

*ENGAGING THE FEMININE*



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**INWARD  
LIGHT**

*Seeks to be an organ of expression and  
intercommunication among those con-  
cerned with cultivating the inner life and  
relating it to the problems of our time.*

Vol. XLV No. 99

Ex Post Facto Winter 1982-83

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## EDITORIALS

### ENGAGING THE FEMININE

We are all agog about the *return of the Goddess* in new books, lectures and workshops, not to mention the changed attitudes of women and men. Goddess only knows where this will lead us. . . though we could easily hazard a happy guess.

As we promised last time around, this issue of *Inward Light* brings you articles about the feminine by men, quite a collection of them, including one about Kali. Two reports on the Haverford conference in 1982 are really beautiful examples of a consciousness which is focused and one which is diffuse. We hope you will enjoy the diagrams used to illustrate a point in one of them as much as we do.

Along these lines, *Inward Light* is pleased to call your attention to the publication in 1982 of the book, *The Goddess Poems* by Herta Rosenblatt. A number of the poems first appeared in issue #98, and we are delighted that the sixty-two page book is now available for \$5.00 plus postage from Pat Fleming, 4 Wood Road, Wilmington, DE 19806. To those who may be looking for another method of evoking Gaea and/or Her many aspects as revealed in the pantheon of Greek Goddesses, these poems are a pure delight. And to those who have known and loved the author in Friendly circles or as a small group leader at the Haverford Conference, they are a treasure.

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Your editors take this opportunity to thank the writers of the many warm letters of appreciation and support and the many gifts both large and small, which we received in response to our appeal letter on behalf of *Inward Light*.

It would be hard for anyone to imagine our feelings when, after the most careful budgeting and planning, we found our treasury depleted for the second time. We were incredulous. The process of unraveling the factors which brought us to this point has been a long

one. With a complete revision of our system of circulation, including annual subscription by issue number and our method of renewal and record keeping, we now proceed with confidence. We expect our "Ex Post Facto Winter" issue #99 to be delivered in June, and, if our mailing procedures permit, the "Spring" issue #100 will be delivered in September. With the appearance of #101 to cheer you in the dead of winter, we expect to be back on schedule.

Henceforth all renewals will begin with even numbered issues and renewal reminders for non-members will be included in the odd numbered issues. Any gift subscriptions which do not fit this schedule can be adapted to it at any time upon payment for a single issue.

A sampling of the briefer messages received which cheered our hearts: "I so very much appreciate this publication." "I have been a close friend of Elined Kotschnig since. . . 1937. I still appreciate the *Inward Light* " "I have been a subscriber for many years and I find it invaluable." "I depend on *Inward Light*," "Keep up the good work," and, "Good luck!"

To each one of you we extend our thanks and this message:

Enjoy!

C.P.&E.B.P.

## A MODERN ARTIST WHO SPEAKS TO OUR TIME

DEAN L. FRANTZ

Peter Birkhauser was an artist who was practically unknown even in his homeland of Switzerland. Many who saw his paintings did not appreciate them. Art critics wrote caustic comments about his work. But a psychiatrist who was in touch with archetypal images and their affect on our psyche once told me, "After his death, Birkhauser will become known through his paintings as the greatest interpreter of the inner life in the 20th century." Posthumously, this artist is now being given the praise which was withheld from him during his lifetime. Through the book, *Light from Darkness*,<sup>1</sup> which is a collection of some of his finest works, increasing numbers of people are learning to know his paintings, and are deeply moved by them.

George Bernard Shaw once said "You use a mirror to see your face, you use works of art to see your soul." The paintings of Peter Birkhauser help us peer into our soul. They reveal to us those shadowy sides of ourselves which we often pretend are not there. They portray those inner figures which populate our psyche. They provide that link with the infinite on which Jung placed such a great importance. They speak of the cosmic dimensions of life beyond the space-time boxes in which we live.

Why do his paintings affect people at such deep levels? The best characterization that can be made of Birkhauser's paintings is that they spring from the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Jung once wrote, "The concept of the archetype derives from the repeated observation that the myths and fairy tales of the world's literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. The

**FCRP members may borrow the book, *Light from Darkness*, as well as many other books, from the Dora Willson Collection of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.**

**DEAN L. FRANTZ, a member of the Church of the Brethren and practising analyst in Fort Wayne, Indiana, wrote his diploma thesis for the Jung Institute in 1977 on "Meaning for Modern Man in the Paintings of Peter Birkhauser".**

more vivid they are, the more they will be colored by particularly strong feeling tones. This accentuation gives them a special dynamism in our psychic life. They impress, influence, fascinate us."<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, the arena in which the power of archetypal images is most frequently felt is in our dreams. Sometimes we have dreams which are so deeply numinous that we feel like Moses at the burning bush, when he was commanded to take off his shoes because he stood on holy ground.

But poetry, music, and art likewise have the capacity to evoke feelings of numinosity within us. Jung once described a particular kind of archetype, which he called archetypes of transformation. "They are not personalities, but are typical situations, places, ways and means that symbolize the kind of transformation in question. These archetypes are true and genuine symbols that cannot be exhaustively interpreted. . . They are genuine symbols precisely because they are ambiguous, full of half-glimpsed meanings and in the last resort inexhaustible."<sup>3</sup> Jung described a symbol as the intimation of a meaning beyond the level of our present powers of comprehension. Symbols do not speak in specifics, but they point us toward meaning. They prod, they provoke, they push us to search for that meaning towards which the symbol points. Herein lies the force and vitality of a symbol which is a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious, a link between the known and the unknown, a connector between the rational and the non-rational. The symbol is that which connects the ego with the Self, and thus serves as a vehicle for getting in touch with the deeper levels of the psyche.

As Jung said, "The spiritual adventure of our time is the exposure of human consciousness to the undefined and the indefinable." Art is one means whereby we are exposed to that which can not be defined, and to forces which move and shape us in the depths of our beings.

In his introduction to *Woman's Mysteries* Jung wrote, "Whenever the archetype clothes itself with adequate symbols, which is not always the case, it takes hold of the individual in a startling way, creating a condition of being 'deeply moved', the consequences of which may be immeasurable."<sup>4</sup>

Symbolic art, as well as dreams, possessing a numinous quality, can speak to us in ways which may lead us to re-evaluation,

re-orientation of our lives, and a re-ordering of priorities. This is not true of all art, however. There are paintings which are deliberately created by the artist to achieve a particular result. In contrast, the kind of art I am describing, and which the paintings of Birkhauser represent, is art which springs from its creator as Pallas Athene sprang fully armed from the head of Zeus. Here the artist is seized upon by images which he could never consciously have created, which his own will could never have brought into being. Then the artist who paints from the depths of his own unconscious, who allows the archetypes to shape his paintings, such an artist becomes a translator of the eternal, a human receptacle for extra-human contents, a finite being to whom the infinite has been entrusted. Such an artist was Peter Birkhauser, driven to paint his dreams, visions, and fantasies, putting on canvas those dark, mysterious, and often overwhelming forces which erupted from his unconscious.

In his autobiography Jung wrote, "The creative person has little power over his own life. He is not free. He is captive and driven by his daimon."<sup>5</sup> Erich Neumann in *Art and the Creative Unconscious* says, "We know that the creative power of the unconscious seizes upon the individual with the autonomous force of an instinctual drive and takes possession of him without the least consideration for the individual, his life, his happiness, or his health."<sup>6</sup> He goes on to suggest that the careers of the great artists of our time are all, in greater or lesser degree, calvaries.

But if the artist is able to endure the suffering which is his lot, his art may be a means of bringing healing and renewal to his time. Like the prophets of ancient Israel, his message may not be appreciated, because it is seen as a critique of culture. But in the larger perspective, what the artist says to us through his paintings may be precisely what is necessary for our individual and collective health.

In his earlier years, Birkhauser painted commercial art to make a living. Somewhere in the midpoint of his life, he became disturbed and distraught. He began to record his dreams. In one of his early dreams, the artist and his wife were caught in a crowd of people moving towards the right. Then suddenly two huge giants appeared who were going towards the left. Birkhauser and his wife followed them but it was difficult because the crowd was moving in another direction. They continued to follow the giants and finally, after

much difficulty, they were led to a banquet table where a great feast had been prepared for them.

This dream came at a time when Birkhauser's psychic energy had come to a standstill. Another dream was that of a strange woman being in bed with him. He was very tired. This unknown woman told him that he must get up. He protested that he was too tired to get out of bed. However, she insisted and forced him to leave his bed, saying to him "Now you must seek the blue light."

Then came a dream which proved to be the turning point in his life and artistic career. This dream portrayed a man with a split face, a wound from his forehead down through his chin. One eye suggested his inner suffering, and the other eye looked like that of a madman. Birkhauser was frightened by this ghastly figure, and ran towards his home. When he reached his home, he locked all the doors and windows. But then he heard this man in the street outside his home, asking the neighbors where Birkhauser lived, and the artist knew there was no escape from him.

A lengthy period of time passed before he could summon the courage to paint this fearsome man, whose features tormented him. But at last he committed to canvas this wounded man, and from that moment on, his paintings depicted his inner world.

This kind of art which I have described, and which Birkhauser left as his creative legacy to the world, has certain values which we now examine. When life becomes one-sided, or over-balanced, or adopts a false attitude, our dreams become a means of restoring the psychic balance. Jung often pointed out that art frequently anticipated psychological changes before they came to the surface of collective awareness. Just as dreams help to bring about balance in our individual psyches, so art represents a process of self-regulation in nations and cultures.

Birkhauser's paintings compensate for this one-sidedness. They often portray those mysterious creatures which reside in our unconscious. They remind us of dimensions of our lives which we have neglected or forgotten. They vividly speak to us of the symbolic life which is becoming an endangered species in our time. Some of his paintings shock us into an awareness of that mysterious, invisible world of spirit which constantly impinges on our materialistic and rational world.

In a time when many people live only for today, his paintings point to a life with distant horizons. In a world where value is often determined by what can be seen, weighed, counted, and measured, his paintings suggest cosmic depths and dimensions far beyond the boundaries of what we can know with our five senses. Birkhauser's paintings are a reminder of the eternal and infinite in a world limited by space and time.

As Jung has said, "The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life. Therein lies the social significance of art; it is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking. The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. The artist seizes on this image and in raising it from deepest unconsciousness he brings it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers."<sup>7</sup>

When I was writing my thesis for the Jung Institute in Zurich, I had the unique opportunity of observing and talking with visitors to an art gallery where Birkhauser's paintings were displayed. The responses of people to his paintings were most interesting, and I quote some of them to illustrate the particular values of art which has its origin in the unconscious, and specifically those values which are felt by those who are touched by Birkhauser's paintings.

A woman who saw these paintings for the first time said "The feeling from the paintings is very strong. It affects me unconsciously in ways I cannot describe. Birkhauser portrays powers we usually do not see."

An artist viewing the paintings said, "As art they leave something to be desired. But there is a spiritual message here. I want to run away, but I can't. I am compelled to confront what these pictures are saying to me."

A student commented, "Mr. Birkhauser has obviously not only

experienced the infinite, but he is able to record it. I have never been so touched—the message of the paintings is clear. They gripped me."

A contemporary author of Jungian books recently saw the book *Light from Darkness* for the first time. He later wrote me, "I have found the Birkhauser book a treasure. I examine a few pictures each morning as my way to start the day correctly."

Just as Birkhauser was moved to paint from the depths of his own psyche, so his paintings often put people in touch with depths they have forgotten, or have somehow brushed aside in their frenzied pace of life. These awesome paintings speak to the very heart and soul of human beings. It is virtually impossible to view his paintings without feeling some deep inner stirrings.

Another woman who saw Birkhauser's art for the first time said, "When I walked into the room, it was as if I had been here before. It seemed as if I had always known these paintings." Another person who had seen the paintings once, and then returned again said, "I had to return, because I had two dreams about these paintings after I saw them the first time. I simply had to return."

These experiences relate to Jung's statement that, "The impact of an archetype, whether it takes the form of immediate experience or is expressed through the spoken word, stirs us because it summons up a voice that is stronger than our own. Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night."<sup>8</sup>

Another person moved by the paintings said to me later, "These paintings gave me a new insight into life. They helped me understand what life is all about. I was tired when I went to see the paintings, but after seeing them, I forgot about being tired. They did something for me. I could not sleep after seeing them."

We should not be surprised, then, to discover the healing power in this kind of art, and especially in these paintings of Birkhauser.

Their last public exhibit was opened with a reception. The speaker on this occasion suggested that paintings such as these were literally "medicine for the soul".

Birkhauser suffered greatly during his lifetime, but his personal agony resulted in paintings which are a force for renewal and regeneration. Neumann writes, "The individual history of every creative man is always close to the abyss of sickness; he does not, like other men, tend to heal the personal wounds involved in all development by an increased adaptation to the collectivity. His wounds remain open, but his suffering from them is situated in depths from which another curative power arises, and this curative power is the creative process. As the myth puts it, only a wounded man can be a healer, a physician. Because in his own suffering the creative man experiences the profound wounds of his collectivity and his time, he carries within him a regenerative force capable of bringing forth a cure not only for himself but also for the community."<sup>9</sup>

Jung often spoke of the need to stand the tension between the opposites. He once said that another world war might be prevented if enough people could endure the awful stress which the opposites place upon us. Who knows—perhaps Birkhauser's paintings will become a healing force in our world, to mediate, to resolve, to bring together, to unite those terrible forces which even now threaten our world. If his paintings bring healing to some individuals who have been deeply wounded, or if they create a climate for the release of healing energies in our culture, then the life of Peter Birkhauser will not have been in vain.

His paintings defy interpretation. They do not carry a specific message, but their impact is unforgettable. Jung said "The work of the artist meets the psychic needs of the society in which he lives, and therefore means more than his personal fate, whether he is aware of it or not. Being essentially the instrument of his work, he is subordinate to it, and we have no right to expect him to interpret it for us. He has done his utmost by giving it form, and must leave the interpretation to others and to the future. A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is always ambiguous. A dream never says 'you ought' or 'this is the truth'. It presents an image in much the same way as nature allows a plant to grow, and it is up to us to draw conclusions. If a person has a

nightmare, it means he is either too much given to fear or too exempt from it; if he dreams of a wise old man, it means he is either too much of a pedant or else in need of a teacher. In a subtle way both meanings come to the same thing, as we realize when we let a work of art act upon us as it acted upon the artist. To grasp its meaning, we must allow it to shape us as it shaped him."<sup>10</sup>

For two years I talked frequently with Peter Birkhauser about his life and his paintings. Some idea of the inner strength of this remarkable artist may be seen in this biographical note which he shared with me. He told me that during the years of World War II there were many times when his shoes had holes in them and he did not have the money to repair them. But he continued to work in the analytical process with his analyst because he realized that work with his own unconscious was more important than anything else.

When people criticized his paintings, he replied "I don't mind, since I am no longer eager to be accepted as an artist. At one time, I had the ambition to become known as a great painter. But now my only concern is to fulfill my task, to make visible the contents of the unconscious which are brought to me."

I know many people who have been deeply moved by Birkhauser. He has a way of speaking to the inner needs of our soul. With the passage of time, I believe Birkhauser's paintings will speak increasingly, not only to individuals, but to collective consciousness as well, because they truly are medicine for the souls of the whole human race.

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<sup>2</sup>Jung, C.G. *Collected Works*, Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press Vol. 10, par. 847.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. CW 9a, par. 80.

<sup>4</sup>Harding, Esther, *Woman 's Mysteries*, New York: Bantam Books, 1973, p.x.

<sup>5</sup>Jung, C.G., *Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe*, New York, Vintage Books, Alfred A. Knopf and Random House, 1961, p. 357.

<sup>6</sup>Neumann, Erich, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1947, p. 98.

<sup>7</sup>Op. cit. *CW 15*, par. 130.

<sup>8</sup>Op. cit. *CW 15*, par. 129.

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., Neumann, p. 186.

<sup>10</sup>Op. cit. *CW 15*, par. 161.

## FROM AN EMPTY SKY\*

JEANNETTE PRIETSCH

Once from an empty sky unknown  
You stooped at me  
the exploding shadow of Your wings  
engulphed me

and I knew You unconditionally  
as Mother of my life  
and receiver of my death.

Now I walk the dry aromatic hills  
searching Your way to the sea  
called pacific

While my heart lifts to You  
soaring in updrafts  
far beyond my vision.

When I have come at the last  
down out of these hills to the sea  
I shall fall on my knees again  
in the sudden shadow of Your  
wings

giver and gatherer of life  
You will stand before me  
and I shall be home.

\*© Jeannette Prietsch, 1982.

JEANNETTE PRIETSCH is an American programmer in Stockholm. Her interests include aikido, Quakers, Amnesty International, and, most importantly, feminist activities. Most of her *free* free time is spent in writing poetry.

# FEMININE POWER IN A FAIRY TALE

DAVID L. HART

Without defining what the feminine is, many fairy tales reveal it to be a decisive and fateful power, whose overall effect for good or ill depends substantially on the state of that human consciousness that confronts it. It can thus be seen in many different ways, negative or positive, depending on who meets it and in what way. The outcome of a story will rest on the spiritual qualities of that hero who is called upon to deal with this power, for those very qualities are essential to its transformation back into its true nature.

To illustrate this vital state of affairs, let us look at a fairy tale from Iceland.

### *Hildur the Elf Queen<sup>1</sup>*

There was once a farmer who lived on a certain farm in the mountains, though neither his name nor that of the farm is recorded. He was a bachelor and had a housekeeper named Hildur. She was in charge of all indoor work on the farm, and was well liked by the housefolk, including the farmer himself; but she kept her distance from him, being a reserved woman and somewhat silent, though pleasant enough and easy to get on with.

The farmer's affairs were in a flourishing state in all but one respect; he was an excellent sheepfarmer and attached great importance to the proper care of his flock, but he had unusual difficulty in hiring shepherds.

It was not that he treated his shepherds harshly, or that there were any shortcomings on the part of Hildur; it just happened that none of the shepherds hired by him ever reached old age, for every man of them was found on Christmas morning dead in his bed.

In those days it was the custom throughout the country for church service to be held on Christmas Eve, which was then considered no less solemn an occasion than Christmas Day itself. But on those mountain farms which were far from church, it was no

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easy matter for folk to get to the service in good time, especially those who were not able to leave before the Seven Stars were well above the horizon when the shepherds came home. However, in this farm they had no trouble finding someone to watch the house while the others were in church—Hildur always offered to do this while she got on with the work of making ready for the festival. She would stay up late into the night, preparing food and dealing with other necessary matters, so that the churchgoers were sometimes back from the service, in their beds asleep, before Hildur went to bed herself.

For some time now there had been this trouble of the shepherds dying on Christmas Day. Word began to get about all over the district, and the farmer had the greatest difficulty in hiring men for the work, though there was never any suspicion, either against the farmer or his people, for the shepherds were all found without any mark or wound on them.

Finally the farmer declared that he could no longer have it on his conscience to hire men to their certain death; so in future, how his flock and his farming might fare, fate alone must decide.

When the farmer had made up his mind about this and was firmly resolved not to hire another shepherd, a man came to him one day and offered his services. He was a strong, sturdy looking fellow.

"I have no need of your services," said the farmer.

"Have you hired a shepherd for the season?" asked the stranger.

The farmer replied that he had not; nor had he any intention of doing so. "I dare say you have heard about the disasters that have befallen all my shepherds up to now," he said.

"I have heard," answered the stranger; "but their fate would not frighten me from watching your flock, if you will have me."

Since he urged this so earnestly, in the end the farmer gave way and hired him as shepherd. After that, some time passed, and each got on well with the other, farmer and shepherd; everyone else liked the shepherd, too, for he was well-mannered, brave, and energetic in doing whatever lay to hand.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened, until Christmas time arrived. Then, as usual, the farmer and his people set off for church; all, that is, except the housekeeper, who stayed at home, and the shepherd who was out watching over the sheep.

Evening drew on, and the shepherd came home as usual. He ate his supper and went to bed.

Although he was without fear, it now entered his mind that it might be wiser to wake than sleep, whatever might befall; and so he lay awake.

When it was very late he heard the churchgoers returning home. They got themselves a bite to eat, and then went to bed.

The shepherd was still aware of nothing unusual; but about the time when it seemed to him that everyone was asleep, he began to feel a strange weakness, as if the strength had been drained out of him, though this was scarcely surprising to one weary after the day's work. Nevertheless he felt sure that it would go ill with him if he let sleep overcome him, and so he used all his will power to keep himself awake.

A short time passed by, and then he heard someone coming to his bedside, and he seemed to sense that it was Hildur the housekeeper. He pretended to be fast asleep, and felt her push something into his mouth. He realized that it was a witch bridle, but let her put it on him.

When Hildur had harnessed him, she led him gently out, mounted on his back, and rode him as hard as she could, until they came to a place where there was a kind of pit or chasm in the ground. There Hildur dismounted beside a rock and made fast the reins. After that she vanished from sight down into the chasm.

The shepherd found it little to his liking or to the satisfaction of his curiosity to lose sight of Hildur in this way. At the same time he could not follow because of the magic that was in the bridle. However, he managed to rub his head against the rock until he got the bridle off. Then he dived down into the chasm after Hildur.

He had not gone far—or so it seemed to him—when he saw her in front of him. She had come to a fair, smooth meadow and was walking quickly across it. By now the shepherd had realized that Hildur was not what she seemed to be. He thought, too, that she was sure to see him if he followed her over the meadow, so he took out a stone of invisibility that he carried in his pocket and held it in the palm of his left hand. Then he hurried after Hildur as fast as he could. As he crossed over the meadow, a large and magnificent palace came into view. Hildur went straight towards it, and the shepherd saw a great mob of people coming out of the palace to meet her. They were led by a man dressed more splendidly than the others, and the shepherd heard this man greet Hildur as his

wife and bid her welcome, while the rest of the people hailed her as queen. With the noble looking man were two grown up children, who went to Hildur and embraced her joyfully as their mother.

When this crowd had greeted the queen, she was escorted into the palace with her husband and received there with the greatest ceremony. The shepherd followed, staying always where he would draw least attention to himself, yet seeing all that went on. He saw such riches and splendor that never in his life had he set eyes on the like before.

Tables were laid and food brought forth, and he wondered much to see the ceremony with which all was done. After a while he saw Hildur come into the hall dressed in royal robes and with a ring of gold on her finger. People were told to take their places, and Queen Hildur sat down on a throne by the king with the courtiers on either side, and everyone ate.

When supper was done, the tables were taken away and the courtiers and ladies-in-waiting joined in a dance at will, while some amused themselves in other ways that pleased them better.

The king and queen conversed together, and to the shepherd it seemed that their conversation was both loving and full of sadness. While they talked, three children came to them, younger than those mentioned before; and they, too, embraced their mother. Queen Hildur returned their embraces very warmly. She took the youngest child and set it on her knees, and was most affectionate towards it; but the child was fretful and behaved badly, so the queen put it down and, taking the ring from her finger, gave it to the child to play with. The child was quieted and played with the ring for a while; then dropped it, and the ring rolled away on the floor. The shepherd was close by, and he was quick to snatch up the ring as it rolled across the floor, and put it in his pocket so that no one noticed; though all thought it strange when they looked for the ring and could find it nowhere.

When the night was well advanced, Queen Hildur began to make a move to leave; but all in the palace begged her to stay there longer, and were very sorrowful at the signs of her going.

Sitting in one part of the hall the shepherd had noticed a woman, old and somewhat disagreeable looking. She was the only one who neither had welcomed the queen when she came, nor tried to delay her departure. When the king saw that Hildur had made up her mind to go, and that she would not stay either for his prayers or for those of any other, he went to this woman and said.

"Mother, now take back your curse and pay heed to my prayers, that my queen be exiled no longer, nor I enjoy so little and such short-lived solace of her company, as now."

The elderly woman answered him angrily, "The whole of my curse shall stand, and there is no hope of my taking it back."

The king was then silent and walked sadly back to the queen, put his arms about her neck and kissed her, begging her again with loving words not to leave him. The queen replied that she had no choice, because of his mother's curse, and it was likely that they would see one another no more; for the crimes she had unwillingly committed, because of the horrible fate that followed her, were now so many that they could no more be hidden, and she would have to suffer the penalty for them.

While she made this lamentation, the shepherd, seeing how matters were, slipped out of the palace and hurried back across the meadow and up through the chasm again. Then he put away the stone of invisibility, put on the bridle, and waited for Hildur to return. After a little while she came, alone and in mournful mood. She mounted on his back once more and rode homewards. When they reached the farm she laid him carefully in his bed, took off the bridle, and then went to her own bed and lay down to sleep.

Although the shepherd was wide awake all the time, he still pretended to be asleep, so that Hildur should suspect nothing. When she had gone to bed, though, he relaxed his watchfulness and slept. He slept late into the day, as might be expected.

The next morning the farmer was the first afoot, for he was anxious to visit his shepherd; fearing to find him dead, as had happened before on Christmas Day, bringing grief instead of Christmas gladness. He went, therefore, to his bed and felt him, and, finding him alive, was filled with joy and thanked God for his mercy.

The shepherd awoke, hale and hearty, and got up. When he was dressed the farmer asked him whether anything unusual had happened during the night.

"Nothing," replied the shepherd. "Though I had a remarkable dream."

"What kind of dream?" the farmer asked.

The shepherd began now to tell the story that has been heard already: how Hildur the housekeeper had come to his bedside and

bridled him, and after that every word and deed he could remember. When he was done, all were silent, except Hildur.

She said, "You have shown yourself a liar in every word you have spoken. What proof have you that your story is true?"

The shepherd was not the least abashed at this. He took out the ring that he had picked up from the palace floor in Elfland, and replied, "Though I do not think it my duty to prove my story true, yet it happens that I plainly have here a token of my visit to the elves last night. Queen Hildur, is this not your ring?"

"Yes," replied Hildur, "and you are the luckiest and most happy of men, for you have released me from the curse laid upon me by my mother-in-law, by which I was compelled to commit so many crimes at her will."

And now Queen Hildur told her story in the following words. "I was an elf maiden of common kin, but he who is now king of Elfland fell in love with me and married me, against his mother's will. She was so enraged that she swore he would have little solace of my company though we might see another from time to time. For she laid upon me this fate: to be a servant in the world of men, and with it, the horrible doom to be the cause of a man's death on every Christmas Eve by putting a witch bridle on him and riding him, as I did this shepherd last night, to see the king; and this was to go on until my guilt was discovered and I was put to death; unless before that I met some valiant man who dared follow me into Elfland and show a token of his visit and tell what he had seen there. Now that I have confessed how all the former shepherds on this farm met their deaths because of me, I hope that I shall not be blamed for what I did unwillingly; for up to now there has been no man bold enough to explore the way to the underworld and visit the abode of the elves, except this hero, who has set me free from my curse and its enchantment; and for his deed he shall be rewarded ere all is done.

"And now you have my hearty thanks, who have all treated me well; but I shall stay no longer here, for I am filled with a longing for my home."

And with these words, Queen Hildur vanished, and she has never since been seen in the world of men.

As for the shepherd, it is told that he married and set up house the following spring. The farmer was generous to him when he went away and did not let him leave empty handed.

He became the most thriving farmer in the district, and peo-

pie always went to him for help and advice. His popularity and good luck were so great that men had never known the like, and it was as if every beast on his farm, as the saying goes, was born with two heads. But he would say that all his luck was due to Hildur the elf queen.

The feminine power in this story is obviously Hildur. The interesting thing is that she is not known at all in her true nature when the story begins. She is, in fact, thought to be an ordinary, if somewhat mysterious, woman, and her function in the economy of the tale is that of a servant. Hence she is very much taken for granted and used by the human world, as we always tend to use and take for granted the powers at our disposal, not inquiring as to their source. They are our servants and we are their master.

This assumption that power lies totally in our hands has fateful consequences. Not only is the true quality of the life that Hildur represents completely unknown to us, but her essential power is badly distorted. The true feminine is forced into a state of degradation that cries out over and over for relief: for that is the meaning of the repeated deaths of the unlucky shepherds, who represent unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem. Until it is solved, and the underground power is restored to its royal place at the center, life will drain fruitlessly away.

The turning point of the story is actually the point at which the farmer decides not to hire any more shepherds—decides, that is, to stop this terrible waste of life. In doing this, he is also admitting that power is not totally in his hands. There is a problem here over which he has no control; the one thing he *can* do is give up carrying on "business as usual" and pretending that all is well.

By this admission the farmer has allowed healing forces to be set in motion, for control must be relinquished before any new possibility can take shape. The very moment that he gives up his flock—whose care is extraordinarily important to him—to fate or to God, is the moment when a new, unheard-of person appears on the scene, a person who seems both aware and completely confident. At this point the story line passes from the farmer to this stranger, the new shepherd. Or, in other words, a new kind of *consciousness* takes over, which is going to experience the feminine power in a

wholly different way, releasing it from the constriction created by the previous attitude.

It is obvious, from the experience of the new hero, that the former shepherds, who met their deaths at the hands of Hildur every Christmas, were overpowered by her. They never released themselves from the bondage or her witch-bridle, because they could not stay awake: they were totally bewitched. It is interesting that the feminine power was experienced in such apparently contradictory ways. On the one hand, it was distorted into the servant of masculine consciousness, as Hildur was housekeeper to the farmer; but on the other, it was an irresistible and terrible destroyer of men, as Hildur's secret curse reveals. But this apparent contradiction is no contradiction at all. It is when the feminine is degraded and not known for itself that it takes on negative and possessive aspects. This can be seen very clearly both in relationships and in the connection with one's own inner feminine being. There is only one kind of attitude that releases us from this double tyranny, and that is the attitude of the successful shepherd, who is willing to stay with Hildur, follow where she leads, and understand who she truly is and always was.

Not only does the shepherd stay awake and follow willingly; he becomes, by disappearing in invisibility, a truly faithful observer, a pure awareness in whose light Hildur and her real background can appear for the first time. The difference between Hildur as servant of man and as reigning queen is so vast that it should make us forever skeptical of premature and foolish judgments about the nature of this feminine power, no matter in what form it may seem to manifest itself. We must continually check our own attitudes, for it is these that determine the whole nature and quality of the feminine presence that we meet.

Thus the reality of the elf queen emerges along with the source of her problem, that curse which was laid upon her by her spiteful mother-in-law. The curse is the generally human curse of discrimination. The king's mother decided that the elf-maiden was not good enough for her son: by her attitude she set up that division into high and low, good and bad, upper world and underworld from which the true feminine being suffers most of all, since its nature and fulfillment lie in wholeness, oneness, and peace. It is, in fact, a false feminine power which has seemed to be in charge: the witch-power

of the mother-in-law represents that very illusion of total control from which the farmer's world suffered at the beginning of the story. This is indeed a curse, fatally suppressing and distorting the real sources of life and happiness, which are always to be found in relation to a wider truth lying beyond the domain of ego manipulation.

The solution to the whole problem of the distortion of the feminine is to be found in seeing and understanding truly. This is proved by the outcome of our fairy tale. Because a human consciousness has gone beyond its own limits to penetrate into the reality of the feminine power—because, in doing so, it has gone beyond *itself*—the order of life has been restored. The shepherd's act of generosity has placed Hildur back on the throne that is rightfully hers. That is, false views of the feminine have been discarded for the true one, and in this process the world is set right: there is harmony within and a corresponding enrichment without. The happiness of the restored queen quite naturally results in blessings for the shepherd, but not because he ever sought them. It is because he sought to know her that she can respond with her whole being, which is now known. This knowing is what can make real and sustaining the true power of the feminine, in whatever form we encounter it in our lives.

#### REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup> "Hildur The Elf Queen" reprinted from *Mead Moondaughter and Other Icelandic Folk Tales*; translated and adapted by Alan Boucher, © 1967 by the author. Reprinted with the permission of the publisher, Chilton Book Co., Radnor, PA.

## "OPEN-EYED, IN THE TERRIBLE PLACE"

JOSEPH HAVENS

At the 1982 Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology, I helped facilitate a small group on Mother Kali, a Hindu Goddess. We were interested in learning more about this strange feminine form of the Godhead; we also hoped to understand and evoke something of the "Kali" within each of us, and to see how Kali manifests herself in the wider world.

Who is Mother Kali? She is frequently portrayed as the Black Goddess, wearing a necklace of skulls and devouring human entrails. But she is life-giving, as well as life-destroying. Thus, she usually has full breasts, and holds a golden ladle and a vessel of milk-rice in two of her many hands. She presents Creation and Destruction as equal partners in life's unfolding. But it is her devouring side which seems to fascinate her devotees. One member of our FCRP workshop wrote us afterwards about his relation to Kali. He was struck by

. . . the stark negative side of Kali: the fact of destructiveness, wrathfulness, unpredictability, irrationality; that which at the personal level creates or stirs up in us hostility, anger, envy, jealousy, all the seven cardinal sins; what compels us to project the shadow, locate the enemy out there, find a scapegoat and want to kill it.

Kali at the collective level is for me what compels man to war, genocide, the devastation of civilian populations, torture, The Final Solution, concentration camps, exploitation of the defenseless, the rape of nature. . .

Though this description is clearly one-sided, pondering it has made me aware of how unprepared we were in our workshop to deal with the stupendous problem of Judeo-Christians trying to comprehend, much less to affirm, this vision of Kali. As I have scaled down my own expectations in this regard, I have recognized that I am

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drawn to Kali in two specific areas: facing the forces of violence and destruction within our own psyches, and recognizing and attempting to understand these same dark forces at the political level. I do not feel capable of dealing with the enormous question of whether these powers of death and destruction are integral to the Godhead. I am also well aware that to affirm the values of overturning and annihilation creates significant moral dilemmas and dangers. Kali philosophy has been used, I am sure, to justify mistreatment and suffering; it can leave one complacent to the evils of the world. But there is at the heart of *all* spiritual treatments of evil a great puzzle, e.g., how can an all-powerful God create a world containing cancer, rape, torture? How can we reconcile ultimate goodness with all that contradicts it within and around us? Kali turns these questions into what Rudolf Otto calls a *Mysterium Tremendum*, a holy awe. There is terror in it, but also truth. Kali encompasses within her being the whole range of human behavior. She invites us simply to contemplate that. "Kali, the destroyer, cannot be overthrown," writes May Sarton, "We must stay, open-eyed, in the terrible place."<sup>1</sup> There is a form of enlightenment born of listening steadily and \ receptively to the full orchestration of life's symphony. But this carries us beyond the scope of this paper. I want here to address the meaning of Kali in particular realms and events.

I quote our correspondent again in specific reference to our workshop:

. . . in no session did we do enough to <sup>4</sup>'live into' the qualities for which Kali stands. The opening slides were excellent; the quote from Isaiah 24 was excellent. But . . . when it came to our giving instances of Kali in our own experience, we either witnessed to the fact that we were living very positive, sunshiny, problem-free, relatively undistressed lives, or that we were not able to associate personal experiences with Kali.

Why are we not able to "live into" these qualities of rage and horror, swallowing up and overturning? Why should we even try? It is frightening to discover these dark elements within ourselves—it doesn't fit with the image most of us have of ourselves; it might mean seeing ourselves as different kinds of persons than we now do. Such changes in self-perception usually come about only after a fundamental change or catastrophe in our lives, or a years-long course of psychotherapy. Those of our conferences which have at-

tempted to evoke direct experiences of the Shadow have had difficulty. Kali is "unpredictable" and "irrational." Our *planned* exercises and events operate within constraints of time and social acceptability which inhibit direct experiencing of these shadow realms. When Kali enters our lives directly, she usually does so *unwanted, uninvited* and *unexpectedly*. We are all aware of moments—in Quaker Business Meetings for instance—when violent feelings erupt. Bitterness or chaos may ensue. We avoid such occurrences as if they were infectious and try in every way to prevent them; and for our own comfort we usually attribute their source to other people. So our attempt to "evoke Kali" in our workshop I now see as naive. Though we may believe in Her and want to know Her directly, we have a heavy stake in maintaining our cool, keeping our emotions within bounds, not exposing our darker selves to one another. A more legitimate aim for such a workshop is that of *preparation*, i.e. helping us to recognize and value Kali experiences when they come to us—to see the kernels of truth which usually lie hidden in them. Jung admonishes us to "withdraw our projections" of our Shadows. That means that any outburst of Kali—in our families, our meetings, in Lebanon or El Salvador— should lead us to inquire about its source not only in "the others" or in "the System," but in our own attitudes and attachments.

Kali proclaims that anger, destruction, and death are necessary if life is to proceed. I recall a brief workshop I was leading in which we had been thoughtfully and carefully discussing the state of the world. Finally, a young woman burst out with her feelings of despair, not only about threats to the planet, but also about the lack of feeling communication within this group (which had been together for several weeks). This opened many others to share similar disappointments and frustrations, and brought the community to deeper levels of understanding and mutual support. The open expression of these feelings made many of us uncomfortable at first, but it had within it the seeds of renewal and new energy, and began a process of reconnection among those who had been feeling separate.

In the following, our correspondent pursues to its logical conclusion his view of Kali as an expression of God:

If Kali is a fact in the way God works, and my whole understanding is that this is what is being said, why shouldn't

some of our plenary sessions be decorated with huge banners showing massacre, torture, imprisonment, devastation? Why shouldn't there be recurring times in the church year when such banners would be put up in our Christian churches? Are we running away from the fact of this horrible side of the way God works? Are we deliberately trying to sweep it under the rug? The Hindus thought it important to be constantly reminded of this fact of Kali. How do we justify our total neglect of it?

Though this may be overstated, it makes an important point. Why is there no Christian equivalent of Kali? Good Friday is relevant, but it is frequently relegated to a single day of the year; and it is not a popular theme in Quakerism. Teresina Havens points out that there is a strong element of Kali in the Hebrew prophetic writings. Readers may be familiar with Isaiah's celebration of God's use of war and political catastrophe to bring the Israelites to their spiritual senses: "Ah, Assyria, the rod of mine anger, the staff of my fury! . . . Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness" (Isiah 10: vss. 5 and 22). The 24th chapter of Isaiah is a fearsome calling down of destruction upon the wayward people of God. Plenty of Kali there!

The East would put the same message in Karmic terms: We reap what we sow. They who live by the sword shall die by the sword. We who have put our faith in military might and in the economic exploitation of the Third World shall reap fear and insecurity and perhaps much worse until we learn to live with compassion for our fellow sufferers the world over. Joanna Macy has developed this idea in relation to the Bomb: "It is the materialization of divine law and its awesomeness. Saints and prophets and mystics have always seen it. . . the dread-filled breath-taking seriousness of karma . . . and the hell we make when we cease to learn to love. Now all can see it." <sup>2</sup> So Kali provides us with a vivid and shocking symbolic mode of attending to "evil" as a part of our existence, both personal and cosmic. The more deeply we acknowledge that, the less devastated we shall be by whatever Kali sends for our spiritual edification, and the more meaning we shall find in it.

Some versions of the New Age seem to ignore or cut out completely the existence of the Darkness within us. Kali, however, will not be denied. Just as the terrible destructiveness of the Third Reich can be traced in part to the disillusionments of the German Youth

Movement which preceded it, so there may be a rebound toward Totalitarianism or Nihilism if and when the great dreams and predictions of the New Age fail to materialize.

In our small group we tried to deal with the question, Why is Kali feminine? We talked of the image of the Devouring Mother, of the stifling symbiosis which can exist between mother and child, of the Bacchanalian violence of the Maenads. In Kali, these fearful sides of the Feminine are combined with the Nurturant Mother image, symbolized in her milk-filled breasts and the life-giving rice in her hand.

There are many male equivalents of Kali: Shiva and Vishnu in their destructive aspects (see, for example, Chapter 11 of the *Bhagavad Gita*), Moloch, Darth Vader. A friend once wrote me about his Kali-like image of his father: "for years I had a symbol for him which was Gustav Dore's print of Moloch, red-hot from the fiery furnace inside of him fed by wood by the priests, on whose outstretched arms were placed small children to be burned alive ..." Gender seemed of less than primary importance, for Kali stood for the Darkness in all of us.

A poem by May Sarton, "The Invocation to Kali," is for me a powerful mode of affirming Kali and opening our hearts to her fearful ministrations. Here are three brief excerpts from it:

It is time for the invocation, to atone  
For what we fear most and have not dared to face:  
Kali, the destroyer, cannot be overthrown;  
We must stay, open-eyed, in the terrible place. . .<sup>3</sup>

For a long time we shall have only to listen,  
Not argue or defend, but listen to each other.  
Let curses fall without intercession,  
Let those fires burn we have tried to smother. . .<sup>4</sup>

Kali, be with us.  
Violence, destruction, receive our homage.  
Help us to bring darkness into the light,  
To lift out the pain, the anger,  
Where it can be seen for what it is—  
The balance-wheel for our vulnerable, aching love.  
Put the wild hunger where it belongs,  
Within the act of creation,  
Crude power that forges a balance  
Between hate and love. . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 'For a long time we shall have only to listen.' Listen in our personal affairs, and listen to the anguish of the planet. Grievs, hates and fears which we have been taught are shameful contain Kali-truth. They are deeply human and an essential aspect of creativeness. The planetary teaching of Kali is perhaps best understood in terms of Karma. We have reaped the Bomb. If we heed its Kali-message, we may be able to reverse the course of humankind. If we do not, I am convinced, Kali will visit us even more destructively in Her cosmic form and we shall suffer until we see that we are indeed "All members of one body," and that Kali abides in us all. Meanwhile, "we must stay, open-eyed, in the terrible place."

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<sup>1</sup> Sarton, May. "The Invocation to Kali," *A Grain of Mustard Seed*, N.Y. Norton, © 1971, p. 20. Reprinted with the permission of the author, and of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted from a personal letter by Joanna Macy, circa 1981. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

<sup>3</sup>Sarton, *A grain of Mustard Seed*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

## REFLECTIONS ON AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE FEMININE

JOHN MILLEN

My timid, sensitive, honest feelings,  
How easily they are driven underground,  
Overwhelmed by sentimental moods,  
By ungrounded desire.

The world changes in that unwary moment  
When delightful conversation becomes excited expectation,  
And fellow mortals turn into gods.

Afterwards —  
Exposed and alone, I mourn the loss of her company,  
And wonder how I am to recover.  
With her?  
With myself?

That whore of a god!  
Armed with intimate knowledge of my most private weakness,  
She leads me with breathtaking certainty  
Away from my humanity,  
Away from my life!

OH WOMAN!

In desperation I run after her  
And show her my wound.

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## ENGAGING THE FEMININE

SILVIO FITTIPALDI

A few years ago a member of the FCRP posed a question that touches on the theme of these reflections. She asked: "Why do you keep coming back to the FCRP?" At that time I had no immediate response except that I returned to the conference because it offered me a respect for my need for solitariness and because my creative urges were stimulated. More recently another member of the FCRP sent to me a copy of Chris Downing's 1978 Rachel Cadbury Lecture. At the beginning of that lecture Downing spoke of the FCRP in the following manner:

From its beginnings this group has tended to emphasize what are traditionally regarded as more "feminine" or more introverted approaches to religious experience. The importance attached to intuitive insight and mythological and metaphorical expression implies some suspicion of the power of rational conceptual discourse to do justice to the subtleties of religious experience.<sup>1</sup>

As I read these words and reflected on them I thought that, maybe, that is why I, who was living in a all male monastic setting, returned to the FCRP, namely, to reconnect with the feminine in myself, to image metaphorically with the people there. I also have a suspicion of the exclusive power of rational conceptual discourse and have felt and taught the power of the intuitive in such rational sciences as math. Each year at the FCRP I would become engaged in some art form as poetry, dance, pottery or painting and begin to touch on depths in myself that I had been missing. Maybe they can be called the "feminine" aspect of my person.

Thus, for those of us who have experienced this conference, I would suggest that a powerful image of the feminine, a living symbol of the engagement of the feminine, is the FCRP itself.

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## Defining The Feminine?

The process of defining an aspect of reality is a process of specification and the discovery of boundaries. It is a process of abstracting a part from the whole. I, particularly, describe <sup>4</sup>"defining" as a "process" insofar as I want to communicate it as a living, ongoing reality rather than a static conceptualization. The process of defining is a process of continually discovering the limitations and potential of one's life in the world, a process of identification and creation, in an ongoing manner, of the ground from which a person lives. It is with this in mind that I present three approaches to the feminine that seem to me to touch on central issues, approaches that present the feminine as engaged in a process of wholeness.

The first approach that I want to present is taken from an article by Valerie Valle and Elizabeth Kruger<sup>2</sup>. Initially, the authors contrast male and female in terms of the cultural stereotypes that define the male consciousness as clear, logical, unemotional and in complete control in contrast to female consciousness as nonrational, intuitive and striving toward union. Then, after arguing for the fullness and healthiness of androgyny, Valle and Kruger go on to describe a feminine style of consciousness grounded in three experiences that belong solely to women, namely, menstruation, pregnancy and birth, and breastfeeding. Five traits are then listed as present in feminine consciousness stemming from these experiences. The experience of time as cyclical rather than as linear can come from the experience of menstruation. The process of pregnancy and giving birth lead to the experience of creativity as the creating "of the environment necessary for the emergence of the created," as well as the<sup>4</sup> ability to let go of ego-control of a situation and let one's inner nature guide." Thirdly, <sup>4</sup>"responsiveness to and awareness of the needs of others" as well as <sup>4</sup>"interest in the development of symbiotic, mutually fulfilling relationships" can come from the experience of breastfeeding.

Secondly, Rosemary Ruether gives her readers a major challenge in her article "Motherearth and the Megamachine."<sup>3</sup> In the end, Ruether's challenge is for us humans to realize our potential for wholeness. She concisely sets us the problem in the following words:

All the basic dualities—the alienation of the mind from the body; the alienation of the subjective self from the objective

world; the subjective retreat of the individual, alienated from the social community; the domination or rejection of nature by spirit—these all have roots in the apocalyptic-Platonic religious heritage of classical Christianity. But the alienation of the masculine from the feminine is the primary sexual symbolism that sums up all these alienations. The psychic traits of intellectuality, transcendent spirit, and autonomous will that were identified with the male left the woman with the contrary traits of bodiliness, sensuality, and subjugation."<sup>4</sup>

Ruether then argues for a reconciliation of these opposites. Her image is the cultivation of a garden in which "the powers of rational consciousness come together with the harmonies of nature in partnership."<sup>5</sup>

A third suggestion comes from Chris Downing in her recent book, *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*. At the beginning of this book Downing writes:

The being of the goddess is related to her having a feminine body but is not delimited by that. Indeed, the earliest traditions seem to have imagined her as parthenogenetic and thus androgynous. She is feminine—and masculine. She represents a unity that encompasses this duality."<sup>6</sup>

Each of these three women attempts to describe the feminine in such a way that the wholeness of the human is realized. I would like to suggest that there is some organic relationship between the male and female sexual structure biologically and the complex of characteristics designated respectively as masculine and feminine. At the same time, however, each human person is more than her or his biology. To define a human person only from a biologically grounded perspective would be reductionistic and would destroy the multi-levelled complexity of human persons. At our deepest level we struggle to become fully human, reaching in and out for the wholeness of which each of us is a living and dying symbol. And that is the holiness we seek.

### The Feminine in Religion?

The religions throughout the world have been deeply responsible for the disengagement of the feminine in culture as well as for the relegating of some aspects of the human to women and others to

men. At the same time, there are present in religion images that symbolize the integration of the feminine and the masculine. In the following I want to share some of my experiences of this integration.

From the time when I was a child I was nurtured by the Roman Catholic liturgy and worship. These liturgical celebrations were highly organized. There was a rhythm of word and silence, centered at the altar, symbolizing the presence of Christ in the community and manifested in the movement of the ministers, the color of the dress, the world of the music and housed in some superb church structures. When I think of a church building I think first of the church on the campus of Villanova University with its two spires reaching into the sky and the dark silence within, broken by shafts of sunlight that filtered through the stained glass windows. I spent many hours in this place where the liturgical services touched my intuitive as well as my rational powers, where I often sat in quiet meditation, a meditation that opened me to the sensitivity of Jesus of Nazareth. This description contains images of both masculine and feminine. I never thought of the experience in this way. Now I realize that it integrated the feminine and the masculine.

I am carried from the church at Villanova to the magnificent cathedrals in Europe, especially Cologne, Notre Dame and Chartres. In their own silent way they symbolize the union of the masculine and the feminine with their deep inner darkness and their reaching toward the sky. In particular, the labyrinth at Chartres reminds me of the god and goddess who are related in a labyrinth. Religion has been a quest in a labyrinth for me, a quest for soul. I have discovered that I do not have to reach the geographical center to discover this soul. Rather, as I walk, holding both ends of the string, I come upon soul at each turn of the corner. And I can also discover that soul by sitting and resting on the journey, being at home. I walk and rest with anxiety and fear as well as trust and confidence.

My imagination now moves eastward to the Hindu temples at Khajarahho, a small village in north central India. At the center of a temple dedicated to Shiva is a small, dark womb chamber. Within this chamber is a lingam. The feminine and the masculine are joined. On the outside, in the societies surrounding this temple as well as the cathedrals of Europe and the churches in the western hemisphere, men and women are separated by a broad cultural sexism. At the heart of the religious imagination, however, they are

joined. They meet. It is this image of Meeting that I point to as central to a religious sensitivity to the feminine. It is here that, I believe we touch on the heart of Quakerism. In the Society of Friends the meeting is the central dynamic living symbol along with that of the Inner Light.

I want to conclude this section by sharing some reflections on images of God. Insofar as we humanize God or divinize the human, God is presented as female or male. The engagement of the feminine calls for both male and female images of God. This will involve a major shift in the western religions, at least, a shift that is necessary, I believe, for us to realize the fullness of life—male and female—that is possible. In order for this to happen there are aspects of divinity that will have to come to the fore that might appear strange and unusual. It is true that there are a number of images of the nurturing God in the Bible. I affirm these and hope that they enter more dynamically into Christian and Jewish consciousness as feminine as well as masculine. However, there is another image of God that evokes the feminine in me.

From my earliest years, the name God evoked in me a vague presence. As I grew in age and especially in the midst of my meetings with the Hindu traditions and Buddhism and the Christian theology of Karl Rahner, I came to a realization of God as mystery—the unnamable, the silent one who speaks in silence, the dark as well as the light, chaos as well as order. I came to experience the divine dimension of reality as that experience of an inability to fully fence in reality, to fully define it or ourselves, to fully image a reality in which I live whose images continuously change, whose boundaries I cannot pin down. I came to realize that God is not to be symbolized merely by the order of the clockmaker but also by the boiling pot of water, not only manifest in the intricately structured Taj Mahal but also in the teeming, tumbling back streets of Calcutta, the city of Kali. In the end, we need the goddesses as well as the gods. They can point us to images of the full humanity and then beyond to the fullness of reality.

#### The Feminine: Receptivity and Power?

As I reflect on receptivity and the feminine, I am carried into my own training as a minister which is training to be a servant. It seems to me that this experience has parallels in the lives of women

who are reared in our culture to be women which is to be a servant, and in the lives of men and women in the corporate world. There is both limitation and power in this training to be a servant and this is the limitation and power of being receptive. It also is a process that involves much risk and trust.

Many Christian people, ordained and unordained ministers have been trained to follow in the footsteps of Christ and to be for others. A fundamental element of my own training involved serving others, not on my own terms or on the terms of those being served but rather on the terms of the church. From the age of 13, in the seminary, as well as in my homelife, a style of life was given to me and I was constrained to form myself according to its form and patterns. That form was called the "will of God." Often it was the will of a human director.

As a teenager I struggled with that will as I struggled for my own identity. In the end I succumbed to the form, at least externally. All along, however, I did feel a unique soul pressing itself forward.

A central element in my training was the development of the virtue of obedience. Such obedience involved doing the will of another and, again, shaping ourselves according to the terms of another. Gradually, I began to realize that obedience meant to listen, to take in, to receive. And I began to listen to many voices. Not only did I hear the voices of our directors but I also began to hear my own voice and to hear murmurs from the many people I was reading, novelists and philosophers such as Tolstoy and Camus, Sartre and Marcel, Buber and Carl Rogers. I began to realize that there were other shapes and forms and that I had a hand in the creation, a very small hand at first and a hand that I continue to struggle to discover.

In 1963 I was deeply touched by Carl Rogers who gave to me a very personal way to relate with others. In his client-centered therapy, I found a way to center myself on the other and to reflect their side to the other. I had not yet found a solid side of my own. Rather I tried to enter the side of the other, to imagine it and to search out with that other opening ways beyond their own struggle and pain. Such hearing is quite powerful. Yet there is something missing from it.

The question was posed to me: Where do you stand? What are your terms? Where is your ground? I had a difficult time responding

to those questions which are really the same question: Where are you in all this? And that continues to be my major question. I was experiencing what Buber calls the experience of the other side. I was and am weak in the experience of my own side. I could receive but I had a difficult time asking for what I wanted (not in an ego-centric way). I could give on the terms of the other but not as easily on my own terms.

The power of receptivity, in the Buberian sense, is a power that is not isolated but rather is joined with the power of having a side of one's own. To receive only on the terms of another is unfair to both the giver and the receiver. Rather a fair and full receptivity is one in which I can hear the other side and hear my own side. Then I can choose to give and to receive in accordance with a balance of give and take. Hopefully, that would be more satisfying to all involved over the long run.

Two images come to me with regard to this kind of receptivity. The first is a mutual embrace where energy moves in both directions. Trust and risk are involved in both receiving and giving. The power is not simply in one or the other but in the exchange between them.

Another image that is pertinent to me recently is that of a doorway. To stand actively on a doorway is to stand in the "between," a place of intense trust, a quite auspicious place. I stood on a doorway in 1976 in a Shiva temple in Madras. Someone requested that I go in or out. I did not understand. I respectfully went out. Now I choose to stand in the doorway. For to bring myself to the doorway is an act of trust in the past and the future. To stand between, giving and receiving is to be a different kind of servant than one who lives only on the terms of another. Rather the servant who lives in the "between" is formed by self and other, is formed in the relation, in the meeting. My center then is not in myself, or in the other, but rather in the realm between or among us. The movement is not simply toward an eternal Thou but rather in the eternal between. This is the power of a receptivity that is a part of a process rather than one in which I live on the terms of another solely. It is a receptivity that is part of an exchange.

Thus the primary image that I offer as an image of the engagement of the feminine is the image of a meeting. To enter a meeting

with openness and receptivity, as well as with ones own power, is to trust and to risk and to engage all the elements of the present reality in an exchange that grows and changes shape and rests in the confidence of the processes of meeting.

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## ENGAGING THE FEMININE: REFLECTIONS

HERTA JOSLIN

As I search for words with which to communicate my sense of the feminine, my mind whirls, circles, intertwines, and that which is uppermost gives way to that which rises. It turns, as the symbol for the Yin and the Yang seems to turn on itself. In the Introduction to his translation of the *I Ching*<sup>1</sup>, Richard Wilhelm helps to clarify our concepts of feminine and masculine. He reminds us that when the

**HERTA JOSLIN was also one of the speakers at the 1982 FCRP. She is a Jungian therapist and a member of the Society of Friends. This year was the last of a five year term as co-clerk of the Conference with her husband, Elliott.**

Chinese devised the circle divided into dark and light to symbolize the duality in the world of female and male, they did not mean to imply physical, sexual characteristics. Yin here means cloudy, dark, yielding; Yang brings images of banners in the sun, brightness, the firm. We now use these terms to identify the duality within a person, recognizing feminine and masculine aspects within one being.

Some of the things which, for me, seem to relate to the feminine are:

The sense of deep places, secret, powerful  
The struggles of relationship  
Connection with the earth, seeds, growing green things  
A sense of power which rises in me unannounced  
The Goddess  
The sudden, nearly irresistible need to be a separate being, which sweeps over me, regardless of other relationships  
The deep intimacy with myself

Being an introvert, as well as deeply subjective in my approach to the world, my strongest attraction is for the intimacy with myself, with the inner spaces. I find one of the most fascinating aspects of my life to be the ongoing dialogue which I have with dreams—my dreams, dreams of my clients, of my friends, dreams which I read in books. When I was younger and beginning to read Jungian and Humanistic psychology, whenever I came upon a dream I read it with a guilty feeling. It was always so utterly wonderful that I secretly felt I was treading on forbidden ground, that I might somehow be punished for enjoying it so much. Odd though that may seem, the feeling persisted until I returned to college to continue my interrupted education, this time with the study of dream, myth, art, and the psyche as the central network. At last I felt <sup>44</sup>“legitimate.”

My fantasy about the unconscious is that of an enormous warehouse, vast beyond my imagining, where every image I have ever seen is filed in some incredibly complex manner. This enables the maker of dreams, to find precisely the combination of visual forms required to create the symbolic representation of a psychic state or process. There is nothing random about this choosing. Careful and imaginative investigation by the dreamer, winding through a trail of associations and memories, arrives, sometimes with an intuitive leap, sometimes by a massing of understood images, at the mes-

sage of the dream. Then the seemingly meaningless succession of fantastical images resolves giving the dreamer a deep sense of Tightness, and the knowledge that this dream has been comprehended.

Exploring dreams in this way is a feminine process, a moving within the darkness, making use of a diffuse sense of awareness, yielding to the unknown, while trusting in the creative power of the psyche. I can image moving into inner spaces as walking through trees standing in sunlit grass, to a huge fir, spreading its branches low to the ground. Moving within those reaching green arms, I find myself close to the enormous trunk. Pitch oozes out, bubbles against the shaggy bark. There is an opening in the wood. I step inside. The passageway leads down, winding through the roots into the earth. I sense the darkness, rich smells, rough texture. A rush of air sweeps past me opening into a larger cave, a resting place—Ali Baba's treasure trove, perhaps? The bedroom of a nymph? The great god Pan's secret hideout? Whispers of all these marvels—and more—rustle in my ears. Here the Goddess shines, an iridescent gleam defines her. Here seeds await their time, dreams lie a-borning, children snuggle their heads into their pillows. Wings of poetry ready their shadows for flight into words, music draws a quiet breath, colors shimmer and tremble in anticipation. I wait. There is no need to move, to act, to decide. This is the place which precedes birth, when time .and the act are together ripe. The bud will open.

Sometimes a dream or fantasy image is so visual that it seems to compel some actualization, as though the unconscious were asking for a chance to be seen. Painting, drawing, sculpting, poetry, all are ways to facilitate the emergence of the image. Struggling to paint my sense of the inner quality of the feminine, I find pictures of a mountain with deep dark rivers running beneath it, a womb full of flames, a crystal bowl containing fire. Each succeeding painting reaches further into the reality I am experiencing, none seems to get there. At last I paint a silver center; silver is the moon metal, cold relating to the implacable heart of the deep feminine places. This center is guarded by pointed crystals which shine in colors of violet, blue, magenta. They guard the secret depth, and they pierce the heart; the deep feminine follows its ultimate rhythm regardless of personal desires. A spiral rises out of the center, growing larger as it reaches out, touching all parts of the picture, leaving the page to

move beyond, giving me some sense that the absoluteness of this deepest truth is merged with all life.

When I sit in Meeting for Worship this same spiral sometimes appears, making a connection between the individual me and the greater Spirit. The Spirit has always been masculine in character for me—I experience it as a penetrating light which enters from above, expanding within me, filling me with a sensation of space, an openness wherein the Spirit may work upon me. With an increasing awareness of the depths of the feminine, I am receptive in a different way. The image is not so much that of a bride as of a priestess—an active participant in the mystery. I find that she is more interested in ritual, in some activity, that sitting in silent waiting is not her preference.

These things are still emerging into my awareness. The sense of the Goddess present within me comes more frequently, and I begin to recognize certain qualities. She is that part of me which is at home in the dark, luminous with mystery, nurturing, circular in awareness. She waits at my left side, a little behind me, coming up from below. She does not enter until invited. When I sense her presence, or I am in need of her, I silently request her help, opening, in image, an area in my body around my left lower ribs and kidney. How she manifests, or what direction her intervention will take, I never know until it has happened.

This process which I have been describing, of attending to dreams, to fantasy, of change, of ritual and being open to the entrance of the Goddess, is also the process which attenders of the Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology have come to expect will take place at our annual gathering. Many times I have described this conference to potential newcomers: This is a place where people come expecting change—and it happens! Over the thirty-nine years of our existence the blend of the Quaker religion and Jungian psychology has allowed us to open our minds and hearts to the mysterious depths of myth, dream, fantasy, silence, and the Gods. And though many of us tried all year to do just that, we found, as we met again in a group, that the power of our multiple spirits and souls worked its magic on each individual. We experienced the shaking reality of the Gathered Meeting when a whole room of silent worshipers seemed to be linked in one Spirit. We were caught in the excitement of creating our images in clay, paint, words, or dance. We formed lasting friendships, deep ones, open to

soul communication, renewable without effort year after year. And when we said goodbye we wept with joy for the sharing which we held with so many.

In May 1982, however, we did something different. In previous years we had a topic, a focus for our attention, around which our diffuse awarenesses were gathered, something which challenged us, inspired us, threatened us, saddened us. This year we had the feminine as the topic, our title, "Engaging the Feminine," led us straight back into ourselves, into our corporate feminine being. There was no escape, for our speakers refused to allow us to stray out of the personal experience into the intellectual discussion. Colors in hand, we drew our way through lectures, small groups, even Meeting for Worship. Some of us got angry, some were frustrated. That which we had been engaging unconsciously through the years was now coming into our conscious awareness. And the elements cooperated. The rain seemed determined to melt us all into primordial mud. Never had so many machines broken down, beginning with the steam table for breakfast and ending with innumerable tape recorders. To anyone who has tried to write or talk about the feminine, this disintegration of logical reality will be familiar. She is elusive, she manifests in images, and when the masculine word-power of Logos is brought to bear she slips away, running like water through the fingers, leaving a strong sense of her presence but few words to taste.

Feminine awareness has a circular quality. The mind travels around the terrain, absorbing information, gathering images, sensing nuances. The beginning of such a process is frequently confusing, and much trust is needed to persevere, to allow the emerging image its own time and space. To engage the feminine Conference in a feminine manner brought two diffuse awarenesses together, two women, as it were, meeting to know each other. I dreamed of such a situation shortly before the Conference:

I am in the front seat of a car with a man and woman—she is between us, we are tickling her playfully. He says, "I know what," and carefully ties together a pubic hair of hers and mine, joining us. He leaves. She and I are delighted. She says, "This is the best of all." I agree. We embrace closely—then separate, smiling at the tiny pain of the hair pulling out. I get out of the car, it is time for class and I gather my books. I stand for a moment in the morning to clear my eyes.

I interpreted this at the time to be my own connection with my feminine self, brought about by a male figure, my animus, who first, in previous dreams, had attracted me to himself. When I felt drawn to his presence, he then brought his wife into the group, then gradually arranged the connection with her which culminated in the dream which I related. Sharing my responses to these events at the Conference, I spoke of my personal delight in feeling so connected with the woman within, as well as in increasingly close relationships with women in my outer life. Coming near to my own feminine aspect in this way I found I was also entering into a personally intimate experience of the Goddess, beginning to explore into the range of her power. But, as most of our speakers discover, the Conference is a powerful entity in its own right, and we are often moved far beyond our original intent, as individuals respond and group dynamics develop. I discovered that the dream woman from the unconscious was not only my own personal feminine but also the Conference feminine, married to the masculine, functioning but unaware of herself. Now, in a new emergence, she moves up to be connected with the conscious woman, represented in the dream as myself, which is also the consciousness of the Conference. Choosing to address the title, "Engaging the Feminine," we brought her to our collective diffuse awareness, engaged in active relationship with her, and tied a link between ourselves. I am not surprised, with such a challenge, that we had to undergo some melting at the start, that the rain was so uninhibitedly coming through our shoes, into our luggage and through the roof. Allowing the components first to dissolve is an initial step in the alchemical process; this permits them then to recombine into new forms. By making use of the colors of Cray-pas we had the opportunity to shape images, helping to bring the diffuse into the concrete. Sharing these images, talking about our experiences as they emerged, allowed Logos an opportunity to clarify our evolving awareness. As the time passed, we became familiar with a variety of egg-shaped containers, vulva shaped openings, flowers, vases, wombs containing new life, and the inverted triangle used in ancient times as a feminine symbol. When Mary Hopkins was inspired, Monday morning, to create a new symbol, ^ # ensuing roar of laughter and delight expressed how familiar we had become with our new language. Perhaps it was also explosion of relief that now the two women had truly been joined in consciousness. Our delight was compounded when, as we finally subsided, a male voice from the rear of the room said, quietly, "Ouch!"

And what of the masculine? Again and again, as men told of their encounters with their feminine selves, of their struggles to be in the feminine, that question arose, staying with many as a quest still to be undertaken. I spoke of the feminine as being many things: a sense of a deep place of power, a crystal, silver veined in rock under the mountain, the Eros of relationship, nurturance, connection with the earth. All these are recognized also by men, sometimes as very basic qualities in their being—does that, they then ask, make me less male? Am I, I respond, any less female when I settle on a course of action and move with determination and clarity towards a goal? The answers to these questions must come, ultimately, from the men. In my dreams I find the beginning of an answer to what my own masculinity might encompass, an awareness of the strengths and abilities of my body and mind, a focus of attention, a pleasure in challenge, an ability to order time and space. These things I recognize.

But I am compelled away from these questions. An unrest grips me, a sense of imminent arrival, yet no image arrives, no presentiment stirs. I paint and draw huge pictures divided always between water and fire. Blue, green, purple, lavender swirl on one side; orange, red and yellow leap up on the other. They do not mix. Guardians of a cave appear—within it I lie, in a variety of postures, waiting for I know not what.

I dream I am on a roof, having climbed up with my son. He has gone down the other side. But I am afraid and sit on the peak. The only way down is to slide. I ask for a rope, but when I've tied it to my waist there is nowhere to tie the other end. I can't go down the way I came up. I must slide, catching myself a little by holding the edge of the roof in places. I wonder, wildly, if a helicopter might carry me away, but realize I must go, now.

The next day, in session with a client, the sensation of the Goddess came within me so powerfully that I nearly lost my breath. I felt completely possessed, my body sensations changed, I became an archetype and, recognizing it, I spoke in her voice to my client. The sensations persisted, a small part of me watched in awe. This was the slide down the roof, the dream image accurately presaged the emotional necessity. Not knowing how it would end, no more than I could have predicted how I would hit the ground, I seemed to have no choice but to continue, to commit myself to the Goddess and the archetype with which she had invested me, until we came to an

end, which was, I believe, mutually agreed upon. When she and I separated the knot was still there, again the image of the pubic hair leaps to consciousness. That knot of hair, pulled by common consent from our two bodies, becomes the link, the tool which enables me to make use of both originators. To work with the dream and image, it is necessary to keep awareness in both the unconscious, (following the myth and its development), and in the present reality, (everyday conscious life), into which we must all return from our excursions within. The water and the fire in my paintings stay separate—a preponderance of either extinguishes or vaporizes the other.

The world of dream and fantasy tempts me to remain there, to see all things as symbolic, to live within the mystery, in constant communion with the goddesses and gods. So also, as each conference nears its end, we are loathe to leave such warmth and excitement which, to some, seem far more real than life "out there." Entering fully into that world, we may become lost. Allowing it to enter us, keeping our conscious selves present, we may find the connection we require to stay human while becoming channels for the divine.

A recent dream offered a balance.

I am in Italy, racks of spaghetti dry in the sun. Peasant women are packing boxes and I help. Into each box go some bright marigolds, some spaghetti, and some silverware.

The flowers are beauty, sweetness, color, fantasy. The spaghetti is peasant made, dried in the sun, a staple of life. The silver is moon metal from the earth, the deep feminine, here shaped into practical form. What a nice package: fantasy, color, food, and tools with which to eat. Dreams are indeed remarkable!



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## COAST TO COAST

It has been gratifying for members of the FCRP to hear about mini-conferences developing in other areas of the country. At one time much of the business of the Haverford group was carried on by members living in and around Washington, D.C. That these people formed their own local group seemed a natural occurrence.

Over time we became aware that one after another of our members were moving to California. We remember wondering if they would get together. Today we are aware of the wonderful group which has come together there. And now there has been a spin-off from this group. A new gathering has developed in Southern California. A first grandchild, no less!

The latest news is that the rumblings we have been hearing from New England are for real. The first gathering of the NE FCRP was held at Temenos in October.

It is reassuring that while members of the more established groups are moving away, or becoming otherwise involved, new members are joining, and new groups are springing up elsewhere. That opportunities for the experiences leading to self-understanding, spiritual renewal, and the formation of deep personal friendships are increasingly available, is certainly cause for celebration.

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Annual Conference of the West Coast Association for Religion and Psychology in 1982 was led by Laura Dodson on the topic: "Embracing The Tiger: The Yin and Yang of The Inner and Outer Journey." In an article appearing in the Fall issue of *Full Circle*, providing background material in anticipation of the weekend, Laura Dodson asked:

"Could we find an archetypal core to the distress of our globe? What on a core archetypal level hinders us in peacemaking? What is the wounded archetype? Could Jung's concepts of Energy, the tension of opposites, the masculine and feminine, help us to see with more depth?"

She reminds us that when the discrepancy between the inner-

most self and its outer expression becomes too great, illness—physical, mental, and/or spiritual, results.

In the Fall, 1982 issue of *Full Circle*, Mary Ellen McNelly reported Ms. Dodson as saying:

"Don't worry about *what* I can do, but *how* do I see? Let's develop our eyes... to see what is going on inside other people who may not, because of their/our developmental stage, be able to hear us. . .

"Violence is the fruit of being stuck on one end of the opposites. With integration of yin and yang comes our more creative use of self, deeper acceptance of self and others, increased capacity to live with uncertainty, with ambiguity."

#### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The following excerpts were taken from Linda Brown's report on the FCRP conference entitled "Springs of Renewal" which appeared in the Friends Bulletin, June, 1982.

"Betty Smith, member of Santa Monica Meeting and specialist in Greek mythology, was our leader for this weekend journey into the birth-myths of Dionysos, God of abundance and transformation, and of Hermes, trickster/messenger God and guide of souls. According to myth, Hermes and Dionysos are both born in caves. Betty named the cave the place of 'our deepest urgency or cry.' Thus, symbolically, god-presence is born within us out of our deepest longing. . .

"Renewal is not mere gathering of new insight intellectually, but a creative event in one's internal landscape, 'an altering event, a turn' after which one sees the world differently. . . Ancient Greeks believed that each time of renewal was. . .seeing one's life from the perspective of a newborn. . . Dionysos was twice-born of two different mothers and finally brought to birth out of Zeus' thigh as if to symbolize that each life requires many (re)births.

#### WASHINGTON

Like members of an ancient tribe we sat in a semicircle around the huge stone fireplace. It was storytelling time and the theme

was, "Mine Enemy Teaches Me." The fire warmed us as the storytellers, choosing appropriate costumes and props, told their tales.

There was *The Flute Player*; swallowed by a fearsome boa, he learns to live inside the monster, cutting his way out piece by piece until he reaches the snake's heart. Thereupon it rears mightily and falls dead. This represents the quiet, feeling way of dealing with the enemy—from the inside out.

The tale *The King's Ankus*, by Kipling, tells of Mowgli, the jungle boy, and his friend, Kaa, the python. They visit a cave deep under the ground where the sinister white cobra guards the king's treasure. The jeweled ankus, in the hands of greedy men, brings not fortune but death and destruction.

Isak Dinesen's *The Ring*, reveals how a chance encounter with a thief casts a shadow on a young wife's view of life and marriage.

The *Gifts of The Christ Child*, by George McDonald, relates how a wizard helps a ten-year-old boy dream of himself as a grown man and change the scenario of his life for the better.

*The Son of the Leopard*, a moving Ethiopian folk tale re-told by Harold Courlander, deals with the projection of a shadow by a whole people. It shows how a single man, who was believed to be the reincarnation of a tyrannical and blood thirsty ruler, finally comes to terms with his awesome fate.

These stories have in common the gaining of knowledge about the shadow which we project on someone else and sometimes call the enemy. The stories also illustrate the idea that gods and demons, the source of our healing and our destructiveness, dwell within us. Unconscious processes often become clearer to us through images which speak directly to the unconscious. We were encouraged to let go of the concrete world so the events of our spiritual lives could become mirrored in the people and the events of the stories.

*Lucy Eddinger*

#### NEW YORK

Although a conference was not undertaken in 1982, members in the New York area have gathered for monthly discussions focussed on the book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*.

## NEW ENGLAND

On a chilly day in October, friends of FCRP in New England gathered for the first time around the Franklin stove in the new lodge at Temenos. At the outset a sense of trust and common horizons enabled us to share deeply our growing edges with one another.

We focussed on the contemporary relevance of the Greek myth of Helios, the sun god, and his impetuous son, Phaethon. Helios grants his son's wish to drive the solar chariot across the heavens for a day. The horses get out of control, Earth (Mother Gaia) is scorched, and catastrophe is narrowly averted by her cry to Jupiter to stop the ravage.

We gained fresh perspective on nuclear war as only the latest episode in humanity's millennial struggle to control the unleashing of lethal elementary forces. What does it mean today to listen to the feminine voice of Mother Earth? What is our role in letting Her cry be heard widely enough to avert the cataclysmic scorching. . .?

*Teresina Havens*

We are impressed with the above reports from our far flung family. Might we not say that we are part of a world wide movement which Marilyn Ferguson has called *The Aquarian Conspiracy*?

## REVIEWS

*Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women*, by Sylvia Brinton Perera, Toronto, Inner City Books, 1981, 112 p., \$9.00

This is an exciting, difficult, engrossing book about women's search for freedom and healing, and our desperate need to discover an inner female authority in a predominantly male world. Combining a third millenium Sumerian text, *Ishtar's Descent*, with dreams from her own Jungian practice as a model for modern woman's journey, Sylvia Perera presents a vivid image of female initiation.

We who are "father's daughters" in a psychological sense (cp. "mama's boys"), defined by men as "docile daughters", "good mothers", "bright, achieving partners", develop "animus-egos" that goad us into living goal-oriented, compulsive, over-achieving lives. These false centers drive us on to ever new accomplishments, make insatiable demands upon our time and energies, and worse yet, are always critical of the the results. It is that part of us that "projects the power", that attempts to control by manipulation (a real ugly!), that accommodates too willingly, that finds it difficult to ask for help, that is unable to admit and value one's own needs. This sentence struck home with me: "Too often there is no distinction felt between the unmothered woman's need for the mother, and her need for male partership. . . .(These women) continue to seek strength and mothering from men and their own animus, even devaluating feminine nurturance when it is available to them."

Somehow, someway, we must learn to dis-identify from compulsive male judgments and find female values within for our own salvation and wholeness. This is not, of course, a brand new thought. Esther Harding began writing about it fifty years ago, and it is an idea that has been coming to the surface more and more in Jungian literature (for example, Marion Woodman's *The Owl Is The Baker's Daughter*). Sylvia Perera describes this process with such force and clarity that we are able to travel with Ishtar down through the Underworld of our own lives to her dark sister Ereshkigal, the Mother Goddess, source of the deepest instinctive female energy, and return with new insight and awareness. The dread initiation involves "suffering, disrobing, humiliation, flagellation, and. . . crucifixion on the underworld peg." In the course of this the great energy of the Goddess "turns back on itself, goes down into

self-preserving introversions, (and becomes) the energy that makes a woman able to be separate unto herself and survive alone'—centered, grounded and whole.

The Goddess is making herself known in many of us today. But the great need is to experience her with awareness and not with passive acceptance that leads to masochistic suffering. Some of us perhaps take this journey voluntarily, and some of us get booted into it. But if we miraculously survive to tell the tale and can experience this archetypal ego-sacrifice to the self, we can begin to share in the cycle of healing and transformation through which wholeness comes.

I found it a heady experience to read and relate to the vivid passages in this book, to recognize steps along the journey, and to see them as parallel to my own. (Time to knock on wood and confront inflation!) To realize with real elation and a sense of wonder, that women like me can find in this tale a symbolic journey similar to the Christian Hero's journey, but told this time in female terms. Here is the story of the *via dolorosa*, the crucifixion of the ego to the Self for the sake of salvation, the descent into Hell, and the resurrection, told some 3,000 years before the birth of Christ. It gives me the same exciting validation that Neumann's retelling of the story of Amor and Psyche did when I recognized that story as an early acknowledgement of woman's role in the achievement of consciousness.

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*Woman, Earth and Spirit: The Feminine in Symbol and Myth*, by Helen M. Luke. Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1981. 102pp., \$8.95.

Helen Luke, has worked more than thirty years as a counselor to men and women who sought to relate their daily lives to the reality of myth and symbol. This book evolved from separate papers written for study groups at her rural center, "Apple Farm." Its opening chapter, "The Life of the Spirit in Women," appeared first as a Pendle Hill Pamphlet. She forcefully addresses modern woman's need to recover the awareness and expression of her *authentic* femininity, which can take highly individual directions. One persist-

ent effect of the damage done by centuries of masculine dominance is that much of the current feminist propaganda is poisoned by actual contempt for the feminine. This is "the collective judgment of centuries about the inferiority, the dullness, the uncreativity of a woman's passive feminine nature." Her aim becomes mere equality with men, the achievement of comparable expressions of masculine creative Spirit.

"There has to be fuel before the fire will burn; there has to be earth as well as seed, before new life is created." Helen Luke deals beautifully with the symbolism of Fire and Air vs. Earth and Water in this connection, and quotes *the I Ching* on Yin the Receptive, the "equal and opposite" of Yang the Creative. "The Earth's condition is receptive devotion... all beings owe their birth to it, because it receives the heavenly with devotion."

Remembering Ann Ulanov's distinction between the "elementary static" and the "transformative or dynamic" aspects of the feminine principle, we may be tempted to wonder if Luke falls back into seeing the dynamically spiritual as masculine by definition, and only the static aspect as feminine. Such a judgment would be unfair. It is easier to contemplate and admire the transformative feminine in all its glory, both in others and in our own emerging creative selves, than to render an equal tribute to Yin the Receptive! For that very reason, we are sometimes driven to acknowledge that Helen Luke's hammering on the Receptive may be just what we need.

The essay on the ancient Aryan dawn goddess, Eostre, from whom our word "Easter" is derived, may restore our lost meanings. "This image of the goddess bringing to birth the resurrected sun—or Son—out of the womb of darkness. . . carries a numinous power." She ties it in with the mythic truth of the Pueblo Indians' belief that if they were not present at every dawn to help the Sun rise by their worship, it would fail to rise. As Jung says, "If anyone lives his own hypothesis to the bitter end . . . he knows that Christ is his brother." "A true love costs no less than everything. . . In our individual lives it means we stand continually ready to accept the death of an old attitude, the loss of an object of love or veneration, the end of a projection that has lost its numinosity or its relevance to the present."

"Goddess of the Hearth," is my favorite chapter, combining a variety of symbols in a way quite new to me. Fire descends from heaven to meet earth's fuel; whether it then burns creatively or destructively depends on the nature of the fuel we supply and the quality of attention we give it; as T.S. Eliot put it, we have a choice between "fire and fire." The *I Ching* Hexagram #30, which also means "fire and fire," carries the curious injunction to steady perseverance and "care of the cow;" "an image of the slow, patient chewing of the cud which turns the grass of the earth into human food." "The cow is the passive, feminine heat of unremitting attention without which there can be no transformation of fire"—whether for the alchemist in his retort, the cook in her kitchen, or anyone "who seeks to transform the raw material of his or her life into the gold of consciousness." We must drink daily of the milk of the cow; we must ruminate. Without this, says the *I Ching*, the fire "flames up, dies down, is thrown away."

Helen Luke then turns to an interpretation of the hearth-goddess Vesta's virginity: only as a woman finds herself to be complete-in-herself, hence with no need for possessiveness, can she "bring unity to the family around the hearth." This holds true, in different ways, for the woman who has no literal hearth or family. According to the ancient meaning of temple prostitution, it is only through burning in the fires of instinct sufficiently to become "*capable* of a total giving of herself, body as well as soul," that a woman becomes truly virgin and able to <sup>4 4</sup> give the milk of her feminine warmth to all who will draw it." But to bring this about, long years of tending her essential feminine cowlikeness are required.

Another of my favorite essays deals with the "Mother and Daughter Mysteries," which is interesting especially as compared to Chris Downing's treatment.\* Helen Luke is content to follow the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* as it stands; but she too was sufficiently drawn to the thought of the mature Persephone's at-homeness in Hades' realm, to opt for a cover design taken from a votive plaque showing Hades and Persephone sitting together in state, companionable and broadly smiling, perhaps pleased with their worshiper who has offered them the emblems they like best. After all, All-seeing Zeus did arrange this marriage, for good and sufficient reasons!

♦Downing, Christine. *The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Feminine*, N.Y., Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981.

Attention is given to an episode in which Demeter, taking the first step away from total abandonment to her grief, volunteers to care for another child, the human son of the king and queen of Eleusis. Her treatment of the child is described perceptively as both right and wrong, and the mother's terrified interference as both wrong and right. After a petulant temper tantrum and a demand that a temple be built for her, Demeter enters a phase of introverted growth. This culminates in her true and greatest contribution to humankind, the founding of the Eleusinian Mysteries. No longer playing at being a goddess, she demonstrates the reality by offering one of the most profound ritualized inner journeys through which humans have ever been enabled to win their immortality.

There are three brief essays: one on Straw and Gold (the story of Rumpelstiltskin); one on "the Revenge of the Repressed Feminine" (based on the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus); and one on "Money and the Feminine Principle of Relatedness." The Latin *Moneta* was originally the name of a goddess (of the mint in which money was coined). Since she was forgotten and sank into the unconscious, Money "has acquired an ever-increasing autonomous power and is worshiped unashamedly as an end in itself." Helen Luke treats money in the light of the profound human principle of Exchange from which it was derived, and which, as celebrated in the poetry and novels of Charles Williams, is indeed numinous; and this is, of course, what money is for.

*Woman, Earth and Spirit* is a comparatively short book, but its author's insights are as unusual as her style and give us much to ponder.

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### ELINED PRYS KOTSCHNIG, 1895-1983

Analytical psychologist, founder of Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology, and editor of *Inward Light* for 30 years, Elined Prys Kotschnig passed on in her 89th year at Pennswood Village, Newtown, Pa. on June 30, 1983.

She was born in Trevecca, Wales and graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Wales in 1918. Following a year at Cambridge University, she served with the World Student Christian Movement in Romania for three years and was decorated for this work by the Romanian government. Elined met her husband, Walter, an Austrian Friend at Woodbrooke, a Quaker study center in England. They married on December 10, 1924. After moving to Geneva, Elined began her analysis with Dr. Tina Keller and developed a lifelong interest in relating the thought of C.G. Jung to Quakerism.

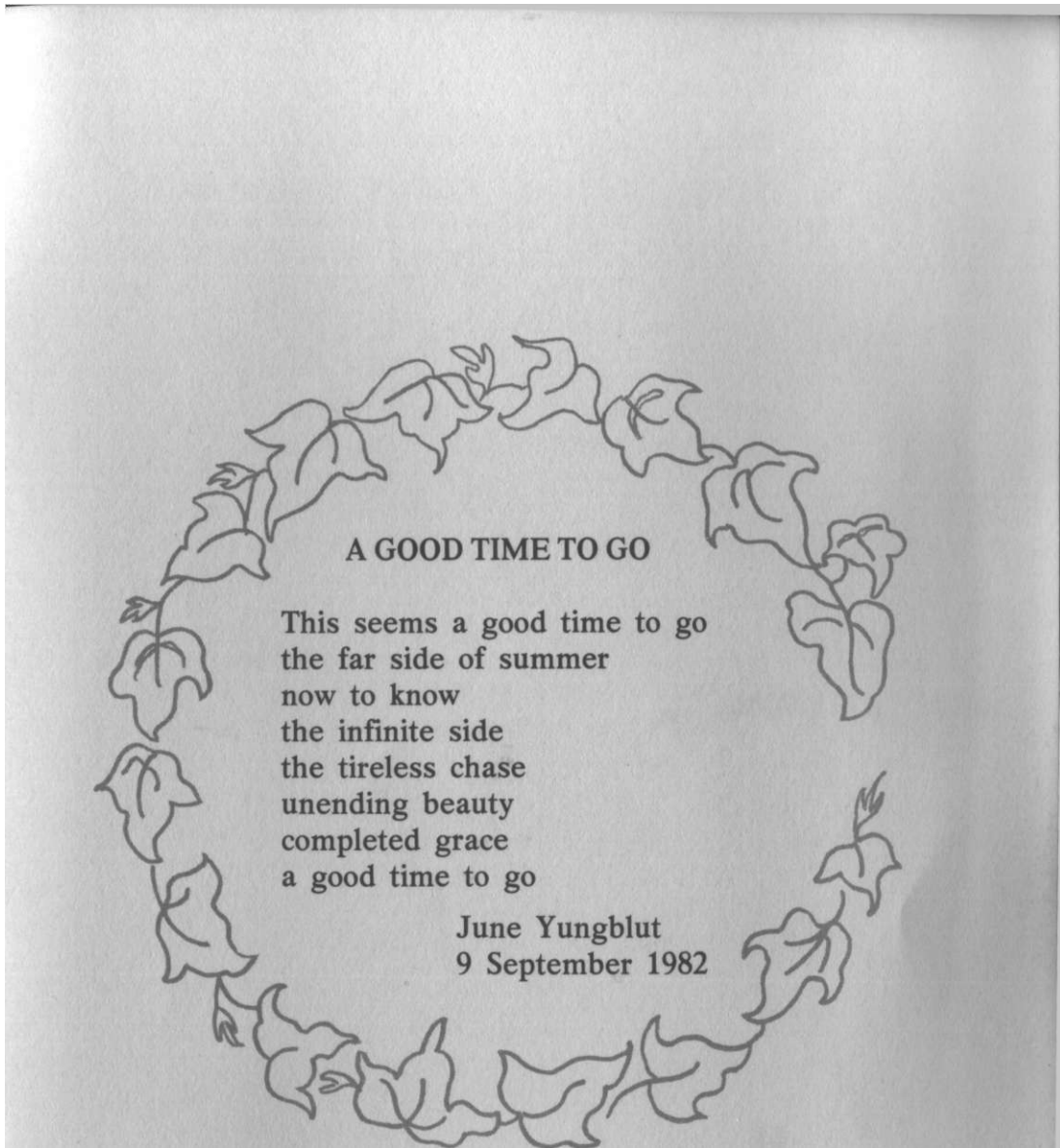
The Kotschnigs came to the U.S. in 1936 where Elined practiced as an analytical psychologist first in Northampton, Mass., later in Washington, D.C. until 1979. Gathering together other interested Friends, she initiated the first Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology, chairing it from 1943 to 1946 and serving on its executive committee until 1980.

Elined Kotschnig belonged to Florida Avenue Friends Meeting, the Society of Analytical Psychologists (N.Y.), the International Associations of Analytical Psychology, the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, and the C.G. Jung Foundation for Analytical Psychology.

Walter Kotschnig, who has had a distinguished career in international relations with the U.S. State Department, a daughter, Enid Kotschnig, a son John Priest, and two grandchildren survive.

Issue #100 of *Inward Light*, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Conference, will portray Elined's crucial role in its history. She brought a remarkable dedication of intellect and spirit to its work and to its journal.

Writing of Susan Yarnall's passing in 1972, Elined used the words "passed on," saying it "is actually the most precise expression and the most full of life and hope we possess." As she, herself, now "belongs to the ages," her faith in the life eternal remains with us.



John wrote: "June died on September 26 of the cancer from which she had so long suffered. . ." and, "May she go 'from strength to strength in the life of perfect service' and creativity."