed by means of dreams), a snake—the god's animal form—is touching the man's shoulder with its mouth. This gesture was considered particularly effective for healing. The image suggests that the various treatments physicians employ on the physical plane have counterparts in the soul.

In dream, healing is often accomplished by an animal form, not by a rational, technical procedure. As reports of dreams often describe, the snake simply bites the person where it hurts. It vaccinates the patient with its immediate, potentially poisonous contact.

We can learn from this image that all illness is stereophonic. It plays out at the level of actual body tissues and also at the level of dream. All illness is meaningful, although its meaning may never be translatable into entirely rational terms. The point is not to understand the cause of the disease and then solve the problem, but to get close enough to the disease to restore the particular religious connection with life at which it hints. We need to feel the teeth of the god within the illness in order to be cured by the disease. In a very real sense, we do not cure diseases, they cure us, by restoring our religious participation in life. If the gods

appear in our diseases, it follows that our lives may be too secular and in need of such a visitation.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Thomas Moore: Let The Dream Interpret Us

In therapy it's tempting for both therapist and patient to translate a dream into theories and rationalizations that merely support the ideas of the therapist or the problematic attitudes of the patient. It is much better to let the dream interpret us rather than for us to become clever in interpreting the dream in ways most compatible with our existing ideas.

It is my experience that a dream reveals itself to the patient and the therapist slowly, gradually. I hear the dream and usually have a few impressions and ideas come to the surface immediately. But there might also be a great deal of confusion about the imagery. I try to hold back my need to overcome a dream with meaning. I tolerate its mood and let its puzzling imagery confound me, turn me away from my convictions in order to consider its mystery. Having patience with dreams is extremely important, and is more effective in the long run than any exercise of knowledge, techniques, and tricks. The dream reveals itself on its own timetable, but it does reveal itself.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)

Marion Woodman: Working with Image & Body

Q: How do you work with dreams?

Woodman: First we identify a positive dream image and then we feed it to the body via the imagination. For example, a woman dreams of a beautiful flower. I ask her to picture that flower inside her body in a place that she experiences as “dark,” usually the uterus or feminine organs. When she does this, she generates energy in this area.

This is liable to make her sick in the beginning. If she has never had consciousness in that place, the energy may be too great. She may become nauseous or dizzy. Yet this difficulty passes once she recognizes her body is carrying her through a profound initiation. It is leading her to her own individual path in life.

Q: Is this a completely new way of working?

Woodman: Not entirely. The Eastern sages knew about the relationship of symbols to the body. You can see it in their description of the chakras. But in our culture, there is a failure of imagination. We confuse spiritual or soul food with actual material food. As a result, the soul is left starving and the body is abandoned.

We also don't feed ourselves images that are healthy. The images of war and violence we see on television are actually soul-destroying. But more fundamentally, the soul is not being fed because people can't receive.

Q: So we've lost a sense of communion between the body and the soul?

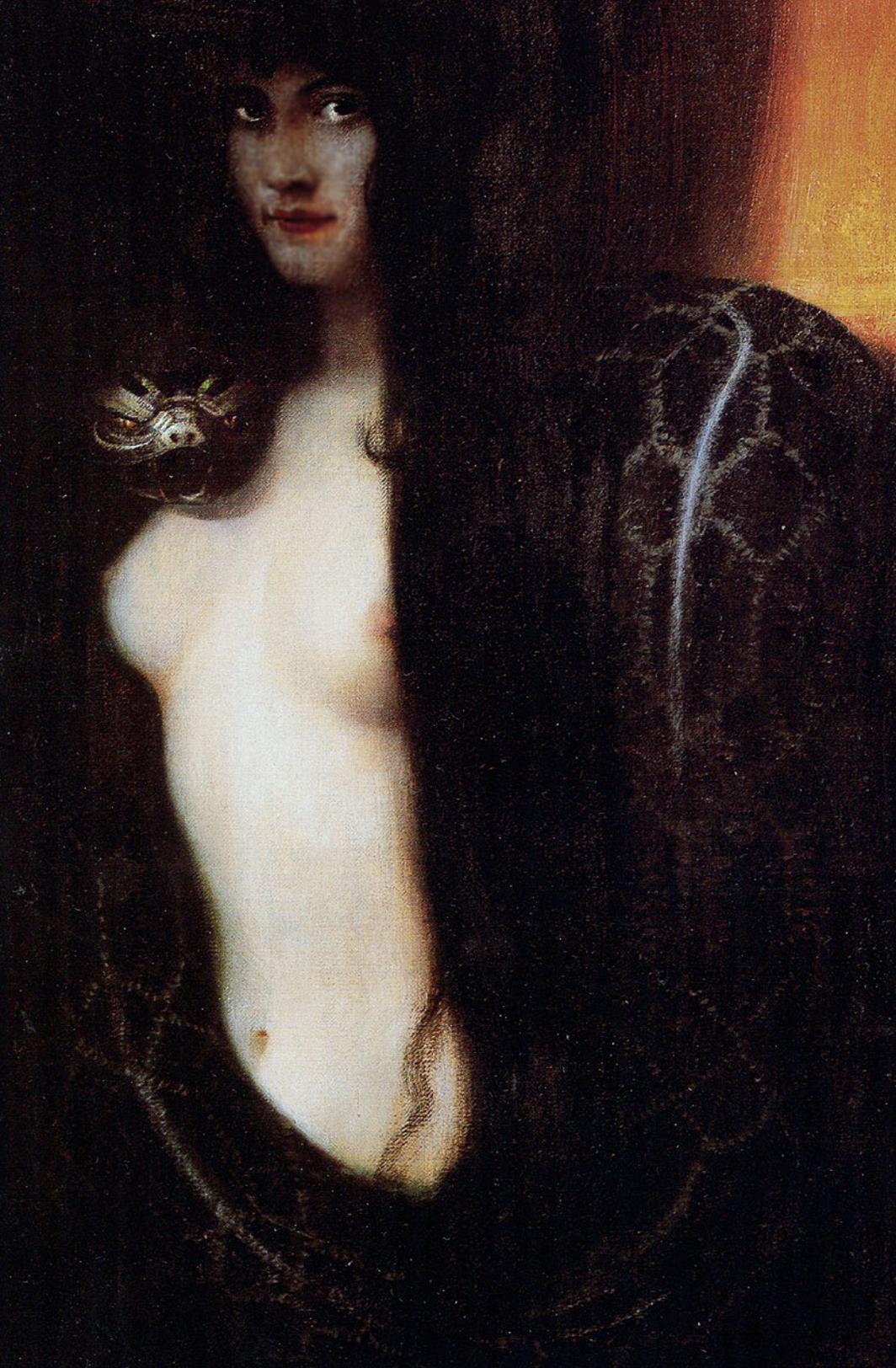
Woodman: Yes. For me body work is soul work and the imagination is the key to connecting both.

To have healing power, an image must be taken into the body on the breath. Then it can connect with the life force, and things can change physically and psychologically.

A man might come into therapy and say, "I can't cry." Yet if I ask him to breathe in a symbol of his grief the tears will start. A woman may say, "I can't express my anger." But if I ask her to image this anger and then breathe it in, in a very few sessions, she may be experiencing her rage uncontrollably. That's why it's important to do this work with someone. It can be frightening on your own.

Most of us keep our breath as shallow as possible because the eruption of feeling is too intense if we inhale deeply. Breathing is very important because it is a matter of receiving and that is the feminine principle incarnate.

(Conscious Femininity: Interviews with Marion Woodman)



Confronting the Shadow

As the old stories tell us, the hero's journey of initiation into a higher order of being often begins with a descent into the dark unknown of the mythological underworld. There the hero confronts and conquers the great dragon of fear (or grandiosity) in order to reclaim the treasure that lies hidden in the depths.

So it is that one of the first tasks of any sincere attempt at soul recovery is a confrontation with the archetypal Shadow — the deepest, darkest corners of the psyche in which lie hidden all the parts of our self that we are most ashamed and afraid of. It's not an enticing prospect, and we can understand why so many New Age practitioners would rather focus on "love and light." But as Jung states with characteristic directness: "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular."

Opposite: The Sin by Franz Stuck

Carl Jung: Everyone Carries A Shadow

Unfortunately there can be no doubt that man is, on the whole, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Every one carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is. If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it.

Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modifications. But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected, and is liable to burst forth suddenly in a moment of unawareness. At all events, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.

We carry our past with us, to wit, the primitive and inferior man with his desires and emotions, and it is only with an enormous effort that we can detach ourselves from this burden. If it comes to a neurosis, we invariably have to deal with a considerably intensified shadow. And if such a person wants to be cured it is necessary to find a way in which his conscious personality and his shadow can live together.

(Carl Jung, Psychology & Religion)



We do not like to look at the shadow side of ourselves; therefore there are many people in our civilized society who have lost their shadow altogether, they have got rid of

it. They are only two-dimensional; they have lost the third dimension, and with it they have usually lost the body. ... The body is a most doubtful friend because it produces things we do not like; there are too many things about the body, which cannot be mentioned. The body is very often the personification of this shadow of the ego.”

(CG Jung, “Analytical Psychology – Its Theory and Practice,” pg 23)



Man stands forth as he really is and shows what was hidden under the mask of conventional adaptation: the shadow. This is now raised to consciousness and integrated with the ego, which means a move in the direction of wholeness. Wholeness is not so much perfection as completeness. Assimilation of the shadow gives a man body, so to speak: the animal sphere of instinct, as well as the primitive or archaic psyche, emerge into the zone of consciousness and can no longer be repressed by fictions and illusions. In this way man becomes for himself the difficult problem he really is. He must always remain conscious of the fact that he is such a problem if he wants to develop at all. Repression leads to a one-sided development if not to stagnation, and eventually to neurotic dissociation. Today it is no longer a question of: “How can I get rid of my shadow?” – for we have seen enough of the curse of one-sidedness. Rather we must ask ourselves: “How can man live with his shadow without its precipitating a succession of disasters?”

(CG Jung, “Collected Works,” vol. 16, pg. 239)

And indeed it is a frightening thought that man also has a shadow-side to him, consisting not just of little weaknesses and foibles, but of a positively demonic dynamism... A dim premonition tells us that we cannot be whole without this negative side, that we have a body which, like all bodies, casts a shadow, and that if we deny this body we cease to be three-dimensional and become flat and without substance. Yet this body is a beast with a beast's soul, an organism that gives unquestioning obedience to instinct. To unite oneself with this shadow is to say yes to instinct, to that formidable dynamism lurking in the background. From this the ascetic morality of Christianity wishes to free us, but at the risk of disorganizing man's animal nature at the deepest level.

(CG Jung, "The Collected Works," vol. 7, pg. 30)



Joseph Campbell: The Shadow

The Shadow is, so to say, the blind spot in your nature. It's that which you won't look at about yourself. This is the counterpart exactly of the Freudian unconscious, the repressed recollections as well as the repressed potentialities in you. The shadow is that which you might have been had you been born on the other side of the tracks: the other person, the other you. It is made up of the desires and ideas within you that you are repressing—all of the introjected id. The shadow is the landfill of the self. Yet it is also a sort of vault: it holds great, unrealized potentialities within you.

(Joseph Campbell, Pathways to Bliss)

Robert Bly: The Long Bag We Drag Behind Us

It's an old Gnostic tradition that we don't invent things, we just remember. The Europeans I know of who remember the dark side best are Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, and Carl Jung. I'll call up a few of their ideas and add a few thoughts of my own.

Let's talk about the personal shadow first. When we were one or two years old we had what we might visualize as a 360-degree personality. Energy radiated out from all parts of our body and all parts of our psyche. A child running is a living globe of energy. We had a ball of energy, all right; but one day we noticed that our parents didn't like certain parts of that ball. They said things like: "Can't you be still?" Or "It isn't nice to try and kill your brother." Behind us we have an invisible bag, and the part of us our parents don't like, we, to keep our parents' love, put in the bag. By the time we go to school our bag is quite large. Then our teachers have their say: "Good children don't get angry over such little things." So we take our anger and put it in the bag. By the time my brother and I were twelve in Madison, Minnesota we were known as "the nice Bly boys." Our bags were already a mile long.

Then we do a lot of bag-stuffing in high school. This time it's no longer the evil grownups that pressure us, but people our own age. So the student's paranoia about grownups can be misplaced. I lied all through high school automatically to try to be more like the basketball players. Any part of

myself that was a little slow went into the bag. My sons are going through the process now; I watched my daughters, who were older, experience it. I noticed with dismay how much they put into the bag, but there was nothing their mother or I could do about it. Often my daughters seemed to make their decision on the issue of fashion and collective ideas of beauty, and they suffered as much damage from other girls as they did from men.

So I maintain that out of a round globe of energy the twenty-year-old ends up with a slice. We'll imagine a man who has a thin slice left—the rest is in the bag—and we'll imagine that he meets a woman; let's say they are both twenty-four. She has a thin, elegant slice left. They join each other in a ceremony, and this union of two slices is called marriage. Even together the two do not make up one person! Marriage when the bag is large entails loneliness during the honeymoon for that very reason. Of course we all lie about it. "How is your honeymoon?" "Wonderful, how's yours?"

Different cultures fill the bag with different contents. In Christian culture sexuality usually goes into the bag. With it goes much spontaneity. Marie Louise von Franz warns us, on the other hand, not to sentimentalize primitive cultures by assuming that they have no bag at all. She says in effect that they have a different but sometimes even larger bag. They may put individuality into the bag, or inventiveness. What anthropologists know as "participation mystique," or "a mysterious communal mind," sounds lovely, but it can

mean that tribal members all know exactly the same thing and no one knows anything else. It's possible that bags for all human beings are about the same size.

“We spend our life until we're twenty deciding what parts of ourself to put into the bag, and we spend the rest of our lives trying to get them out again. Sometimes retrieving them feels impossible, as if the bag were sealed. Suppose the bag remains sealed—what happens then? A great nineteenth-century story has an idea about that. One night Robert Louis Stevenson woke up and told his wife a bit of a dream he'd just had. She urged him to write it down; he did, and it became “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” The nice side of the personality becomes, in our idealistic culture, nicer and nicer. The Western man may be a liberal doctor, for example, always thinking about the good of others. Morally and ethically he is wonderful. But the substance in the bag takes on a personality of its own; it can't be ignored. The story says that the substance locked in the bag appears one day somewhere else in the city. The substance in the bag feels angry, and when you see it it is shaped like an ape, and moves like an ape.

The story says then that when we put a part of ourselves in the bag it regresses. It de-evolves toward barbarism. Suppose a young man seals a bag at twenty and then waits fifteen or twenty years before he opens it again. What will he find? Sadly, the sexuality, the wildness, the impulsiveness, the anger, the freedom he put in have all regressed; they are not only primitive in mood, they are hostile to the person

who opens the bag. The man who opens his bag at forty-five or the woman who opens her bag rightly feels fear. She glances up and sees the shadow of an ape passing along the alley wall; anyone seeing that would be frightened. "I think we could say that most males in our culture put their feminine side or interior woman into the bag. When they begin, perhaps around thirty-five or forty, trying to get in touch with their feminine side again, she may be by then truly hostile to them. The same man may experience in the meantime much hostility from women in the outer world. The rule seems to be: the outside has to be like the inside. That's the way it is on this globe. If a woman, wanting to be approved for her femininity, has put her masculine side or her internal male into the bag, she may find that twenty years later he will be hostile to her. Moreover he may be unfeeling and brutal in his criticism. She's in a spot. Finding a hostile man to live with would give her someone to blame, and take away the pressure, but that wouldn't help the problem of the closed bag. In the meantime, she is liable to sense a double rejection, from the male inside and the male outside. There's a lot of grief in this whole thing.

Every part of our personality that we do not love will become hostile to us. We could add that it may move to a distant place and begin a revolt against us as well.

But why would we give away, or put into the bag, so much of ourselves? Why would we do it so young? And if we have put away so many of our angers, spontaneities, hungers, enthusiasms, our rowdy and unattractive parts, then how can

we live? What holds us together? Alice Miller spoke to this point in her book *Prisoners of Childhood*, which in paperback form is called *The Drama of the Gifted Child*.

The drama is this. We came as infants “trailing clouds of glory,” arriving from the farthest reaches of the universe, bringing with us appetites well preserved from our mammal inheritance, spontaneities wonderfully preserved from our 150,000 years of tree life, angers well preserved from our 5,000 years of tribal life—in short, with our 360-degree radiance—and we offered this gift to our parents. They didn’t want it. They wanted a nice girl or a nice boy. That’s the first act of the drama. It doesn’t mean our parents were wicked; they needed us for something. My mother, as a second generation immigrant, needed my brother and me to help the family look more classy. We do the same thing to our children; it’s a part of life on this planet. Our parents rejected who we were before we could talk, so the pain of the rejection is probably stored in some pre-verbal place.

When I read her book I fell into depression for three weeks. With so much gone, what can we do? We can construct a personality more acceptable to our parents. Alice Miller agrees that we have betrayed ourselves, but she says, “Don’t blame yourself for that. There’s nothing else you could have done.” Children in ancient times who opposed their parents probably were set out to die. We did, as children, the only sensible thing under the circumstances. The proper attitude toward that, she says, is mourning.

(Robert Bly, A Little Book on the Human Shadow)

Thomas Moore: A Taste for the Perverse

One effective “trick” in caring for the soul is to look with special attention and openness at what the individual rejects, and then to speak favorably for that rejected element. For the man I was just discussing, feeling adolescent was something he saw as a problem. I tried to see value in that “problem” without sharing the man’s distaste. We all tend to divide experience into two parts, usually the good and the bad. But there may be all kinds of suspicious things going on in this splitting. We may simply have never considered the value in certain things that we reject. Or by branding certain experiences negative we may be protecting ourselves from some unknown fears. We are all filled with biases and ideas that have snuck into us without our knowing it. Much soul can be lost in such splitting, so that care of the soul can go a long way simply by recovering some of this material that has been cut off.

What I am talking about here is a version of Jung’s theory of shadow. For Jung, there are two kinds of shadow: one consists of the possibilities in life that we reject because of certain choices we have made. The person we choose to be, for example, automatically creates a dark double—the person we choose not to be. This compensatory shadow varies from one person to the next. For some people sex and money are looming shadows, while for others they are simply part of life. Moral purity and responsible living can be shadow aspects to some. Jung also believed there is an absolute shadow, not relative to our life choices and habits.

In other words, there is evil in the world and in the human heart. If we don't recognize this, we have a naive attitude that can get us into trouble. Jung thought the soul can benefit by coming to terms with both kinds of shadow, losing some of its naive innocence in the process.

It appears to me that as we open ourselves to see what our soul is made of and who we really are, we always find some material that is a profound challenge. To some extent, care of the soul asks us to open our hearts wider than they have ever been before, softening the judging and moralism that may have characterized our attitudes and behavior for years. Moralism is one of the most effective shields against the soul, protecting us from its intricacy.

There is nothing more revealing, and maybe nothing more healing, than to reconsider our moralistic attitudes and find how much soul has been hidden behind its doors. People seem to be afraid that if they reflect on their moral principles they might lose their ethical sensitivity altogether. But that is a defensive approach to morality. As we deal with the soul's complexity, morality can deepen and drop its simplicity, becoming at the same time both more demanding and more flexible.

I would go even further. As we get to know the soul and fearlessly consider its oddities and the many different ways it shows itself among individuals, we may develop a taste for the perverse. We may come to appreciate its quirks and deviances. Indeed, we may eventually come to realize that

individuality is born in the eccentricities and unexpected shadow tendencies of the soul, moreso than in normality and conformity. One who cares for the soul becomes someone at ease with idiosyncrasies and the unexpected.

When I lecture on shadow to therapists-in-training, I sometimes ask them, “Where is the line of perversity drawn for you, where is the place where you come up against your own fear and repulsion?” Some people say that sexual abuse is that line, and I wonder how they can work professionally with abused or abusing patients. Others say it is violence of any kind. Others find sexual fantasy perverse. We might ask ourselves the same question. Where do I run up against a wall when I look into my own heart? What is the limit?

Care of the soul is interested in the not-so-normal, the way that soul makes itself felt most clearly in the unusual expressions of a life, even and maybe especially in the problematical ones. I recall once being visited late at night by a woman in her late fifties. Her husband had just left her after twenty-five years of marriage. She didn't think she could go on. No one in her family, she kept repeating, had ever been divorced. Why had this happened to her? I noticed that of all the possible thoughts that could preoccupy her at this difficult time, the worst was the thought that she wasn't like the rest of her family. Something serious must be wrong with her, she thought. In a dark way, her individuality was asserting itself in this ordeal. I imagined that this in fact might be the “purpose” of the event: to bring her around to a sharp sense of her own uniqueness.

It is no accident that the history of art is filled with grotesque images—bloody and twisted crucifixions, gracefully distorted bodies, and surrealistic landscapes. Sometimes deviation from the usual is a special revelation of truth. In alchemy this was referred to as the *opus contra naturam*, an effect contrary to nature. We might see the same kind of artful unnatural expression within our own lives.

When normality explodes or breaks out into craziness or shadow, we might look closely, before running for cover and before attempting to restore familiar order, at the potential meaningfulness of the event. If we are going to be curious about the soul, we may need to explore its deviations, its perverse tendency to contradict expectations. And as a corollary, we might be suspicious of normality. A facade of normality can hide a wealth of deviance, and besides, it is fairly easy to recognize soullessness in the standardizing of experience.

(Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul)



Marion Woodman: Worshiping Illusions

Parabola: The title of one of your books, *Addiction to Perfection*, raises a great many questions. I wonder if you could explain a little about what that title means.

Marion Woodman: Well, it comes in part from the situation in which parents have a concept of what the perfect child would be: perfect athlete, perfect scholar, when 100 percent achievement is the goal. The parents are trapped by this ideal, and their whole life is centered around performance. The child then learns how to perform and has an idealized vision of what he or she should be. Anything that doesn't fit in with that ideal has to be pushed back, has to be annihilated. As a result, whatever is human in the child, whatever is "dirty" sexuality, and the plain, ordinary world of the body, the child experiences as not part of the perfect ideal. Spontaneity, just the natural anger or natural joy even, or the natural love of rocks and mud is blocked, and the child gets the idea on some level that he or she is unlovable. "Whoever I am in the reality of my being is not lovable," the child concludes.

Natural being is repressed, and performance becomes everything. In any given situation a person subject to this repression will figure out whom to please and then perform in order to please that person, and their own reality is not present in the performance. People begin to live for an ideal. There's nothing else to live for. But if you are living for an ideal, and driving yourself as hard as you can to be

perfect at your job or as a mother or as the perfect wife, you lose the natural, slow rhythm of life. There's just a rushing, trying to attain the ideal. The slower pace of the beat of the earth, the state where you simply are, is forgotten.

P: It was forgotten long ago, really.

MW: Long ago. The parents have forgotten it, and the grandparents have forgotten it. It's a cultural situation. In its worst form, it's what happened in Nazi Germany. They sought to create a race of supermen, and they were guided by an ideal of this kind. Anything that did not fit in with that rigid concept was killed. I am now in the position to hear the dreams of people suffering from subjection to this kind of ideal, and their dreams are full of Nazi concentration camps. They are living their lives in a Nazi concentration camp. In these dreams, soldiers are killing all the women, baby girls are being raped, animals and women are having their limbs torn off. You see, the instinct is being distorted as well.

In the feminine side of our being is a much slower, less rational side, a part that moves in a much more spontaneous, natural, and receptive way, a part that accepts life as it is without judgment.

For me, perfection is a patriarchal word that splits everything into contraries: black or white. You are then living in constant conflict, and integration is not possible. Even the language is split. I find people who cannot endure words

such as masculine and feminine. They go into a rage at the word masculine or penetration, or a phrase like phallic thrust, because they have been so outraged by what they call “the masculine principle.” I don’t call it the masculine principle; I call it the power principle. That’s what it really is. But certainly, in the patriarchy of the business world and in many homes, what’s operating is power”You be as I want you to be,” and “I love you so much that I know exactly what you ought to be,” and “You will do it, or I will not accept you. I will reject you.” And so people are living in terror of rejection.

P: It leads to compulsive behavior, and then the fury at the denial of most of themselves is projected back out onto their parents?

MW: Or onto men, or onto the culture. People think of the culture as being violent, they have a great fear of violence. Of course there is real violence in the streets, but the violence is inside as well. People are afraid that if they let out their rage they would actually destroy other people. So they muffle it, and secretly collude as they watch violent films, even the news.

P: Is the root of this situation a mental one? It seems to come from an idea in the mind that compels people to live according to a certain picture of themselves.”

MW: It’s an image of what life should be but is not. So it’s worship of an illusion. It simply is not real. You can see that

with an anorexic, for example. She has an image of what her body should be, and she treats herself as a Nazi would have treated her in a concentration camp. She kills her femininity in order to force herself into a rigid ideal, which is delusion.

P: The taking in of this ideal from the outside is so destructive to the individual, and yet it is taken in and embraced with gusto. Why do we embrace it if it is so self-destructive and causes so much suffering?

MW: If you are raised in a home that is based on the power principle, that's the only reality you know. You have no other world to judge by. Terrified of being left alone, the only reality you understand is pleasing other people, and you have within yourself no individual standpoint. You don't even know such a thing exists, that's the tragedy. And then you treat other people the way you were treated, so you raise your kids the same way. You know it's all wrong, that essentially you are not happy, but you have no other model for reality, so the pattern is repeated.

P: Is there anyone who is really free from this? No matter what, the parent will always have some idea of what the child ought to be like.

MW: Well, I'm sure there are some parents who can love the child for who the child is.

P: They would have to be parents who have been able to

love themselves.

MW: That's right. That's where it starts. You have to forgive yourself first for being human, because to be human is to have lots of faults; so you have to forgive, and then the love flows in.

P: That's interesting because our next issue is entitled "Forgiveness."

MW: It's the crucial word. If you are brought up on ideals but know you have human failings and unacceptable qualities, you have to forgive yourself for being human, and it is through this forgiveness that you forgive others. But that is so difficult to do in our society, because we are not being loved for ourselves so we hide our worst faults.

Even in analysis, we will hide our worst faults, and if we begin to sense that we are being loved, even with all our ugliness and darkness, there is an immense fear and resistance, because we feel vulnerable, and suddenly the word trust starts to come in. And we are terrified of trust; we are terrified to make ourselves vulnerable. So the move into forgiveness is an immense leap. People will move to a point of trust, and then the unconscious reaction is one of terror, because they are wide open, they can be struck down. So then you have to wait. And there's another opening to more love, and then again the terror comes in. And it's the body that's terrified. Many people begin to realize at that point that their body was rejected. If they engage in depth

massage or inner work in the body, the agony of the body begins to come up.

P: I'm trying to envisage this process going on outside of analysis. Could it? In a relationship with someone, for instance? So often the situation is unconscious; how do you begin to shed light on it?

MW: Many of the letters I receive are from people who are not in analysis, but they say, "Thank God for this light on what I'm trying to do. I could never see the meaning of what I was trying to do, but now I think I have some idea." They are beginning to realize that they live trying to please others. They are trying to start to live from who they are, what their needs are, what their real fears are, what their real emotions locked in their muscles are. They are trying to experience themselves as body and soul, so that others will have to respond to them in their own reality. And that takes love.

You may not like what the person is saying to you at all, particularly if you have thought of them in a certain way and all of a sudden they start saying things they never said in their lives before. If, for example, they start expressing rage or contempt, it can be very threatening. But I think that's where it starts. The person acts more and more from his or her own individual standpoint. Now that standpoint will change constantly. Gradually you become conscious of the emotions in the body supporting what you are saying, and you experience them as having substance. Instead of

just speaking from the neck up, you discover what's in the body. It seems a lot of people are cut off at the neck, so they talk from the head. Meanwhile, something completely different can be going on below the neck. There's a real split inside.

P: What you have called "inner civil war."

MW: Yes, inner civil war. And that's why so many people try to drown themselves in the addiction. As soon as the rage begins to come up, they start eating or drinking or spending money, or they turn to sex or an obsessive relationship. Or gambling, or TV. Anything that will block out consciousness. The addictive substance acts as a soporific, and gradually they sink into unconsciousness.

From my point of view, in each case you have to try to figure out what the addictive substance means symbolically. Otherwise, it will hold an almost religious significance. Now that most people do not have a religious focus, the religious focus will go on to something material. They may think it's food they want, for example, because they experience themselves as starving. Well, the soul is starving; it's true, because it's not being recognized, and it's being continually starved. They then try to feed it with food, which usually symbolizes the loving mother who can accept them as they are.

P: You see different substances as having different symbolic meanings? Alcohol?

MW: Spirit, the longing for the light; whereas food grounds you, puts you back in the body, alcohol initially takes you into light. I think the positive side of addiction is that many addicts are profoundly religious people. They have immense energy, and they are not satisfied with the world as it is. They think it is a dreadfully cruel, ruthless place, and they want meaning in their lives.

P: So perhaps they feel the need more acutely than others.

MW: Because they have such a driving energy. And they want a god. Now they'd never say that, but they want something bigger than the bread-and-butter world. If that's all there is, it's meaningless. If life is nothing more than driven work, for example, it is not worth living. The alcohol takes them out of the mundane world, temporarily and then, of course, ultimately it takes them into unconsciousness.

P: It has always seemed to me that addiction had the elements of both avoidance and substitution.

MW: Yes. The avoidance would be the avoidance of the inner civil war, and it's also an avoidance of reality. Reality is too painful if the bottom line is that I am not lovable, that I will be rejected if I am who I am. That is an unbearably painful recognition.

P: But different from the need for another level that you just spoke of?

MW: Yes. One side of it is fear. The other side is substituting an addiction for a deeper reality.

P: In your book you write that many people are driven to addiction because “there is no collective container for their natural spiritual needs.”

MW: It used to be there in the church, for example, where people would enter into the sacred world, surrender to it, leave the sacred world, and take that energy back to the profane world. But they had something to take with them; they had a meaning. Their suffering was given meaning. You can't live with meaningless suffering. So you have avoidance addicts do not live in the here-and-now. They are always going to stop drinking next Monday, or they're going to stop eating next Monday, but meanwhile eat as much as they can between now and Monday. Everything is going to be all right in the future but here and now? They are never where they are; they are always running, or dreaming about the wonderful past, or the wonderful future. So they are never in the body. The body lives in the present. The body exists right now. But an addict is not in the body, so the body suffers. Uninhabited. And there's where that terrible sense of starvation comes from. To be in the now is to be full.

P: The fact that the whole culture is in an addictive state interests me in terms of this lack of meaning. It is as though there is a fundamental human need for meaning that can be as strong as instinctive needs. What could meet that need

for those who are alienated from the traditional churches?

MW: Well, I think there are two things here. If you imagine the uninhabited body as sort of an empty hole, you see people try to fill it in different ways. But the soul in the body is left empty. My answer to that is that the real food of the soul is metaphor. The whole world of dreams is a metaphorical, symbolic one. Religion is based on symbol. Art, music, poetry, the whole creative world, the world of the soul is based on it.

P: So there is a faculty within that understands this world. That lives on it, in fact.

MW: It lives on it, it is as important as food. We simply must have access to that symbolic realm, because we are not animals only, and we are not gods, only. Somehow there has to be a bridge between the animal and the divine within, and that is the symbol. Children understand this. They love fairy tales, for example. But in our culture, these are taken away from them very early on. The world of the imagination is repressed, and the soul is left crying.

P: There is an enormous price to pay to keep all of that down.

MW: It won't be held down. Eventually you'll be faced with nightmare. Eventually it will come up. Or it will take a perverse route and say, "Give me spirit," and instead of understanding this symbolically, people interpret it concretely:

and they start to drink alcohol, which is a concretization of that longing.

P: There's something very hopeful in it when you look at it that way!

MW: I like working with addicts, because they are desperate and they know there is something really wrong. A lot of them wish they were dead. They are on a self-destructive course and they know it. The world as it is is intolerable, and their lives are intolerable because they aren't really living their own lives. But they know it. They are right.

P: It seems like more than a problem to fix. It seems to have a very creative aspect.

MW: It does. Death and resurrection. And they do go through the death. What I see in a broader sense is that the feminine principle, which for centuries has been so denied in our culture, is forcing its way, her way, back in again. If you're an addict, you have got to come to terms with the feminine principle. You've got to feel that slow rhythm, the rhythm of the earth is slow, you have to feel that slowing down, you have to quiet the soul, and you have to surrender, because eventually you have to face the fact that you are not God and you cannot control your life.

P: Something has to surrender; something has to let go and give up.

MW: Power, the desire to control.

P: Now, in most of us who are power possessed, the instincts governed by our feminine side are pretty primitive. Whatever is repressed in childhood is not very developed. So it comes out in very violent ways at first, or forever?

MW: At first it will come out in very primitive ways, very challenging ways, and you will find yourself acting like a three year old: "These are my rights." People who are trying to find themselves can have very bad manners. If they were in their polite persona, they would never act that way. When that little girl starts to come out, she is wild. But she has to come out.

P: So the feminine is not just the slow benevolent rhythms of the earth, there is also the dark side of the feminine.

MW: The dark side of the feminine is vicious; it's a killer.

P: The devouring mother, Kali

MW: Yes and no. Men are terrified of her and so are women. And that side comes up, that's what's so complicated, that side comes up along with the loving, Great Mother. If you're trapped in the devouring mother, you are literally paralyzed. You wake up in the morning, and your body doesn't want to move. Here we have the Medusa that turns people to stone. If they try to do anything creative they become frozen. Or petrified. And that's real. For many people

who are trying to do something from themselves for the first time in their life, as soon as that urge is felt and they really start to make a move, the dark mother appears and there is an immense battle. But you have to keep talking to her, and realize what's happening, and not give up. It takes courage and strength.

P: What is it in people that can face all of those things? The ego is involved in the repression. Is it the ego that can see what is going on? What is it in us? Obviously we have the capacity to do it.

MW: Yes. It would be ego ultimately. But most people have to work very hard to build an ego. Most people are operating in the persona, which is the showpiece, the masquerade. They are performing, they aren't in touch with their real feelings, and in a given situation, they don't know if they are angry or if they want to cry. They are unhappy about not being able to express their emotions and also terrified to do so, because expressing them has led to rejection.

P: So the ego is really the vehicle of consciousness?

MW: It is ego that can recognize what the feelings are, what the inner needs are. From a Jungian point of view, the unconscious is like a vast sea where all the complexes are floating around like onions: mother, father, hero, young child. On the underside is the collective unconscious, on the upper side is the collective in the world, and at the heart of all this there is a pinpoint called the ego, which is trying to

filter what's coming through from the unconscious while at the same time trying to deal with the collective. The ego is a filter system that relates to all of reality. But considering the immense buffeting that it's getting from both the unconscious and consciousness, it has a difficult job. It takes a lot of patience to build a strong ego. But the stronger the ego is and the more flexible it is, the more it can allow to come through from the unconscious, and that's where the real wisdom is. But ego is partly in the unconscious and partly in consciousness. It tells us what is real and what is not real. If you didn't have an ego, you might think you Christ, for example. If the place of the ego is taken over, one becomes possessed.

Actually that is what happens in an addictive state, you become possessed, and the ego is not strong enough to prevent this from happening, even though you know you are destroying yourself. There isn't sufficient ego strength to resist. So the complex takes over. But even there, it could be that the complex is acting out of a longing for the light, or consciousness. The possession that drives toward food can be a yearning for conscious femininity. The repressed energy of the feminine can no longer be caged. We are living in a global village and power alone won't work any more. We will destroy ourselves. I have enough faith to believe that the feminine is forcing her way into consciousness by means of these addictions. It changes lives, and it could change the whole culture.

P: We were just talking about how there are two aspects of

this feminine force, positive and negative.

MW: When I'm talking about the feminine, I'm not talking about a mother principle. Certainly the Great Goddess is a part of this archetype, she is matter, the body. But symbolically the mother principle is based on a full breast giving to a hungry child. The mother has to give, and the child has to take. And this experience, too, can become contaminated by the power principle. Many children fall into an immense guilt, because they don't want to take. But if the mother has identified with the mother principle, the child has to take from her, or else, who is she? The feminine principle, however, is not limited to that.

P: What you just described is a distortion of the feminine?

MW: Well, it's unconscious. No mother would admit she is operating on a power principle when she's giving milk to her baby. And on the one hand she isn't, she's nourishing. But if the stage is reached where the child no longer needs her and says "Look, I don't want your orange juice," and the mother is annihilated by that, then power, or the need for control, is involved. And that causes a distortion of the mother-child relationship, because the child is trapped in guilt.

Feminine consciousness rises out of the mother, and you have to be grounded in that, because without it you'd just be blown away by spirit. Feminine consciousness, as I see it, means going into that grounding and recognizing there

who you are as a soul. It has to do with love, with receiving — most of us in this culture are terrified of receiving. It has to do with surrendering to your own destiny, consciously, not just blindly, but recognizing with full consciousness your strengths, your limitations.

It gets into a much broader area, because a man's body is also feminine. All matter is feminine. We are talking archetypally about two complementary energies. We are not talking about gender. Men are even farther out of their bodies than women, it seems to me. I've seen men in body workshops where a relaxation exercise is being tried, and the men's bodies are so often terribly rigid to the point where they cannot lie flat on the floor, the muscles are chronically locked, trying so hard to be good little boys. They can't let the muscles relax. If you think of matter as an aspect of the feminine principle, another dimension is revealed in the male body.

P: The masculine principle or spirit can't live anywhere except in the body. It has to be received by something.

MW: Exactly. It has to be received. And there's where consciousness comes in. You can't put spirit into dense matter. Matter is dark; it's obtuse. There has to be a consciousness to receive spirit. The way I'm understanding it more and more from dreams is that consciousness exists in matter, and that consciousness opens to receive spirit.

P: It develops in the process of being open to the material-

ty of my body, and emotions, and thoughts, and so on?

MW: By being aware of it, yes, and also by being aware of the symbol. The symbol brings the process to consciousness.

P: Where did the power principle come from? Is it a distortion of spirit?

MW: Very distorted, and we have to remember that women are trapped in this power principle just as much as men. Matriarchs are very often more authoritarian than men. What I would say is that in the hero-consciousness of the Greeks, the hero was fighting unconsciousness and trying to get a little glimmer of consciousness. For two thousand years there has been an attempt to become more and more conscious, and the hero archetype has ruled in the Western world. St. George and the dragon, for example.

P: But you're not speaking of a very developed, complete form of consciousness, are you?

MW: No, because the hero myth became contaminated by an unconscious desire for power. In terms of the evolution of our culture, the worship of goddesses in the prehistoric past gradually shifted to the worship of gods, a movement from lunar to solar consciousness. Now what's happening is that people are conscious of the power of the mother and the father complexes, and they are saying, "Who am I?" We are moving into an adolescent period, leaving behind the power principle in those two archetypes. We are trying to

move into what in an individual life looks like adolescence; adolescents are pretty confused. They are dependent on the parents, and they don't want to be. And we are trapped by the complexes. We know what we're trapped in, and we want to get out. So we keep falling back in, and pulling out. That conflict is going on. It happens in the individual as he or she matures, and I see it in terms of the macrocosm as well.

P: So you see this as a critical point in history.

MW: Absolutely; if we don't make the critical transition into adulthood, we may very well destroy ourselves. We are adolescents with a hydrogen bomb and without a sense of the love that can use that energy creatively. However, addictions, personally and collectively, can keep us in touch with the god. In AA, for example, the first thing you have to admit is that you can't control your desire for alcohol, and you have to surrender to a higher power. At the point of vulnerability is where the surrender takes place, that is where the god enters. The god comes in through the wound. If you've ever been an addict, you know that you can always be an addict again, so it's at that point that the energy, if opened to, becomes available again and again.

P: Something has to give up in order for that to come in.

MW: Yes, here again we are back to the idea of consciousness in the body that has to open to spirit.

P: We spoke of addiction, for example to alcohol, where the alcohol represents on a low level the spirit. What happens when the addiction is taken away? Where does it go?

MW: I do think it's possible, with an addiction, to start living life in terms of negatives: "I won't drink." And the danger, with some alcoholics, is that they get stopped on "I will not drink." But they can't live their life on those terms. They are still obsessed with alcohol, it's still going on. It's true of any kind of addict. You may stop the addictive behavior, but as long as your mind is in that rut, it's still trapped.

P: So the surrender to a higher power needs to continue, the openness needs to go beyond the initial phase of stopping the addictive behavior.

MW: Yes, and I think AA members understand this very well you have to go through those Twelve Steps. The addictive person has to keep working at it every day. That's what I mean about addiction keeping you in close contact with the god. You have to be very careful not to fall into some other addiction. One needs to hold that container open and live life rich and full. Otherwise you regress. There's no such thing as stasis.

P: And yet there seems to be a tremendously strong wish to stay where one is, not to move. Why?

MW: It's fear. You see in addicts the compulsion, or the wish, to keep things fixed. They are natural lovers of ritual.

They create their own rituals, and the addiction will take place around that ritual. But it's a perverted ritual, it carries them into unconsciousness instead of into consciousness, because the wrong god is at the center. A ritual should take you into a much broader, richer experience; every time you go through a ritual you should contact that deepest, divine part of yourself and open to something new. If the ritual leads you into unconsciousness, you regress and become more and more deeply trapped in rigidity. If you have no personal standpoint and no boundaries, you don't dare to open.

P: It's almost as though there is an ontological imperative to grow and if you don't, as you say, there is no standing still, only regression.

MW: Even into death.

P: I think as people get older, it starts to become evident that either they become more developed or they become caricatures of themselves. It seems that many people are suffering from a refusal to grow.

MW: We're back to the fear of annihilation again. People are terrified of death. But their terror is death. They turn to stone.

P: So they'll commit suicide first.

MW: They will, unconsciously. Life is a series of deaths and

rebirths. You outgrow patterns, you outgrow people, you outgrow work. But if you are frightened and don't have a flexible personality, when you have to face the death of what you've always known, you are pitched into terror. That's where the addiction will really hit. Some people will cure themselves of an addiction, and then ten years later their husband or wife will die, and they have to go on to a new life and they are terrified. They have to retire, or they have to go to a new job, and the fear comes in. Well, they have to let the past die and move into a new life, or they may turn to the old addiction. And the addiction will throw them into unconsciousness. They can't make the move forward, so they fall back into the addictive pattern.

Often they repeat their own birth pattern. You can think of the birth canal as a transition in which you say good-bye to the womb and good morning to new life. When people enter that "canal," where the past is dead and the new not yet born, they may repeat their original birth trauma.

P: This is different for different people?

MW: Oh, of course. People who are born prematurely will try to go ahead of themselves: they'll always be two or three steps ahead of where they really are. Cesarean births tend to fear confrontation. People whose mothers were drugged are the ones most likely to fall into an addiction. They tend to be quite passive, they wait for someone to do something at a moment of difficulty. But the fear is the outstanding thing, and it can manifest in bodily symptoms.

P: How, in that state of terror, does one hold oneself open, realizing that it's simply one part, not all of you?

MW: It's very important to realize it's only a part. And I think that most people in those birth passages do need support. It's very painful, and a really good friend, or several, can help, even though you have to do your own work alone.

P: This is only one part of really difficult and serious work on oneself that needs to go on. I think it is carried on in living religious traditions and, in recent times, partly in analysis. But analysis is expensive, and many people today feel estranged from religion. How much of this serious work can go on outside of a structure and without contact with someone who knows more than you do, who is more developed than you are? Can a person on their own go very far toward this openness? The world around us doesn't seem to be of much help.

MW: Well, it's an amazing thing, but when one person makes the breakthrough, a movement starts in others. I think there is such a thing as a cultural move toward consciousness. Certainly when one person in a room is more conscious, it changes the consciousness of everyone in that room. And in a family, if one person is working at becoming conscious, everyone in the household is going to be changed.

Something is happening on a large scale, there are radical changes in male-female relationships, and there is an enor-

mous interest in spirit and matter in the fields of science, psychology, biology. I think many people are doing a lot of inner work; they are really trying to understand what is going on inside themselves. A lot of people are using dance to try to connect with the body. There is an interest in painting, in creating for the sheer joy of it. More and more people are trying to save nature from patriarchal exploitation. I know many people who are keeping journals, writing down their dreams and reconnecting with their inner self. They are questioning and trying to become conscious. No matter how they are doing it, they are contacting the symbolic world. That's how I see it. And without that, the addicts are right, life isn't worth living.

(Interview from Parabola magazine, 1987)





End Notes: Dreaming Our Way Toward a Western Shamanism

When I thought about writing a conclusion to this collection as a way to wrap things up (isn't that what you're supposed to do with these things?), it immediately became clear that "conclusion" would be the wrong word and the wrong intention. Perhaps this exploration of mine is leading somewhere or toward something, but it's far from over (thank God). If anything, on most days, it feels as if the journey is just getting started. Better to think of this as a brief pause to assess where I'm at with all this.

As I wrote in the introduction to this collection, my journey into the worlds of yoga, psychedelics, shamanism and depth psychology started when I began seeking some relief for my own suffering. I had no intention of becoming a teacher, guide or counselor of any kind. I was just trying to find a greater sense of purpose and meaning in my life.

Opposite: The Dream by Henri Rousseau (detail)

To my surprise, I did end up becoming all of those things, mostly because I felt an obligation to share what I found most useful on my own journey of soul recovery. This little book was created very much in that spirit.

The writing I've included is just a small sample from some of the teachers who have helped me make sense of my experiences of shamanic ecstasy and (sometimes) terror. I hope they serve you on your journey as guideposts pointing toward areas for deeper exploration.

There's something else that seems to be emerging from my exploration that's as equally surprising to me as becoming a teacher and guide to others.

As I experimented over the years with bringing these sciences of mind, body and soul together in practice, I've begun to get a glimpse of what an authentic modern Western shamanism (as opposed to the neo-shamanisms that merely co-opt indigenous practices and cosmologies) might look like.

This recent development is very much in its early stages, but I've been encouraged by some successful experiments in bringing aspects of yoga and shamanic practices together with a depth psychological understanding of what's happening, how they heal and why they work.

Carl Jung provided us *Modern Men (and Women) In Search Of A Soul* (to paraphrase one of his most pop-

ular books) with a comprehensive map of the psyche. A big part of my soul's purpose seems to be finding and sharing practical ways to explore the territory that Jung ventured into during his own shamanic descent into the archetypal realm of the unconscious, and then mapped out so thoroughly in his extensive writings.

So, perhaps we can consider this epilogue not so much a conclusion, but a milestone on a journey toward some unknown destination.

Wherever this book finds you on *your* journey, I'm happy to meet you there, and I encourage you to keep on exploring. What I've discovered on my own path of living a soul-full life is that it's the seeking for deeper understanding of one's self and one's place in the world that leads you to your soul's purpose.

In a way, the path is the goal — there is no final destination except, perhaps, death itself. And even then, who knows? Maybe death is just another threshold that opens to a whole other realm of experience. One can not only hope but, I believe, one *must* prepare for that great unknown by doing the work of exploring and learning as much as we can in this all-too-brief and wondrous human life.

Thanks for reading. If there's one thing I hope you take away from this book it's this: You're not alone on your journey, and there is a long line of wise elders who have been waiting for you to find your way to them.

