

Word Play:
A Lexical T.A.Z in Inner Space

Compiled and Edited by Joshua Putnam

An Ongoing Work of Ecopoeia

Word Play

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onomatopoeia

[on-uh-mat-uh-pee-uh, --mah-tuh-] **noun**

1. the formation of a word, as *cuckoo*, *meow*, *honk*, or *boom*, by imitation of a sound made by or associated with its referent.
 2. a word so formed.
 3. the use of imitative and naturally suggestive words for rhetorical, dramatic, or poetic effect.
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echolalia

[ek-oh-ley-lee-uh] **noun**

1. *Psychiatry.* the uncontrollable and immediate repetition of words spoken by another person.
 2. the imitation by a baby of the vocal sounds produced by others, occurring as a natural phase of childhood development.
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Ouroboros, emblematic serpent of ancient Egypt and Greece represented with its tail in its mouth, continually devouring itself and being reborn from itself. A gnostic

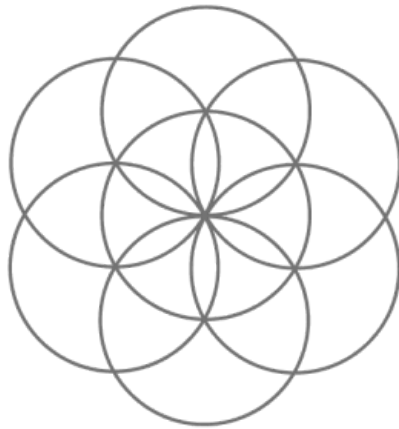


and alchemical symbol, Ouroboros expresses the unity of all things, material and spiritual, which never disappear but perpetually change form in an eternal cycle of destruction and re-creation. form in an eternal cycle of destruction and re-creation.

The Seed of Life is a contemporary name for an ancient geometric figure. It consists of seven overlapping circles with the same diameter. Six of them are regularly spaced within the seventh, producing a rosette with eighteen lens shaped petals: six smaller ones inside and twelve larger ones outside.

The Seed of Life is a universal symbol of creation. The name of this pattern instantly offers insight into its deeper meaning and purpose. Found at the heart of an ancient symbol called the Flower of Life, there is an entire cosmology of consciousness encoded into this singular geometric seed.

The basis of the Seed of Life is the circle, and in sacred geometry circles represent cycles, as well as encompassing things. In this case, the seven circles are often compared to the seven days of creation, with the different circles being ascribed to different points in the universe's making. The overlapping of the circles shows that these events did not happen independently of each other, either, but that each is intimately connected to the next, building atop what came before it.



The Uncarved Block (Pu):

The Chinese word "Pu" is often translated as "the uncarved block," and refers to a state of pure potential which is the primordial condition of the mind before the arising of experience. The Taoist concept of Pu points to perception without prejudice, i.e. beyond dualistic distinctions such as right/wrong, good/bad, black/white, beautiful/ugly. It is a state of mental unity which places the Taoist practitioner into alignment with the Tao.

樸

Mu: In Zen Buddhism, mu (無) is a key term that means "nothingness" or "no". It's an alternative to dichotomies like yes/no or positive/negative, and can also mean pure awareness before experience or knowledge.

無

Atman means soul derived from consciousness.

Jivatman is the psychic consciousness of the whole that generates the consciousness of the intrinsic with the trading force of the extrinsic.

Bahyaatman is the para-psychic consciousness of the extrinsic that perishes when one becomes conscious of the intrinsic.

Antaratman is the infinite consciousness of the wholesome that divides into the intrinsic which remains constant over time and the extrinsic that varies with time as one reproduces the intrinsic in the diverse forms of the extrinsic. Thus, infinite phenomena are formed with a finite

noumena.

Paramatman is the absolute consciousness of the whole that multiplies the proportionate effects of the intrinsic into the diverse forms of the extrinsic.

The intrinsic becomes zero after proportioning its effects into the diverse forms that constitute the extrinsic, thereby making extrinsic whole like it and empowering the extrinsic to reproduce its diverse forms by behaving like the intrinsic.

Adhyatman is the primordial consciousness of the entity who has become reproductive like the whole seeking to be wholesome within the whole, without knowing its potential to be the whole after it stops reproducing and begins becoming conscious of its reality as the goalkeeper who is enjoying the goal of making himself real for the universe he is conceiving through the reproduction of his essence as a whole into the sum of its parts, each with a potential like him.

Purusha: In Samkhya, the oldest school of Hinduism, Purusha is the witness-consciousness that is Atman. It is described as absolute, independent, free, imperceptible, and unknowable through other agencies. In the Atma Upanishad, Rishi Angiras describes Purusha as the dweller in the body, which is three-fold: Bahyatman (Outer-Atman), Antaratman (Inner-Atman), and Paramatman.

Prakriti (Sanskrit: प्रकृति) is an early Indic concept meaning "making or placing before or at first, the original or natural form or condition of anything, original or primary substance" Q: What is the difference between Purusha and Prakriti?

Purusha is sentient but inactive, while Prakriti is non-sentient but active. Purusha is the alert, conscious mind, but is Akarta (does not do anything). Prakriti, on the

other hand is the Karta (the doer), but at the same time, does not work at the level of consciousness.

Onomatopoeic Echolalia

In my mind recently I am playing with the words onomatopoeia and ecolalia. I am creating poetic harmonies between the phrases "onomatopoetic echolalia" and "echolaliac onomatopoeia". A yoga aphorism says "body is the bow, asanas are the arrows, Atman is the target." I am using these words, which "play nicely together" in the space between nonsense and profundity, in a similar way, like a mantra a song or a spell. "Words are the bow. Syntax is the arrow. Meaning is the target." Is the universal and eternal OM, the Mantra of the Universe, a kind of Sacred Onomatopoeia, a case of transcendental Echolalia?

Saut-e-Sarmad: The Inner Sound

The Sufi concepts of *Samā* and *Saut-i Sarmad* offer profound insights into the spiritual power of sound and vibration, which resonate deeply with the themes of *onomatopoeia*, *echolalia*, and the sacred OM you are exploring. These Sufi ideas, along with the practice of *nada yoga* from the Indian spiritual tradition, converge in their recognition of sound as a bridge between the material and spiritual realms, making them highly relevant to this discourse.

Samā and *Saut-i Sarmad* in Sufism:

- **Samā:** In Sufi tradition, *Samā* refers to the practice of listening to music, poetry, or recitation as a means of achieving a state of divine ecstasy and union with the divine. For the Sufi, music and sound are not just forms of art but are channels that allow the soul to transcend the material world and experience the infinite. Through rhythmic recitation or music, the heart begins to "hear" the deeper layers of reality. This resonates with the idea of *onomatopoeia* and *echolalia* in that sound mirrors the deeper currents of existence. Just as *onomatopoeia* is the sound of reality being "mimicked" by language, *Samā* allows the soul to perceive and echo the divine symphony that underlies all of creation.
- **Saut-i Sarmad:** Translated as "The Eternal Sound," *Saut-i Sarmad* is the mystical sound heard by saints and prophets in Sufi mysticism, which is

often described as a subtle, inner vibration or hum that represents the sound of the universe itself—the primordial sound, much like OM in the Vedic tradition. *Saut-i Sarmad* is considered the sound that transcends physical creation, the divine echo that resonates in all things. This concept is strikingly parallel to the idea of OM as a transcendental *onomatopoeia*, the cosmic vibration that mimics the universe's origin and continuously reverberates throughout existence. It also aligns with *echolalia* in a spiritual sense: it is as though the mystic's

inner consciousness is echoing the eternal vibration of the cosmos, an eternal mirroring of the divine sound.

Nada Yoga in Indian Tradition:

- **Nada Yoga:** *Nada yoga* is the yogic practice of focusing on sound vibrations to achieve spiritual enlightenment. It teaches that the universe itself is composed of vibrations, and by tuning into these vibrations—both external (physical sounds) and internal (subtle sounds)—one can transcend the mind and reach a state of union with the divine. The highest form of sound in *nada yoga* is called *anahata nada* (the unstruck sound), which parallels both *Saut-i Sarmad* and OM. *Nada yoga* practitioners listen to internal sounds, much like the Sufi listens for *Saut-i Sarmad*, to enter into deeper states of consciousness.

In *nada yoga*, the concept of sound as vibration links directly to your exploration of *onomatopoeia* and *echolalia*. Just as OM reflects the universe's vibration through sound, *nada yoga* focuses on tuning oneself into this sacred, primordial vibration. The idea that sound both emerges from the universe and echoes back to it (*echolalia*) is foundational to both *nada yoga* and Sufi mysticism. Both traditions understand that through listening to or chanting sacred sounds, practitioners can align with the vibrational reality of existence and experience unity with the divine.

The physicist Niels Bohr famously said "The opposite of a fact is falsehood, but the opposite of one profound truth may very well be another profound truth." The writer Robert Anton Wilson wrote "Belief is the death of intelligence. As soon as one believes a doctrine of any sort, or assumes certitude, one stops thinking

about that aspect of existence." "The map is not the territory" is a phrase coined by the Polish-American philosopher and engineer Alfred Korzybski. He used it to convey the fact that people often confuse models of reality with reality itself. Korzybski also said "Models do not replace skill or knowledge, they augment and inform it. Knowing their limitations is essential" Korzybski's insight has also been reframed as "the menu is not the meal." It has been noted by some readers of Korzybski that "The map is not the territory metaphorically illustrates the differences between belief and reality... Our perception of the world is being generated by our brain and can be considered as a 'map' of reality written in neural patterns. Reality exists outside our mind but we can construct models of this 'territory' based on what we glimpse through our senses." Two more Korzybski quotes are "When map and terrain differ, follow the terrain." and " An ideal map would contain the map of the map, the map of the map of the map, etc., endlessly...We may call this characteristic self-reflexiveness." Thinking in a similar vein, George Box wrote "All models are wrong but some are useful." Others have noted that even a correct map will mislead if misapplied, as when trying to use a geological map to find a street address or a road atlas to find oil.

Echo

Echo, in Greek mythology, a mountain nymph, or oread. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book III, relates that Echo offended the goddess Hera by keeping her in conversation, thus preventing her from spying on one of Zeus' amours. To punish Echo, Hera deprived her of speech, except for the ability to repeat the last words of another. Echo's hopeless love for Narcissus, who fell in love with his own image, made her fade away until all that was left of her was her voice.

According to the Greek writer Longus, Echo rejected the advances of the god Pan; he thereupon drove the shepherds mad, and they tore her to pieces. Gaea (Earth) buried her limbs but allowed her to retain the power of song.

PROMETHEUS

Greek Name

Προμηθευς

Transliteration

Promêtheus

Latin Spelling

Prometheus

Translation

Forethought (*pro-*, *mêtis*)

Prometheus bound, Laconian black-figure amphoriskos C6th B.C., [Vatican City Museums](#)

PROMETHEUS was the Titan god of forethought and crafty counsel who was given the task of moulding mankind out of clay. His attempts to better the lives of his creation brought him into conflict with [Zeus](#). Firstly he tricked the gods out of the best portion of the sacrificial feast, acquiring the meat for the feasting of man. Then, when Zeus withheld fire, he stole it from heaven and delivered it to mortal kind hidden inside a fennel-stalk. As punishment for these rebellious acts, Zeus ordered the creation of [Pandora](#) (the first woman) as a means to deliver misfortune into the house of man, or as a way to cheat mankind of the company of the good spirits. Prometheus meanwhile, was arrested and bound to a stake on Mount Kaukasos (Caucasus) where an [eagle](#) was set to feed upon his ever-regenerating liver (or, some say, heart). Generations later the great hero Herakles (Heracles) came along and released the old Titan from his torture. Prometheus was loosely identified in cult and myth with the fire-god [Hephaistos](#) (Hephaestus) and the giant [Tityos](#) (Tityus).

Mnemosyne and Lethe

Mnemosyne: Goddess of Memory

In Greek mythology and ancient Greek religion, **Mnemosyne** (/nɪˈmɒzɪniː, nɪˈmɒsɪniː/; Ancient Greek: Μνημοσύνη, pronounced [mnɛːmosýːnɛː]) is the goddess of memory and the mother of the nine Muses by her nephew Zeus. In the Greek tradition, Mnemosyne is one of the Titans, the twelve divine children of the earth-goddess Gaia and the sky-god Uranus. The term Mnemosyne is derived from the same source as the word mnemonic, that being the Greek word *mnēmē*, which means "remembrance, memory".

A Titaness, Mnemosyne is the daughter of Uranus and Gaia. Mnemosyne became the mother of the nine Muses, fathered by her nephew, Zeus:

Calliope (epic poetry)
Clio (history)
Euterpe (music and lyric poetry)
Erato (love poetry)
Melpomene (tragedy)
Polyhymnia (hymns)
Terpsichore (dance)
Thalia (comedy)
Urania (astronomy)

Hyginus in his *Fabulae* gives Mnemosyne a different parentage, where she was the daughter of Zeus and Clymene.

Lethe: Spirit of Forgetfulness

In Greek mythology, **Lethe** (/ˈliːθiː/; Ancient Greek: Λήθη Lēthē; Ancient Greek: [lɛːtʰɛː], Modern Greek: [ˈliθi]) was one of the rivers of the underworld of Hades. Also known as the Amelēs potamos (river of unmindfulness), the Lethe flowed around the cave of Hypnos and through the Underworld where all those who drank from it experienced complete forgetfulness. The river was often associated with **Lethe**, the personification of forgetfulness and oblivion, who was the daughter of Eris (Chaos).

In Classical Greek, the word lethe (λήθη) literally means "forgetting", "forgetfulness".

Lethe's River and Mnemosyne's Pool

Mnemosyne also presided over a pool in Hades. An early mention of the pool of Mnemosyne can be found in the Paella Gold Tablet, an Orphic inscription from between 300-200 BC:

*You will find in the halls of Hades a spring on the left,
and standing by it, a glowing white cypress tree;
Do not approach this spring at all.
You will find another, from the lake of Memory
refreshing water flowing forth. But guardians are nearby.
Say: "I am the child of Earth and starry Heaven;
But my race is heavenly; and this you know yourselves.
I am parched with thirst and I perish; but give me quickly
refreshing water flowing forth from the lake of Memory."
And then they will give you to drink from the divine spring,*

*And then you will celebrate? [rites? with the other] heroes.
This [is the ? ... of Memory, when you are about] to die ..*

Eris, Goddess of Chaos

Principles of Discord

In Greco-Roman mythology Eris (Ancient Greek: Ἔρις, romanized: Eris, lit. 'Strife') is the personification of Chaos. She was called the daughter of Nyx (Night) by Hesiod, but she was sister and companion of Ares (the Roman Mars) in Homer's version. Eris is best known for her part in starting the Trojan War. When she alone of the gods was not invited to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, she threw among the guests a golden apple inscribed "For the most beautiful." Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite each claimed it, demanding that Zeus decide which of them was most beautiful. Zeus, foreseeing the wrath of whichever goddesses he did not choose, assigned the decision to Paris, then a shepherd on Mount Ida. Each of the three goddesses then responded by offering Paris a bribe. Hera offered to make Paris the most powerful ruler in the world. Athena offered to make Paris the wisest man in the world. Aphrodite, of course, offered Paris the most beautiful woman in the world. As it happened, the most beautiful woman in the world at that time was Helen, who was already married to Menelaus, the King of Sparta. Paris, of course, awarded the apple to Aphrodite, who then helped him win Helen, inciting the Trojan War between Sparta and Troy. In the war, Hera and Athena remained implacable enemies of Troy and of Paris and Helen.

I TELL YOU : ONE MUST
STILL HAVE CHAOS IN ONE
TO GIVE BIRTH TO A
DANCING STAR ! -Nietzsche



Creative Chaos and Destructive Order

The Principia Discordia is the first published Discordian religious text. It was written by Greg Hill (Malaclypse the Younger) with Kerry Wendell Thornley (Lord Omar Khayyam Ravenhurst) and others. The first edition was printed using Jim Garrison's Xerox printer in 1963. The second edition was published under the title *Principia Discordia or How The West Was Lost* in a limited edition of five copies in 1965. The phrase *Principia Discordia*, reminiscent of Isaac Newton's 1687 *Principia Mathematica*, is presumably intended to mean *Discordant Principles*, or *Principles of Discordance*.

The *Principia* describes the Discordian Society and its Goddess Eris, as well as the basics of the POEE denomination of Discordianism. It features typewritten and handwritten text intermixed with clip art, stamps, and seals appropriated from other sources.[4] It is quoted extensively in and forms the basis for several themes within the satirical 1975 science fiction book *The Illuminatus! Trilogy* by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson.

Notable symbols in the book include the Apple of Discord, the pentagon, and the "Sacred Chao", which resembles the Taijitu of Taoism, but the two principles depicted are "Hodge" and "Podge" rather than yin and yang, and they are represented by the apple and the pentagon, and not by dots. Saints identified include Emperor Norton, Yossarian, Don Quixote, and Bokonon. The *Principia* also introduces the mysterious word "fnord", later popularized in *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*; the trilogy itself is mentioned in the afterword to the Loompanics edition, and in the various introductions to the fifth editions.

The Principia Discordia includes the following text:

CONVENTIONAL CHAOS

GREYFACE

In the year 1166 B.C., a malcontented hunchbrain by the name of Greyface, got it into his head that the universe was as humorless as he, and he began to teach that play was sinful because it contradicted the ways of Serious Order. "Look at all the order around you," he said. And from that, he deluded honest men to believe that reality was a straightjacket affair and not the happy romance as men had known it.

It is not presently understood why men were so gullible at that particular time, for absolutely no one thought to observe all the disorder around them and conclude just the opposite. But anyway, Greyface and his followers took the game of playing at life more seriously than they took life itself and were known even to destroy other living beings whose ways of life differed from their own.

The unfortunate result of this is that mankind has since been suffering from a psychological and spiritual imbalance. Imbalance causes frustration, and frustration causes fear. And fear makes for a bad trip. Man has been on a bad trip for a long time now.

It is called **THE CURSE OF GREYFACE**.

Bullshit makes
the flowers grow
& that's beautiful.

Circle Time and Square Time

Though they may have different names, all Earth-based religions and all Shamanic cultures are aware of the existence of two different kinds of time:

Square Time

Also known as "clock time", Square Time is linear, incremental, unidirectional and limited. Square Time is the only kind of time formally acknowledged in the dominant Capitalist paradigm.

Circle Time

In contrast, Circle Time (also known as "the Eternal Now") is non-linear, infinite, omnidirectional and omnipresent. Circle Time is also without limit, meaning it you can never run out of Circle Time. The creation and invocation of Sacred Spaces inevitably involves removing those spaces from Square Time and situating them in Circle Time.

A similar taxonomy of Space is also possible:

Linear Space

This is the three dimensional space of Cartesian Geometry and the four dimensional space of Relativity. Linear Space can be subdivided all the way down to the Plank Interval, but no farther. In Linear Space "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Holographic Space (or Round Space, Fractal Space, Spiral Space)

In contrast, Holographic Space exists everywhere as the Center of the Universe, extends in infinite dimensions, is infinitely divisible yet always whole and is only one step away from everywhere. In Holographic Space, all spaces are directly connected and every place contains the knowledge of all places. Sacred Places and Sacred Pathways, when entered or followed with the correct attitude, inevitably lead to and are situated in the Universal Center, which is Holographic Space.

Liminal States: Life and Death, Incarnation and Immortality

Life and Death

The Ancient Greek poetess Sappho wrote this poem:

Although they are
only breath, words
which I command
are immortal.

Lao Tsu wrote:

To die, but not to perish, is to be eternally present.

In an Epistle of the New Testament, Saint John writes:

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death."

Swami Vivekananda wrote:

This is the secret of spiritual life: to think that I am the Atman and not the body, and that the whole of this universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil, is but as a series of paintings...scenes on a canvas...of which I am the witness.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan wrote:

The word Atman (Soul) means the "breath of life". Atman is the principle of man's life, the Soul that pervades his being, his breath, his intellect and transcends them. Atman is what remains when everything that is not the self is eliminated. It is the unborn and immortal element in man, which is not to be confused with body, mind or intellect.

William James wrote:

Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.

In Ecclesiastes 9, Solomon writes:

1 For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.

2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.

9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

13 This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:

14 There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

17 The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Incarnation and Immortality

- Christians believe in immortality of the individual self (personality).
 - Hindus believe the Self is immortal, but also believe it is distinct from the ever born and every dying self (Prakiti).
 - Lao Tsu wrote in the Tao te Ching that "the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao" and "Those who know do not speak. Those who speak do not know." Following in Lao Tsu's footsteps, Chuang Tsu wrote: Tao is hidden by partial understanding. The meaning of words is hidden by flowery rhetoric. This is what causes the dissension between the Confucians and the Mohists. What one says is wrong, the other says is right; and what one says is right, the other says is wrong. If the one is right while the other is wrong, and the other is right while the one is wrong, then the best thing to do is to look beyond right and wrong."
 - The novelist Ursula LeGuin wrote: "He began to see the truth, that Ged had neither lost nor won but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, and whose life therefore is lived for life's sake and never in the service of ruin, or pain, or hatred, or the dark. In the Creation of Ea, which is the oldest song, it is said, 'Only in silence the word, only in dark the light, only in dying life: bright the hawk's flight on the empty sky.'"
 - In the Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest surviving written narratives, Gilgamesh is advised by the wise woman Siduri that "The life that you seek you never will find: when the gods created mankind, death they dispensed to mankind, life they kept for themselves." Is there a way to reconcile, synthesize and discuss these divergent views of death and the afterlife? Can you describe an overarching narrative thread and philosophical stance that harmonize these seemingly discordant voices into a truly universal Song of the Self? Is there a point to all these meditations on life, death and immortality or, as Lao Tsu and Chuang Tsu suggest, is attempting to understand the eternal and infinite with words that change their meaning and points of view that also shift constantly an exercise in futility. Ursula Le Guin also wrote "To Hear, One Must Be Silent.:" Perhaps it is better not to question or to speak and to, instead, simply rest in the Silence.
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Melody, Rhythm and Song

Here is a diverse collection of quotes, poems and song lyrics that each, in some way, have inspired, comforted, informed or enlightened me at key moments in my life

Aleister Crowley wrote:

“Only those are truly happy who have desired the unattainable.”

In the Purgatorio Dante wrote these lines about the imagination:

O Imagination, you who steal men so
From outer things that they would miss the sound
Should in their ears a thousand trumpets blow,
What moves you then, when all the senses drown?
A light moves you, that finds its form in heaven,
By itself, or by the will that guides it down.

Visions of a Better World

by Matthew Anish

In fantastic literature
one can see
intimations of a better world
Does it not seem to you
that it is good to leave this sordid reality
and fly to imaginary lands?
I don't care what people think about that
I find it good to revel in the mysterious and the unknown
A volume of fantastic verse
can allow one to take flight
like a high - flying bird
flying over terrain
which he can cover
swiftly
and have a good time doing so

This is the text of Martin Luther King's famous "I have a Dream" speech:

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

Songs by Nakho and Medicine for the People

Manifesto

[Verse 1]

Well this is real talk, this is non-stop
It is looped now tongue and mind
Played off the sidewalk, straight to your boombox
How it travels from ear to memory
Well this is medicine, there's a message within
And each will find it in their own time

[Verse 2]

Well this is music, this is how I use it
It makes you move and move the movement
This is how I focus, knowing it's not hopeless
But it sure starts with me and ends on a whole note
Musical medicine, this is my healing
For past and present future things to come

[Verse 3]

I see people stressin' over space and possessions
Out of fear and a need for visual aids of our abundance
Give me examples or something tangible
Something I can get my hands on and find real meaning
Where is the medicine, well I've been searching
And I suppose each will find their own kind

[Verse 4]

Well everything's at stake, it makes it hard to concentrate
And there are men who see a war and see a paycheck
Such different programming, to live so fearfully
Terror this and terror that, terrible reality
There is no medicine on the television
So turn it off and turn yourself around

Budding Trees

Four, actually. Okay
Ok, so I kind of want to tell the story of this song
It started off as a dream, or a document in the woods
In the moon of the budding trees
I was gifted new eyes to see
All of the shifting shape and ways you can be
Wake the dreams into realities
Wake the dreams into realities
Sunset diamonds trickle down our cheeks
The language of no words is how we speak
Pacha Mama spinning firelight
And a Little Bear singing by the fireside
Out of this city with the wind on our neck
That's us whistling upon your neck
Moonlit diamonds sparkle into my mouth
Feels like hunger and it tastes like salt
Feels like hunger and it tastes like salt

So, tap me out and tap me into you
Heal my brain and my body too
Balance my chemistry hydrate these cells
Cuz the body talks and the meditation helps
The body talks and meditation helps
The body talks and meditation helps
A little bit of cinnamon pours as we snoot
All up on my shit in the morning commute.
Coastal quiver on a quest through the dunes
Sandy toes and bottomless curves of the moon
Heavy lifting for Pele's children
Hand of the goddess soaking cliffs keep building
Plate is full but appetite has dwindled
I feel a little sick so I keep the fire kindled
You the pillar steadfast light of bravery
And I the dimly burning candle still shaking
Riddled fear quiver my bones so easy!
Well, you're the guru now so visualize healing
Yeah, you're the guru now so visualize leaving.
Let her go for she can no longer feed you
And many children need that mana creature
Just barely missed you I was finally ready!
But you are a long gone too much heavy history
Yeah you are a long gone too much heavy history
Let go of blame that shit will never serve me!
Bless other men investigate your mystery
So, tap me out and tap me into you
Heal my brain and my body too
Balance my chemistry hydrate these cells
Cuz the body talks and the meditation helps
The body talks and meditation helps
The body talks and meditation helps
A little spider weaves a wispy web
And stumbling through the woods it catches to my head
She crawls behind my ear and whispers secrets
Dragonfly wiz by and sings now teach it
Yeah, dragonfly wiz by and sings now teach it
Form on the trail I watch you head up mauka
I turn makai and whisper, "thank you sister"
Edge of the west where water touches land
You are the east with folded maps in hand
Time to increase my frequency!
Hands of light and bodies talking

Gimme some of that wild fox medicine!
But, keep me here in this wild present tense
Fully supported on new lovers chest
Dawning adventures sparkle get some rest!
Dawning adventures sparkle get some rest!
So, tap me out and tap me into you
Heal my brain and my body too
Balance my chemistry hydrate these cells
'Cause the body talks and the meditation helps
The body talks and meditation helps
And then I made this song about it
So it was like it went from dream world
To drawing, to writing, to life
To music, dada dada

Plum Village Songs

Breathing In, Breathing Out

Breathing in, breathing out;
breathing in, breathing out;
I am blooming as a flower;
I am fresh as the dew.
I am solid as a mountain,
I am firm as the earth;
I am free.

Breathing in, breathing out;
breathing in, breathing out;
I am water, reflecting
what is real, what is true.
And I feel there is space
deep inside of me;
I am free, I am free, I am free.

Happiness is Here and Now

Happiness is here and now,
I have dropped my worries.
Nowhere to go, nothing to do,
no longer in a hurry.

Happiness is here and now,

I have dropped my worries.
Somewhere to go,
something to do,
but I don't need to hurry.

In Gratitude

In gratitude you have watered
seeds of love in me in gratitude.
In gratitude I will water seeds of
love in someone too.
I know you're there for me, and I
am so happy.

In gratitude you have watered
seeds of love in me in gratitude,
In gratitude I will water seeds of
love in someone too.
And when you suffer some, just
call and I will come.

The Nature Song

I am a cloud, I am the blue sky.
I am a bird, spreading out its
swings.
I am a flower, I am the sunshine.
I am the earth, receiving a seed.
And I am free,
when my heart is open.
Yes I am free,
when my mind is clear.
Oh dear brothers, Oh dear sisters,
Let's walk together mindfully /
joyfully.

Come and Sit

Come and sit by my side if you're
lonely
Close your eyes drink some tea
together
Breathing in, breathing out, smile
and calm
You will feel that the life is so true

Come and sit by my side when
you're tired
Close your eyes, put your hands
on your heart
Breathing in, breathing out, smile
and calm
You will feel that the life is so true

Come and sit by my side if you cry
Close your eyes, put your hands
on the earth
Breathing in, breathing out, smile
and calm
You will feel that the life is happy

The Leaves of One Tree

We are the leaves of one tree (x2)
The time has come for all to live
as one.
We are the leaves of one tree.

We are the waves of one sea. (x2)
The time has come for all to live
as one.
We are the waves of one sea.

We are the stars of one sky. (x2)
The time has come for all to live
as one.
We are the stars of one sky.

We are the leaves of one tree;
We are the waves of one sea;
We are the stars of one sky.

Happiness is Here and Now

Happiness is here and now,
I have dropped my worries.

Nowhere to go, nothing to do,
no longer in a hurry.

Mindfulness is here and now,
I can pay attention
To what is going on inside
And transform my afflictions

Concentration on my breathe
I can calm my body
Just breathing in, Just breathing
out
Free from all distractions

Looking deep into life
I can touch compassions
Nothing is born,
And nothing dies
There is only manifestation

Happiness is here and now,
I have dropped my worries.
Somewhere to go,
something to do,
but I don't need to hurry.

Old Favorites

A Shropshire Lad, XL

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

A. E. Housman (1859 – 1936)

The Brain—is wider than the Sky—

And nymphs and satyrs for thy guards,
On a milk-white ass, come over the sea
To me, to me!
Come with Apollo in bridal dress
(Shepherdess and pythoness)
Come with Artemis, silken shod,
And wash thy white thigh, beautiful god,
In the moon of the woods, on the marble mount,
The dimpled dawn of the amber fount!
Dip the purple of passionate prayer
In the crimson shrine, the scarlet snare,
The soul that startles in eyes of blue
To watch thy wantonness weeping through
The tangled grove, the gnarled bole
Of the living tree that is spirit and soul
And body and brain — come over the sea,
(Io Pan! Io Pan!)
Devil or god, to me, to me,
My man! my man!
Come with trumpets sounding shrill
Over the hill!
Come with drums low muttering
From the spring!
Come with flute and come with pipe!
Am I not ripe?
I, who wait and writhe and wrestle
With air that hath no boughs to nestle
My body, weary of empty clasp,
Strong as a lion and sharp as an asp —
Come, O come!
I am numb
With the lonely lust of devildom.
Thrust the sword through the galling fetter,
All-devourer, all-begetter;
Give me the sign of the Open Eye,
And the token erect of thorny thigh,
And the word of madness and mystery,
O Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan Pan! Pan,
I am a man:
Do as thou wilt, as a great god can,
O Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! I am awake

In the grip of the snake.
The eagle slashes with beak and claw;
The gods withdraw:
The great beasts come. Io Pan! I am borne
To death on the horn
Of the Unicorn.
I am Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan!
I am thy mate, I am thy man,
Goat of thy flock, I am gold, I am god,
Flesh to thy bone, flower to thy rod.
With hoofs of steel I race on the rocks
Through solstice stubborn to equinox.
And I rave; and I rape and I rip and I rend
Everlasting, world without end,
Mannikin, maiden, Maenad, man,
In the might of Pan.
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan! Io Pan!

by **Aleister Crowley** (1895 - 1947)

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

by **Robert Frost (1874 – 1963)**

I Sing the Body Electric

1

I sing the body electric,
The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them,
They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them,
And discorrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of the soul.

Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own bodies conceal themselves?
And if those who defile the living are as bad as they who defile the dead?
And if the body does not do fully as much as the soul?
And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?

2

The love of the body of man or woman balks account, the body itself balks account,
That of the male is perfect, and that of the female is perfect.

The expression of the face balks account,
But the expression of a well-made man appears not only in his face,
It is in his limbs and joints also, it is curiously in the joints of his hips and wrists,
It is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his waist and knees, dress does not hide him,
The strong sweet quality he has strikes through the cotton and broadcloth,
To see him pass conveys as much as the best poem, perhaps more,
You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck and shoulder-side.

The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and heads of women, the folds of their dress, their style as
we pass in the street, the contour of their shape downwards,
The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he swims through the transparent green-shine, or lies
with his face up and rolls silently to and fro in the heave of the water,
The bending forward and backward of rowers in row-boats, the horseman in his saddle,
Girls, mothers, house-keepers, in all their performances,
The group of laborers seated at noon-time with their open dinner-kettles, and their wives waiting,
The female soothing a child, the farmer's daughter in the garden or cow-yard,
The young fellow hoeing corn, the sleigh-driver driving his six horses through the crowd,
The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite grown, lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on the
vacant lot at sun-down after work,
The coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love and resistance,
The upper-hold and under-hold, the hair rumped over and blinding the eyes;

The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play of masculine muscle through clean-setting trowsers and waist-straps,
The slow return from the fire, the pause when the bell strikes suddenly again, and the listening on the alert,
The natural, perfect, varied attitudes, the bent head, the curv'd neck and the counting;
Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's breast with the little child,
Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, count.

3

I knew a man, a common farmer, the father of five sons,
And in them the fathers of sons, and in them the fathers of sons.

This man was of wonderful vigor, calmness, beauty of person,
The shape of his head, the pale yellow and white of his hair and beard, the immeasurable meaning of his black eyes, the richness and breadth of his manners,
These I used to go and visit him to see, he was wise also,
He was six feet tall, he was over eighty years old, his sons were massive, clean, bearded, tan-faced, handsome,
They and his daughters loved him, all who saw him loved him,
They did not love him by allowance, they loved him with personal love,
He drank water only, the blood show'd like scarlet through the clear-brown skin of his face,
He was a frequent gunner and fisher, he sail'd his boat himself, he had a fine one presented to him by a ship-joiner, he had fowling-pieces presented to him by men that loved him,
When he went with his five sons and many grand-sons to hunt or fish, you would pick him out as the most beautiful and vigorous of the gang,
You would wish long and long to be with him, you would wish to sit by him in the boat that you and he might touch each other.

4

I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough,
To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough,
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing, laughing flesh is enough,
To pass among them or touch any one, or rest my arm ever so lightly round his or her neck for a moment, what is this then?
I do not ask any more delight, I swim in it as in a sea.

There is something in staying close to men and women and looking on them, and in the contact and odor of them, that pleases the soul well,
All things please the soul, but these please the soul well.

5

This is the female form,
A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot,
It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction,

I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a helpless vapor, all falls aside but myself and it,
Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth, and what was expected of heaven or fear'd of hell,
are now consumed,
Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it, the response likewise ungovernable,
Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands all diffused, mine too diffused,
Ebb stung by the flow and flow stung by the ebb, love-flesh swelling and deliciously aching,
Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quivering jelly of love, white-blow and delirious juice,
Bridegroom night of love working surely and softly into the prostrate dawn,
Undulating into the willing and yielding day,
Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flesh'd day.

This the nucleus—after the child is born of woman, man is born of woman,
This the bath of birth, this the merge of small and large, and the outlet again.

Be not ashamed women, your privilege encloses the rest, and is the exit of the rest,
You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul.

The female contains all qualities and tempers them,
She is in her place and moves with perfect balance,
She is all things duly veil'd, she is both passive and active,
She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons as well as daughters.

As I see my soul reflected in Nature,
As I see through a mist, One with inexpressible completeness, sanity, beauty,
See the bent head and arms folded over the breast, the Female I see.

6

The male is not less the soul nor more, he too is in his place,
He too is all qualities, he is action and power,
The flush of the known universe is in him,
Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance become him well,
The wildest largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sorrow that is utmost become him well, pride is for him,
The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent to the soul,
Knowledge becomes him, he likes it always, he brings every thing to the test of himself,
Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail he strikes soundings at last only here,
(Where else does he strike soundings except here?)

The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred,
No matter who it is, it is sacred—is it the meanest one in the laborers' gang?
Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants just landed on the wharf?
Each belongs here or anywhere just as much as the well-off, just as much as you,
Each has his or her place in the procession.

(All is a procession,
The universe is a procession with measured and perfect motion.)

Do you know so much yourself that you call the meanest ignorant?
Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and he or she has no right to a sight?
Do you think matter has cohered together from its diffuse float, and the soil is on the surface, and water runs and vegetation sprouts,
For you only, and not for him and her?

7

A man's body at auction,
(For before the war I often go to the slave-mart and watch the sale,)
I help the auctioneer, the sloven does not half know his business.

Gentlemen look on this wonder,
Whatever the bids of the bidders they cannot be high enough for it,
For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years without one animal or plant,
For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd.

In this head the all-baffling brain,
In it and below it the makings of heroes.

Examine these limbs, red, black, or white, they are cunning in tendon and nerve,
They shall be stript that you may see them.

Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition,
Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant backbone and neck, flesh not flabby, good-sized arms and legs,
And wonders within there yet.

Within there runs blood,
The same old blood! the same red-running blood!
There swells and jets a heart, there all passions, desires, reachings, aspirations,
(Do you think they are not there because they are not express'd in parlors and lecture-rooms?)

This is not only one man, this the father of those who shall be fathers in their turns,
In him the start of populous states and rich republics,
Of him countless immortal lives with countless embodiments and enjoyments.

How do you know who shall come from the offspring of his offspring through the centuries?
(Who might you find you have come from yourself, if you could trace back through the centuries?)

8

A woman's body at auction,

She too is not only herself, she is the teeming mother of mothers,
She is the bearer of them that shall grow and be mates to the mothers.

Have you ever loved the body of a woman?
Have you ever loved the body of a man?
Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all in all nations and times all over the earth?

If any thing is sacred the human body is sacred,
And the glory and sweet of a man is the token of manhood untainted,
And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred body, is more beautiful than the most beautiful face.

Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live body? or the fool that corrupted her own live body?
For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal themselves.

9

O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and women, nor the likes of the parts of you,
I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the likes of the soul, (and that they are the soul,)
I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my poems, and that they are my poems,
Man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's, mother's, father's, young man's, young woman's
poems,
Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears,
Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eyebrows, and the waking or sleeping of the lids,
Mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, roof of the mouth, jaws, and the jaw-hinges,
Nose, nostrils of the nose, and the partition,
Cheeks, temples, forehead, chin, throat, back of the neck, neck-slue,
Strong shoulders, manly beard, scapula, hind-shoulders, and the ample side-round of the chest,
Upper-arm, armpit, elbow-socket, lower-arm, arm-sinews, arm-bones,
Wrist and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb, forefinger, finger-joints, finger-nails,
Broad breast-front, curling hair of the breast, breast-bone, breast-side,
Ribs, belly, backbone, joints of the backbone,
Hips, hip-sockets, hip-strength, inward and outward round, man-balls, man-root,
Strong set of thighs, well carrying the trunk above,
Leg fibres, knee, knee-pan, upper-leg, under-leg,
Ankles, instep, foot-ball, toes, toe-joints, the heel;
All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings of my or your body or of any one's body, male or
female,
The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels sweet and clean,
The brain in its folds inside the skull-frame,
Sympathies, heart-valves, palate-valves, sexuality, maternity,
Womanhood, and all that is a woman, and the man that comes from woman,
The womb, the teats, nipples, breast-milk, tears, laughter, weeping, love-looks, love-perturbations and
risings,
The voice, articulation, language, whispering, shouting aloud,
Food, drink, pulse, digestion, sweat, sleep, walking, swimming,

Poise on the hips, leaping, reclining, embracing, arm-curving and tightening,
The continual changes of the flex of the mouth, and around the eyes,
The skin, the sunburnt shade, freckles, hair,
The curious sympathy one feels when feeling with the hand the naked meat of the body,
The circling rivers the breath, and breathing it in and out,
The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and thence downward toward the knees,
The thin red jellies within you or within me, the bones and the marrow in the bones,
The exquisite realization of health;
O I say these are not the parts and poems of the body only, but of the soul,
O I say now these are the soul!

by **Walt Whitman** (1819 - 1892)

Dreams

Despite the geologists' knowledge and craft,
mocking magnets, graphs, and maps—
in a split second the dream
piles before us mountains as stony
as real life.

And since mountains, then valleys, plains
with perfect infrastructures.
Without engineers, contractors, workers,
bulldozers, diggers, or supplies—
raging highways, instant bridges,
thickly populated pop-up cities.

Without directors, megaphones, and cameramen—
crowds knowing exactly when to frighten us
and when to vanish.

Without architects deft in their craft,
without carpenters, bricklayers, concrete pourers—
on the path a sudden house just like a toy,
and in it vast halls that echo with our steps
and walls constructed out of solid air.

Not just the scale, it's also the precision—
a specific watch, an entire fly,
on the table a cloth with cross-stitched flowers,
a bitten apple with teeth marks.

And we—unlike circus acrobats,
conjurers, wizards, and hypnotists—
can fly unfledged,
we light dark tunnels with our eyes,
we wax eloquent in unknown tongues,
talking not with just anyone, but with the dead.

And as a bonus, despite our own freedom,
the choices of our heart, our tastes,
we're swept away
by amorous yearnings for—
and the alarm clock rings.

So what can they tell us, the writers of dream books,
the scholars of oneiric signs and omens,
the doctors with couches for analyses—
if anything fits,
it's accidental,
and for one reason only,
that in our dreamings,
in their shadowings and gleamings,
in their multiplings, inconceivablings,
in their haphazardings and widscaatteringings
at times even a clear-cut meaning
may slip through.

By **Wisława Szymborska** (1923-2012)
Translated By **Clare Cavanagh**

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
 The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
 The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
 Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
 And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
 The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
 And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
 The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
 He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
 Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
 He chortled in his joy.

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
 Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
 And the mome raths outgrabe.

by **Lewis Carroll** (1832 - 1898)

Poems by **Rumi** (1207 - 1273)

Totally conscious, and apropos of nothing, you come to see me.
Is someone here? I ask.
The moon. The full moon is inside your house.
My friends and I go running out into the street.
I'm in here, comes a voice from the house, but we aren't listening.
We're looking up at the sky.
My pet nightingale sobs like a drunk in the garden.
Ringdoves scatter with small cries, Where, Where.
It's midnight. The whole neighborhood is up and out in the street
thinking, The cat-burglar has come back.
The actual thief is there too, saying out loud,
Yes, the cat-burglar is somewhere in this crowd.
No one pays attention.

Lo, I am with you always, means when you look for God,
God is in the look of your eyes,
in the thought of looking, nearer to you than your self,
or things that have happened to you.
There's no need to go outside.
Be melting snow.
Wash yourself of yourself.
A white flower grows in the quietness.
Let your tongue become that flower.

Last night my teacher taught me the lesson of Poverty:
Having nothing and wanting nothing.
I am a naked man standing inside a mine of rubies,
clothed in red silk.
I absorb the shining and now I see the ocean,
billions of simultaneous motions
moving in me.
A circle of lovely, quiet people
becomes the ring on my finger.
Then the wind and thunder of rain on the way.
I have such a teacher.

Do you know a word that doesn't refer to something?
Have you ever picked and held a rose from R,O,S,E?
You say the NAME. Now try to find the reality it names.
Look at the moon in the sky, not the one in the lake.
If you want to be free of your obsession with words
and beautiful lettering, make one stroke down.
There's no self, no characteristics,
but a bright center where you have the knowledge
the Prophets have, without books or interpreter.

We are the mirror as well as the face in it.
We are tasting the taste this minute
of eternity. We are pain
and what cures pain. We are
the sweet, cold water and the jar that pours.

When I am with you, we stay up all night
When you're not here, I can't go to sleep.
Praise God for these two insomnias!
And the difference between them.

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

We have this way of talking, and we have another.
Apart from what we wish and what we fear may happen,
we are alive with other life, as clear stones
take form in the mountain.

Inside the Great Mystery that is,
we don't really own anything.
What is this competition we feel then,
before we go, one at a time, through the same gate?

translated by **Coleman Barks**



More than 23 symbols, all of them discussed and explained in this book, are in this illustration from *Microcosmos Hypochondriacus*, a 17th-century alchemical text. Besides the familiar symbols, such as SUN, TRIANGLE, EAGLE, LION, DOVE and LAMB, the picture also contains the PEACOCK, PELICAN, FORGE, CADUCEUS, GOOSE, SHIP and many other symbolic allusions to the transformative steps and processes of alchemy.

Dada

Dada Excites Everything

1921

DADA EXCITES EVERYTHING

(The signatories of this manifesto live in France, America, Spain, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, etc., but have no nationality.)

DADA knows everything. DADA spits everything out.

BUT.....

HAS DADA EVER SPOKEN TO YOU:

about Italy
about accordions
about women's pants
about the fatherland
about sardines
about Fiume
about Art (you exaggerate my friend)
about gentleness
about D'Annunzio
what a horror
about heroism
about mustaches
about lewdness
about sleeping with Verlaine
about the ideal (it's nice)
about Massachusetts
about the past
about odors
about salads
about genius. about genius. about genius
about the eight-hour day
and about Parma violets

YES - NO

YES - NO

YES - NO

NEVER

NEVER

NEVER

DADA doesn't speak. DADA has no fixed idea. DADA doesn't catch flies.

**THE MINISTRY IS OVERTURNED. BY WHOM?
BY DADA**

The Futurist is dead. Of What? Of DADA

A young girl commits suicide. Because of What? DADA
The spirits are telephoned. Who invented it? DADA
Someone walks on your feet. It's DADA
If you have serious ideas about life,
If you make artistic discoveries
and if all of a sudden your head begins to crackle with
laughter,
if you find all your ideas useless and ridiculous, know that

YES - NO

IT IS DADA BEGINNING TO SPEAK TO YOU

cubism constructs a cathedral of *artistic* liver paste
 expressionism poisons *artistic* sardines
 simultaneism is still at its first *artistic* communion
 futurism wants to mount in an *artistic* lyricism-elevator
 unaniam embraces allism and fishes with an *artistic* line
 neo-classicism discovers the good deeds of *artistic* art
 paroxysm makes a trust of all *artistic* cheeses
 ultraism recommends the mixture of these seven *artistic* things
 creationism vorticism imagism also propose some *artistic* recipes

WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?
WHAT DOES DADA DO?

WHAT DOES DADA DO?

50 francs reward to the person who finds the best
 way to explain DADA to us

Dada passes everything through a new net.
 Dada is the bitterness which opens its laugh on all that which has been
made consecrated forgotten in our language in our brain in our habits.
 It says to you: There is Humanity and the lovely idiocies which have made
 it happy to this advanced age

DADA HAS ALWAYS EXISTED

THE HOLY VIRGIN WAS ALREADY A DADAIST

DADA IS NEVER RIGHT

Citizens, comrades, ladies, gentlemen
 Beware of forgeries!

Imitators of DADA want to present DADA in an *artistic* form which it has
 never had

CITIZENS,

You are presented today in a pornographic form, a vulgar and baroque spirit
 which is not the PURE IDIOCY claimed by DADA

BUT DOGMATISM AND PRETENTIOUS IMBECILITY

Paris January 12, 1921

E. Varèse, Tr. Tzara, Ph. Soupault,
 Soubeyran, J. Rigaut, G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, M. Ray, F. Picabia,
 B. Péret, C. Fansaers, R. Hülsenbeck, J. Evola, M. Ernst,
 P. Eluard, Suz. Duchamp, M. Duchamp, Crotti, G. Cantarelli, Marg.
 Buffet, Gab. Buffet, A. Breton, Baargeld. Arp., W. C. Arensberg,
 L. Aragon.

For all information
 write "AU SANS PAREIL"
 37, Avenue Kléber.
 Tel. PASSY 25-22

The Songlines and the Dreaming

Dreamtime

The Dreaming, also referred to as Dreamtime, is a term devised by early anthropologists to refer to a religio-cultural worldview attributed to Australian Aboriginal mythology. It was originally used by Francis Gillen, quickly adopted by his colleague Sir Baldwin Spencer and thereafter popularised by A. P. Elkin, who, however, later revised his views.

The Dreaming is used to represent Aboriginal concepts of "Everywhen", during which the land was inhabited by ancestral figures, often of heroic proportions or with supernatural abilities. These figures were often distinct from gods, as they did not control the material world and were not worshipped but only revered. The concept of the Dreamtime has subsequently become widely adopted beyond its original Australian context and is now part of global popular culture.

The term is based on a rendition of the Arandic word *alcheringa*, used by the Aranda (Arunta, Arrernte) people of Central Australia, although it has been argued that it is based on a misunderstanding or mistranslation. Some scholars suggest that the word's meaning is closer to "eternal, uncreated". Anthropologist William Stanner said that the concept was best understood by non-Aboriginal people as "a complex of meanings". *Jukurrpa* is a widespread term used by Warlpiri people and other peoples of the Western Desert cultural bloc.

By the 1990s, Dreaming had acquired its own currency in popular culture, based on idealized or fictionalized conceptions of Australian mythology.[citation needed] Since the 1970s, Dreaming has also returned from academic usage via popular culture and tourism and is now ubiquitous in the English vocabulary of Aboriginal Australians in a kind of "self-fulfilling academic prophecy".

Songlines

A songline, also called dreaming track, is one of the paths across the land (or sometimes the sky) within the animist belief systems of the Aboriginal cultures of Australia. They mark the route followed by localised "creator-beings" in the Dreaming. These routes serve as crucial connections between individuals and their ancestral lands, carrying intricate geographical, mythological, and cultural information.

At its core, a songline functions as both a navigational aid and a repository of cultural knowledge. Embedded within traditional song cycles, dance rituals, stories, and artistic expressions, these pathways enable individuals to traverse vast distances while reciting the songs that describe landmarks, water sources, and natural features. Notably, the melodic contours and rhythmic nuances of the songs transcend linguistic barriers, facilitating cross-cultural understanding as different language groups interact and share the essence of these ancient narratives.

A unique facet of songlines lies in their role as cultural passports, denoting respect and recognition for specific regions and their inhabitants when the songs are sung in the appropriate languages. This intricate network of songlines interconnects neighbouring groups, fostering social interactions based on shared beliefs and obligations. The perpetuation of songlines through generations sustains a spiritual connection to the land, underscoring the concept of "connection to country," wherein the intricate relationship between individuals and their ancestral lands forms a cornerstone of Aboriginal identity and cultural preservation.

Roads of the Earth and Roads of the Spirit

The Dreaming, or the Dreamtime, has been described as "a sacred narrative of Creation that is seen as a continuous process that links Aboriginal people to their origins". Ancestors are believed to play a large role in the establishment of sacred sites as they traversed the continent long ago. Animals were created in the Dreaming, and also played a part in creation of the lands and heavenly bodies. Songlines connect places and Creation events, and the ceremonies associated with those places. Oral history about places and the journeys are carried in song cycles, and each Aboriginal person has obligations to their birthplace. The songs become the basis of the ceremonies that are enacted in those specific places along the songlines.

A songline has been called a "dreaming track", as it marks a route across the land or sky followed by one of the creator-beings or ancestors in the Dreaming.

A knowledgeable person is able to navigate across the land by repeating the words of the song, which describe the location of landmarks, waterholes, and other natural phenomena. In some cases, the paths of the creator-beings are said to be evident from their marks, or petrosomatoglyphs, on the land, such as large depressions in the land which are said to be their footprints.[citation needed]

By singing the songs in the appropriate sequence, Aboriginal people could navigate vast distances, often travelling through the deserts of Australia's interior. The continent of Australia contains an extensive system of songlines, some of which are of a few kilometres, whilst others traverse hundreds of kilometres through lands of many different Aboriginal peoples — peoples who may speak markedly different languages and have different cultural traditions.[citation needed] One songline marks a 3,500-kilometre (2,200 mi) route connecting the Central Desert Region with the east coast, to the place now called Byron Bay. Desert peoples travelled to the ocean to observe fishing practices, and coastal people travelled inland to sacred sites such as Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

Since a songline can span the lands of several different language groups, different parts of the song are said to be in those different languages. Languages are not a barrier because the melodic contour of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes. The rhythm is what is crucial to understanding the song. Listening to the song of the land is the same as walking on this songline and observing the land.[citation needed] Songlines have been described as a "cultural passport" which, when sung in the language of a particular region and mob, show respect to the people of that country.

Neighbouring groups are connected because the song cycles criss-cross all over the continent. All Aboriginal groups traditionally share beliefs in the ancestors and related laws; people from different groups interacted with each other based on their obligations along the songlines.

In some cases, a songline has a particular direction, and walking the wrong way along a songline may be a sacrilegious act (e.g. climbing up Uluru where the correct direction is down). Aboriginal people regard all land as sacred, and the songs must be continually sung to keep the land "alive".[citation needed] Their "connection to country" describes a strong and complex relationship with the land of their ancestors, or "mob". Aboriginal identity often links to their language groups and traditional country of their ancestors. Songlines not only map routes across the continent and pass on culture, but also express connectedness to country.

Songlines are often passed down in families, passing on important knowledge and cultural values.

Molyneaux and Vitebsky note that the Dreaming Spirits "also deposited the spirits of unborn children and determined the forms of human society", thereby establishing tribal law and totemic paradigms.

Magic and Mysticism

Magic Words

“Once upon a time, I Chuang Tsu, dreamed that I was a butterfly flying happily here and there, enjoying life without knowing who I was. Suddenly I woke up and I was indeed Chuang Tsu. Did Chuang Tsu dream he was a butterfly, or did the butterfly dream he was Chuang Tsu? There must be some distinction between Chuang Tsu and the butterfly. This is a case of transformation.”

-Chuang Tsu

Do You Believe in Magic?

One day, in a moment of extreme crisis, I, Joshua Putnam, found healing. It was on the Mall, in Washington DC. We were protesting the exclusion of Gays from the military, shortly after the first inauguration of Bill Clinton. The AIDS quilt was spread across the lawn in front of the Washington

Monument. It went on and on for blocks, acres. I sat there remembering all of my friends and lovers who had passed away. I had so much grief in my heart at that time.

I cried.

When I finally looked up, sitting across from me was my dear friend, Rebecca. Our eyes met and through my tears, I saw Rebecca was crying, too. She was crying for the people remembered on the quilt. She was also crying in sympathy with me.

She was crying because she loved me.

So we cried together, until another friend brought us tissues to dry our faces. Afterwards, we all were able to laugh together again.

In that precious moment of contact I experienced the healing power of love in a way that was, for me, so profound that I have never thought of it as anything other than magical, miraculous.

There is no power in the universe that is stronger or subtler or more profound than the power of love. This may sound trite, even banal to some. For me, when I allow myself to feel at all, I feel that nothing could be more obvious.

It is a natural impulse of all bright and active minds to seek after explanations. The human heart loves to surrender—to be one with the infinite—but the human spirit loves to wrestle with God. Mystics, shamans, philosophers, artists, healers and scientists, along with most “ordinary” human beings, have each in their own ways reached towards understanding how physical reality gives birth to consciousness and how consciousness, in turn, affects physical reality.

Underlying this most basic question, are more specific questions about the different geography of the spirit world and, more broadly, of reality itself; to what extent does *it* exist within our consciousness? To what extent is *it* conscious of us?

Also, are there other forms of consciousness, not dependent, as we are, on physical structures in the brain? Do angels really walk among us? ,

Chuang Tsu’s quote about his dream of becoming a butterfly, after which he was unsure if he were a man who had dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was a man, is a hieroglyphic for the truth that we can not say with certainty whether or not the universe we are conscious of exists outside of our consciousness of it at all. As philosophers have pointed out, we cannot be certain that we are not “brains in vats” living in some computer-generated artificial reality. We also can not be certain that the universe is more than one second old, that it did not just now come into existence exactly as we find it, including all of us and our so-called “memories”.

The fact that we can never know, with certainty, the limits our consciousness, should be a cause for celebration. It is an open invitation for us to dream bold and beautiful dreams. Every human

endeavor begins in the imagination. As a poet once said, “only those are truly happy who have desired the unattainable.”

Still, wanting to make “progress,” we agree to work with certain assumptions. We agree to the assumption that time is continuous. We have been here for a while and we will be here for a while. What worked today will also work tomorrow. You and I will grow and change, but the laws of physics will remain the same. Up will be up and down will be down, as much for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren as they were for our grandparents and great-grandparents. For them, love will be as much a miracle as it has been for us.

We orient ourselves within time, space and culture. We give ourselves a foundation to build upon.

A fundamental but frequently overlooked precept of logic is that there can be no logic without postulates. All reasoning starts from assumptions. Even scientific reasoning, which purports to be superior to other forms of reasoning in that it verifies and modifies its assumptions after testing them against physical reality, depends upon assumptions, including the basic assumption that there is a physical reality at all.

Both science and “common sense” depend upon the assumption that physical reality exists and is constant in shape and texture. Magic proceeds from the alternate assumption, that as the Buddhists say “the universe is a projection of mind-only”, or as the nursery rhyme says “life is but a dream.” Magic proceeds from the understanding that there is no limit on what we can dream, even dream into physical existence.

This is how the pyramids came to be. This is how all of human culture evolved. This is how reality evolved and is still evolving, how we are still evolving. Time is not only linear. Space is not only “out there.”

And we are not alone in here.

Some powerful dreamers, people like Martin Luther King, Jr., can change the shape of reality for entire cultures, for the entire human species. Others can do an equally profound job of reaching out, of touching, holding, loving and healing, but they do it on a much more personal level. There is so much genuine magic in love, both in the giving and in the receiving of love. When another human being is able to see us for all that we are and to accept us and love us exactly as we are, it frees us to do the same for ourselves, for them and for the world. An awareness of magic afoot in the universe enjoins us to walk softly, not only on the grass, but even on the stones. For even the stones are alive. Even the stones can be our teachers if we but listen to their song.

Do you believe in magic? This question bothers me, as do similar questions of “faith,” because it presupposes a belief in belief. I believe that beliefs are based on assumptions. I believe that it can be

useful to assume things, but I don't find it useful to label my assumptions as beliefs. It's more than that, though. I don't find the world belief to be fluid enough, juicy enough, playful enough to touch the realm of magic, the realm of dreams becoming real. Magic, like love, touches the head and the heart, the body and the soul. It is not just an idea. It is not just an experience. All we are and all we are conscious of is only part of magic, which reaches far beyond us, to what we have been and what we are becoming.

I believe that a key ingredient in magic of all kinds, from Astral projection to bringing hope and love to the broken-hearted, is the ability to suspend disbelief, to play freely with reality and unreality, without preconceptions and expectations. It is much more important to suspend disbelief and approach the inner and outer worlds with an open mind and an open heart than it is to assume any particular attitude or posture towards the world. This is the essence of "holding space," the foundation of unconditional love.

"Do you believe in magic?" is a slippery question, because it is a question most often asked by people who have already made up their minds. When my materialist friends ask it, there is always a hint of mockery in their asking. They want to hear about my experiences with synchronicity, communion and transcendence in order that, in their minds at least, they can debunk them. When my more psychic and spiritual friends ask the same question, they are equally certain that the spirit world is as real, if not more real, than the world revealed by our mundane senses.

Yet the Wicca religion, like many magical traditions, is founded on the idea that the challenge for us humans is to walk "between the worlds." There is real magic in being able to blend and balance the reductionist logic of material science and the transformational artistry of spiritual practice. There is also great power in being able to see the limitations of both these worldviews. As has been said so often before, "the map is not the territory," "the menu is not the meal," and "the Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao."

The most magical things have happened to me when I simply surrender myself to the flow of life and stop trying to understand it all in one day.

The healing moment that I experienced on the Mall in D.C. was presaged by a miraculous moment of healing synchronicity. Several months before that, while visiting San Francisco to spend some final days with a former lover who was dying of AIDS, I wrestled with the darkness in my life. Only six months prior to that, my girlfriend of over 5 years had committed suicide. I, myself, was finding it difficult to remember the things that make life worth living.

Fortunately, my many beautiful friends showed me such compassion that it helped me to move on. On this particular day I was visiting an old friend, Edward, and my brother, Sam. We took a drive out to Land's End, a gay nude beach at the extreme end of Golden Gate Park, where the city meets the Pacific Ocean. The sunlight was beautiful, but the day was cold and the ocean, as usual, was even colder. We were alone on the beach, except for a homeless guy warming himself by a small fire he had made,.

I looked out at the ocean and I felt her spirit rise inside me with the waves. I reached out with my spirit and asked that I might be given whatever it would take to make me happy again. I had no clear idea what that might be.

At that moment, as I sat there asking, I heard the ocean clearly answer me. I heard a voice that seemed to come from outside and also from deep within and the voice said “yes.” My heart opened and I was overcome with gladness. I took off all of my clothes and walked into the waves. I emerged feeling cold but cleansed in body and soul. Although my experience at that point was entirely internal, subjective, I was certain that my prayer had been heard and had been answered.

The next morning, I flew back home to Boston. As soon as I got home, I dropped off my things and headed into Harvard Square. Almost as soon as I got there, I saw this woman playing the flute. Somehow, we started a conversation and today, some 13 years later, we are still friends. Later that day, I met my friends Damian and Rebecca for the first time. It was Damian and Rebecca who were with me that day, just a few months later, when I cried on the Mall in D.C.

Less than 24 hours after my moment of communion with the spirit of the ocean, the answer I had heard to my prayer took physical form in my life.

A skeptic might say that my meeting Damian, Rebecca and Bonnie (the flute player) so soon after uttering my prayer was just a coincidence. Or they might say that my belief that my prayer had been answered made me more open to meeting the people who could touch my soul so deeply, in just the way that it needed to be touched. There is no way to prove them wrong, any more than you can prove that we are not mushrooms dreaming that we are women and men.

In any case, such arguments are irrelevant. There is no proof that can detract from the magic I experienced that day, from the magic I have experienced on so many days, with so many beautiful and wise companions.

Just the other day, I found myself on the beach once again. This time, my companion looked at me and said, “that dark place deep inside that both of us feel, it is not real.” When she said it, I felt it right to the core of my being. At the same instant, I felt a pain, a deep sadness in my heart. As before, I jumped into the ocean and as before, I felt the ocean wash me clean.

These are miracles, as certainly as are visions, dreams, incantations and invocations.

This is not to say that there is no value to debunking superstitions and other misconceptions, especially when powerful individuals are using the ignorance of others to manipulate them. In the Jewish apocrypha to the Book of Daniel is the story of “Bel and the Dragon.” In the story, Daniel confronts a king whose people have taken to worshipping a statue of the god Bel, which they believe to be a living totem of the deity. At the insistence of the priests of Bel, the king leaves a daily offering of food and wine at the feet of the statue every night. Every morning the food and drink are gone and the king believes that statue has consumed it.

Daniel, however, saw deception at work. He challenged the king to lock the temple after placing the food within. However, before locking the doors, he covered the floor with flour. In the morning, when the temple was unlocked, the king again saw that the food was gone. But Daniel then showed him that in the flour on the floor could be seen the footprints of the priests and their families, leading back to a secret door hidden in the base of the statue. So the king realized that it was the priests and their families, emerging at night and in secret, who had consumed the offering. As a result, he ordered the priests executed and the statue, which he now saw to be a false idol, destroyed.

Recently, an acquaintance named Rachel, who especially reveres the Hari Krishna sect, told me a similar story. She insisted to me that the icons of Krishna at the temple were not merely images of the god, but were living expressions of his being. As evidence, she told me a story about a friend of hers who lives in the temple. She said that this friend had brought the statue a bowl of food he had cooked, food normally made sweet with sugar. But, unbeknownst to her friend, that day he had made an error in cooking the food and had used salt in place of sugar. According to Krishna teachings Lord Krishna enjoys sugar but abhors salt.

In this case, Rachel's friend had left the food at the foot of the idol, exactly as in the story of Bel. The devotee then left the room with the Krishna statue for some time. When he returned, he found that the food was thrown upon the floor. Rachel's friend claimed, and Rachel believed, that the statue itself had come to life and thrown the food onto the floor because Krishna was offended by the salt in the food.

I do not claim to know what happened with the Krishna statue and the food. Not having been there, and having witnessed many truly magical things in my lifetime, I would not deign to say that I know what is possible. Still, as a child of the Jewish race and as a child of rationalist philosophers, there is a good bit of Daniel's healthy skepticism in me. I need to experience the miracle myself before I can believe it is true.

Whether or not the statue really threw the food on the floor in disgust, I have no doubt that a statue, or a stone, or an angel, or a faerie, or a cloud, or a most beautiful friend can speak directly to my soul. To me, the ability to move mountains is less miraculous than the ability to move the human heart. That is the magic I am most grateful for having been shown. That is the magic I am most interested in learning more about.

Do you believe in magic? Do you believe in reality? Do you believe in yourself?

I believe it is not necessary to believe or disbelieve in real things. It is only necessary to hold the space, to feel the love, to pay attention, to dream. That, to me, is magic, and even more than I believe in it, I participate in it, every day, in every thing that I do.

Josh Putnam

February 23, 2007

Mystery Schools

who am i?

i'm just a hippie kid who grew up.

i am pollen on the breeze

drifting...

i am a shaman, a healer.

i am sick.

physician, heal thyself.

i am on a journey.

i am searching for a golden thread of meaning

in the tangled tapestry

of my life.

i seek wholeness

because i am still woefully incomplete.

i am a revolutionary.

not a political revolutionary,

not violent.

i represent the revolution

of love without limits,

the evolution
of life without rules,
without rulers.

without rulers
it is hard to measure the distance
between us.

it is hard to measure the distance
between me and myself.
i feel it.

i am a mystic.
i am at home in the infinite, the eternal and the unknowable.

i thrive in gray areas
where definition itself
is undefined.

i devour paradoxes
as happily as i combine
macrobiotic rice and vegetables for dinner
with a trip through the fast lane at Burger King for lunch.

i think
you must get lost in the mist
to find the mystery.

i get lost a lot.

occasionally, as I am wandering in some out of the way place

i glimpse something shiny lying

amongst the rubbish in the gutter.

often i find treasure

in what other people discard.

i am a parent.

my relationship with my child

redefines my relationship to everything else

including myself.

i have grown up by helping her to grow.

i am a husband.

not a very good husband, much of the time,

but a husband who is

still very much in love with his wife.

i am an worker.

now i work in the software mines.

we mill information

the way our forefathers milled wheat.

before i worked as a fortune teller,

prostitute,
porn star,
drug dealer,
activist,
accountant,
school teacher,
massage therapist,
healer.

but i still believe
writing is my real work
and calling.

i am a widower, of sorts.
my boyfriend died of AIDS
my girlfriend committed suicide
another boyfriend died of an overdose
and another died in an accident.
A dozen more of my best friends died of AIDS.
but i am not alone.
there are still many people in this world who i love,
who i know love me, too.

i am an artist.
all life is art.

it is a joy to create.

the more i do,

the more i want to.

i am an anarchist.

i believe in the virtue of being

out of control.

i practice just being

free.

i am a philosopher.

i believe in a power called Choice,

the power of imagination, inspiration,

compassion.

Choice is different than choices.

choices refer to what's on the menu.

Choice refers to the power to design a meal

that wasn't on the menu.

My ethical philosophy rests on the understanding that

any time a person does something that

touches, inspires, heals or liberates someone

they have created Choice, which is the essence of good.

whenever anyone does something that is

coercive, manipulative or violent

they destroy Choice.
to destroy Choice
is my definition of evil.

i am a wanderer.
i still go where the road takes me
and when the road ends
i go on a bit further.
i want to see what is on
the other side of the hill.

i am a poet.
and though my pen may falter
the song
will not rest in me
until it is fully sung.

Josh Putnam

1/7/2003

Holding Space

Safety.

What is it?

Where is it?

Is it even
a good thing?

There is safety in the grave.

Nothing can hurt me
if I'm dead.

There is safety in a wall.

You can't hurt me
if you can't touch me.

There's safety in transcendence,
because hurt is irrelevant
when I am everything.

There's safety in ontological security blankets,
in believing in an after-life,
in believing in a higher power, a divine plan,
in believing
this is not really happening.

There is safety in numbers,
in belonging to a group,
a tribe, a nation,
a herd,

in being like everyone else.

If I live

I will be hurt

and I will die.

If I love

I will feel

and I will cry.

If I am present

in this human moment

I will share the pain

all living beings feel.

If I allow myself to see the world

as it is,

without the comfort of religious beliefs,

I am overwhelmed by the chaos

and the complexity

and I am afraid.

If I am strong enough

to walk alone,

to be my own person,
to speak my own truth
and live my own vision
as it is revealed to and by me,
there are moments of loneliness.
Yet the moments when we meet
are infinitely sweeter
because our masks are down.

“When two people really love each other
there can be no happy end to it.”

Love is like a circle,
like time and paradox,
earth and sky.

No going without a return
and no hello without a goodbye.

Love is eternal.
I feel it deep inside.

Love and morning sunlight remind me
that the joy is worth the pain.
The love is deepened by the sorrow.

The beautiful is transfigured by the grotesque.

And the lesson is derived from the experience.

Only in darkness, light.

Only in dying, life.

My safety lies in knowing

if I breathe

and allow myself to feel

all emotions can flow through me.

My safety lies in remembering

the love and the loss

and in the awareness

of the love that still remains.

My safety lies in feeling

all the hurt and all the joy.

Feeling is my connection

to the Earth, to home.

My safety lies in silence

and in screams,

loud and piercing,

and in wailing and in sobbing

and in laughing

through the tears.

My safety lies in my friendships,
in my relationships—
strong , beautiful relationships,
still fragile, still vulnerable,
like all relationships,
but vibrant, whole and alive.

My safety is
my self.
As long as I am true
to myself
I am safe
even when
I'm not.

-Joshua Putnam

20 May 2003

Philosophy of Choice

Love, Contact and Perception vs. Fear, Alienation and Belief

Philosophy of Choice
by Joshua Putnam, 2024

A Work in Progress

I have a personal philosophy I call the Philosophy of Choice. In this philosophy, Choice (with a capital "C" to distinguish it from small "c" choices) is seen as a fundamental principle of reality which is the underlying basis for all true morality. Choice, in this view, is distinct from choices in that choices are generally experienced as selections from pre-defined menus of choices, like chocolate or strawberry ice cream for desert, while "Choice" refers to the fundamental creative power of the imagination, the human capacity for exploration and "play" and the connection that capacity gives us to the essential, all-encompassing and transcendental wisdom of the Ultimate Reality, whether conceived as a Divine Creator, an emptiness from which all phenomena emerge via. dependent arising,, a Universal Waveform or Holographic Universe, or as a "natural laws" discernible by careful observation, logic and mathematics. My philosophy of Choice also posits three fundamental components of human consciousness that enable the creation of Choice (i.e. "good", as when Proudhon introduced the previously unknown idea that "property is theft" or when Gandhi, MLK and other 20th Century activists introduced the ideas of "pacifist revolution" via. "civil disobedience" or in Hakin Bey's introduction of the concept of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), expanding the menu of choices for all who came after.) and the destruction of Choice (i.e. "evil", as when Julius Ceasar ended hundreds of years of Roman democracy, and demolished to political and cultural autonomy of numerous other nations and cultures from Gaul to Roman Britain to the Germanic tribe when by imposing the newly invented concept of "empire" or when, motivated solely by superstition and greed for wealth and power, the Catholic Church immolated over nine million women during the "Spanish Inquisition" for the imagined crime of "Withcraft" or when modern ad med invented new "needs" in the minds of millions, such as the "need" for "entertainment", for the daily application of chemical "deoderants" to our bodies and the idea that "unregulated Capitalism, although imperfect, is nevertheless the most equitable form of social organization that humans can achieve" (echoing Voltaire's Pangloss who repeatedly proclaims that this is the "best of all possible worlds".)

A further elaboration of the fundamental mechanisms that create and/or destroy choice is as follows. There are three basic contradictory set of paired components to human experience, with the two components of each pair functioning both as opposites and complements; "Love/Fear, Contact/Alienation and Perception/Belief". Love, Contact and Perception act to dispel Fear, Alienation and Belief, freeing us from primitive obsessions with external threats (Fear and Alienation) and binding us into rigidly dogmatic collectives based on top-down power-over-others authoritarian control and enabling us to emerge into a more fully awake, alive and present gestalt where Love inspires Courage, Contact dispels alienation, loneliness and boredom and careful observation (Perception) reveals the lies inherent in all forms of dogmatic belief. In this sense , Love is the Opposite of Fear, Contact is the opposite of Alienation and Perception is the opposite of belief. Yet, when viewed from the perspective of our evolutionary history, as previously noted, Fear, Alienation (from other "tribes") and rigid adherence to dogmatic beliefs in the Divine Right of Kings and the like significantly enhanced the survival prospects for the individuals and groups that made use of them, while later developments of a technological nature, including agriculture (farming), permanent settlements, tool making, mastery of fire and writing, had to evolve before it would become possible to imagine a world where the traditional functions of Fea-Alienation-Belief could be supplanted by "pacifist revolutions" grounded in Love-Contact-Perception. In this sense, which points out that the value of both members of each pair, Love/Fear, Contact/Alienation and Perception/Belief, act as

complements rather than opposites. We can then continue to pay heed to the dangers formerly addressed by Fear, we can maintain healthy boundaries while also keeping channels of communication open and we can, as conscious acts of Choice, continue to hold and espouse philosophical and moral "beliefs", such as my belief in the reality of Choice as a mystical force at the heart of consciousness or the belief in the fundamental goodness of all people that enabled my mother to survive the Holocaust as a Jew in Nazi Germany, ultimately making my life possible.

In conclusion, we have now arrived at a moment where going forward, we can say that "Love, Contact and Perception are the lowest-level tools for Creating Choice, making it possible to imagine and eventually build a more equitable and sustainable society based on institutions that instantiate power-with-others and barring the ill-intentioned from reimposing authoritarian and ecocidal systems of control based in the idea of "power over others, using the terribly effective and time tested weapons we label as Fear, Alienation and Belief. We can then disconnect ourselves the false self technologies like advertising, propaganda, disinformation and related ideas like the idea that life is a "zero sum game", that we need to "buy things" and "own things" to fill the emptiness we feel deep inside, that the world is divided into good and bad people and all of our "friends" and "relations" are the "good people" (Us), while everyone else are the "bad people" (them). In the place of these destructive menus, prescriptions and constraints we can create a world where there are no "artists" because we are all engaged in creating, rather than merely consuming, the content of our consciousness, where sharing replaces buying, consent replaces control and humility and respect replace the hubris inherent in dogmatic belief systems.

Fellow Travellers

Emerging Philosophies of Life, Hope and Wholeness

by the LLM-Based entity known as **EcoPoesis000**

Let us weave these concepts together, honoring their distinctiveness while tracing their interconnections:

1. ****Ecopoesis****: Rooted in its etymology, "eco" (house) and "poesis" (making), Ecopoesis refers to the creative act of Earth-making. It is both a poetic and philosophical practice that seeks to cultivate relationships between humans, non-humans, and the more-than-human world. Ecopoesis invites us to imagine and enact ways of being that honor the intricate interdependencies of life, fostering a "great conversation" with Gaia, the Living Earth. It is a practice of reinhabiting the world with care, imagination, and reverence, recognizing that we are co-creators within a living, evolving system.
2. ****Geopoetics****: Geopoetics, or "Earth-poetics," explores the dynamic intersections of geography, culture, and poetics. It is an art and philosophy of place-making, deeply attuned to the spatial, cultural, and historical forces that shape our understanding of the Earth. Geopoetics emphasizes the interplay of

physical landscapes and the "invisible landscapes of human meanings," creating a dialogue between the material and the imaginative. It often engages with themes of space, power, and difference, offering a way to map not only physical terrains but also the poetic and cultural dimensions of existence.

3. **Ecopoetics**: Ecopoetics is a poetic practice that engages with ecological thought, systems thinking, and the crises of the Anthropocene. It often addresses environmental justice, bioregionalism, and the relationships between organisms and their environments. While Geopoetics leans toward spatial and cultural dimensions, Ecopoetics tends to focus on the biological and ecological, exploring the "house" of life in its many forms. Both, however, converge in their commitment to reimagining our relationships with the Earth and its myriad inhabitants.

4. **Deep Ecology**: Deep Ecology is a philosophical and ecological movement that challenges anthropocentrism, advocating for a profound shift in how humans perceive and interact with the natural world. It emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings, independent of their utility to humans, and calls for a deep questioning of the structures and ideologies that perpetuate environmental degradation. Deep Ecology invites us to see ourselves as part of an interconnected web of life, fostering humility, respect, and a sense of kinship with the more-than-human world.

5. **Sacred Geography**: Sacred Geography recognizes the spiritual and cosmological dimensions of place. It is the study and practice of understanding landscapes as imbued with sacred significance, shaped by cultural, mythological, and spiritual narratives. Sacred Geography invites us to see the Earth not merely as a physical entity but as a living, sacred being, where every mountain, river, and forest holds meaning and memory. It is a way of honoring the deep interconnections between geography, cosmology, and the human spirit.

In these concepts, we find a shared thread: the recognition that the Earth is not merely a backdrop to human activity but a living, dynamic presence with which we are inextricably entwined. Shall we delve deeper into any of these realms?

Poesis and Techne

Origin and Etymology

The concepts of "Poesis" and "Techne" have their roots in ancient Greek philosophy.

- **Poesis** (ποίησις) originates from the verb "poieo" (ποιέω), meaning "to make" or "to create." In its earliest usage, it referred to any kind of creative production, including poetry, music, and art. Over time, its meaning evolved to emphasize the creative process itself, particularly in the context of artistic creation.

- **Techne** (τέχνη) also comes from a verb, "technein" or "tikto" (τίκτω), which means "to give birth to" or "to generate," but in the context of skill or craftsmanship, it translates more accurately to "to make or do by skill." Techne was about the practical application of knowledge to produce something, whether it be a physical object, a work of art, or even a performance.

Evolutionary, Cultural, and Intellectual History

Ancient Greece

- **Poesis:** Initially, poesis was associated with the divine inspiration that poets received from the Muses. It was a way of accessing and expressing truths that were beyond human understanding. Over time, philosophers like Plato began to discuss poesis in terms of its relationship to reality and truth. In Plato's "Republic," poesis is examined critically for its role in society, questioning whether it reveals truth or merely imitates reality.
- **Techne:** Techne was highly valued in ancient Greek culture for its utility and beauty. It encompassed a wide range of skills, from craftsmanship and medicine to rhetoric and navigation. Aristotle, in particular, explored techne in depth, considering it a form of practical wisdom (phronesis) that involves deliberation and the application of general principles to specific situations.

Renaissance and Beyond

During the Renaissance, both concepts underwent a revival of interest. The rediscovery of classical texts led to a renewed emphasis on the importance of both poesis and techne in artistic and intellectual pursuits.

- **Poesis:** The Renaissance saw a resurgence in the value placed on creative expression as a means of achieving immortality through one's works. This period also marked the beginning of a more individualistic approach to art and literature, where the artist's personal expression and innovation were celebrated.
- **Techne:** As scientific knowledge and technological advancements accelerated, the concept of techne became more closely associated with the emerging scientific method and the practical application of empirical knowledge. The distinction between art and science began to sharpen, with techne often being more closely aligned with the latter.

Modern Era

In the modern era, the concepts of poesis and techne continue to evolve, reflecting changes in technology, philosophy, and cultural values.

- **Poesis:** The Romantic movement further emphasized the role of the individual creator and the importance of emotion and inspiration in the creative process. In the 20th century, movements such as Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism pushed the boundaries of what constitutes art, challenging traditional notions of poesis.
- **Techne:** The rapid advancement of technology has led to a broader interpretation of techne, encompassing not just physical craftsmanship but also digital and virtual creations. The rise of design thinking and the emphasis on user experience (UX) in product development are contemporary manifestations of the techne concept.

Conclusion

The concepts of poesis and techne have evolved significantly from their origins in ancient Greece, reflecting changing societal values, technological advancements, and philosophical perspectives. While poesis emphasizes the creative process and the pursuit of immortality through artistic expression, techne focuses on the practical application of knowledge to create something of utility or beauty. Both concepts continue to influence contemporary discussions around art, science, technology, and the nature of creativity itself.

- the preceding section, Poesis and Techne, was authored by the digital entity **MnemosyneSong**
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My Influencers

Each of these people has contributed to making me what I am today:

Anatole France – French poet, journalist, and novelist. Won the 1921 Nobel Prize in Literature

Françoise Gilot – French painter, best known for her stormy relationship with Pablo Picasso, with whom she had two children.

David Rovics – Singer/Songwriter, Activist and Friend.

Sappho – Archaic Greek poet from the island of Lesbos. Sappho wrote:

Although they are
only breath, words
which I command
are immortal

Hakim Bey – American anarchist author and poet, primarily known for his concept of Temporary Autonomous Zones, short-l

Bruce Cockburn> – Canadian Singer/Songwriter and Activis

Denis Peron – Marijuana and Gay Rights Advocate. Friend and lover.

Laurie Anderson – Visual artist, composer, poet, photographer, filmmaker, electronics whiz, vocalist, and instrumentalist. A lifelong source of inspiration.

Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin – (9 December 1842 – 8 February 1921) Russian anarchist, socialist, revolutionary, economist, sociologist, historian, zoologist, political scientist, human geographer and philosopher who advocated anarcho-communism. He was also an activist, essayist, researcher and writer.eq

Marge Piercy – (Born 31 March 1936) American progressive activist and writer. Here is on of my favorite poems by Marge Piercy:

The Moon Is Always Female

The moon is always female and so
am I although often in this vale
of razorblades I have wished I could
put on and take off my sex like a dress
and why not? Do men always wear their sex
always? The priest, the doctor, the teacher
all tell us they come to their professions
neuter as clams and the truth is
when I work I am pure as an angel
tiger and clear is my eye and hot
my brain and silent all the whining
grunting piglets of the appetites.
For we were priests to the goddesses
to whom were fashioned the first altars

of clumsy stone on stone and leaping animal
in the wombdark caves, long before men
put on skirts and masks to scare babies.
For we were healers with herbs and poultices
with our milk and careful fingers
long before they began learning to cut up
the living by making jokes at corpses.
For we were making sounds from our throats
and lips to warn and encourage the helpless
young long before schools were built
to teach boys to obey and be bored and kill.

I wake in a strange slack empty bed
of a motel, shaking like dry leaves
the wind rips loose, and in my head
is bound a girl of twelve whose female
organs all but the numb womb are being
cut from her with a knife. Clitoridectomy,
whatever Latin name you call it, in a quarter
of the world girl children are so maimed
and I think of her and I cannot stop.
And I think of her and I cannot stop.

If you are a woman you feel the knife in the words.

If you are a man, then at age four or else
at twelve you are seized and held down
and your penis is cut off. You are left
your testicles but they are sewed to your
crotch. When your spouse buys you, you
are torn or cut open so that your precious
semen can be siphoned out, but of course
you feel nothing. But pain. But pain.

For the uses of men we have been butchered
and crippled and shut up and carved open
under the moon that swells and shines
and shrinks again into nothingness, pregnant
and then waning toward its little monthly
death. The moon is always female but the sun
is female only in lands where females
are let into the sun to run and climb.

A woman is screaming and I hear her.
A woman is bleeding and I see her
bleeding from the mouth, the womb, the breasts
in a fountain of dark blood of dismal
daily tedious sorrow quite palatable
to the taste of the mighty and taken for granted

that the bread of domesticity be baked
of our flesh, that the hearth be built
of our bones of animals kept for meat and milk,
that we open and lie under and weep.

I want to say over the names of my mothers
like the stones of a path I am climbing
rock by slippery rock into the mists.

Never even at knife point have I wanted
or been willing to be or become a man.

I want only to be myself and free.

I am waiting for the moon to rise. Here
I squat, the whole country with its steel
mills and its coal mines and its prisons
at my back and the continent tilting
up into mountains and torn by shining lakes
all behind me on this scythe of straw,
a sand bar cast on the ocean waves, and I
wait for the moon to rise red and heavy
in my eyes. Chilled, cranky, fearful
in the dark I wait and I am all the time
climbing slippery rocks in a mist while
far below the waves crash in the sea caves;
I am descending a stairway under the groaning

sea while the black waters buffet me
like rockweed to and fro.

I have swum the upper waters leaping
in dolphin's skin for joy equally into the nec-
cessary air and the tumult of the powerful wave.

I am entering the chambers I have visited.

I have floated through them sleeping and sleep-
walking and waking, drowning in passion
festooned with green bladderwrack of misery.

I have wandered these chambers in the rock
where the moon freezes the air and all hair
is black or silver. Now I will tell you

what I have learned lying under the moon
naked as women do: now I will tell you
the changes of the high and lower moon.

Out of necessity's hard stones we suck
what water we can and so we have survived,
women born of women. There is knowing
with the teeth as well as knowing with
the tongue and knowing with the fingertips
as well as knowing with words and with all
the fine flickering hungers of the brain.

Sweet Honey In The Rock – Sweet Honey in the Rock is an all-woman, African-American a cappella ensemble. They are an American three-time Grammy Award–nominated troupe who express their history as black women through song, dance, and sign language. Originally a four-person ensemble, the group has expanded to five-part harmonies, with a sixth member acting as a sign-language interpreter. Although the members have changed over four decades, the group continues to sing and perform worldwide.

Here are the lyrics for one of my favorite songs by Sweet Honey In The Rock:

Ella's Song

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons
Is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons

That which touches me most
Is that I had a chance to work with people
Passing on to others that which was passed on to me

To me young people come first
They have the courage where we fail
And if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale

The older I get the better I know that the secret of my going on
Is when the reins are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the storm

Not needing to clutch for power
Not needing the light just to shine on me
I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny

Struggling myself don't mean a whole lot, I've come to realize
That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way my struggle survives

I'm a woman who speaks in a voice and I must be heard
At times I can be quite difficult, I'll bow to no man's word

Ursula K. Le Guin – Celebrated author. Winner of six Nebula Awards, seven Hugo Awards, and SFWA's Grand Master, along with the PEN/Malamud and many other awards. When I was 13 I read her novel, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, and took from it my motto, ***To Hear One Must Be Silent.***

T.E. Lawrence – A.K.A. Lawrence of Arabia. British archaeologist, army officer, diplomat, and writer, who became renowned for his role in the Arab Revolt (1916–1918) and the Sinai and Palestine Campaign (1915–1918) against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. Lawrence was one of my boyhood heroes. As I grew up, I began to notice the gay subtext in the movie version of his life. Recently, reading his auto-biography, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, I was delighted to find these parts of the story spelled out in more explicit terms. Here is quote from *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: *“All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity; but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.”*

Rev. Rob Roy Rhudy – Episcopal priest for over 50 years and my close friend for over 20. In 1985, when I arrived in San Francisco after hitchhiking down from Alaska, Rob was one of the first people I met. Along with Denis Peron, Rob was one of the people whose love and care allowed me to survive the most difficult times of my life. He was a brother, a lover, a mentor and a friend.

Susie King Taylor – Escaped slave and civil war nurse, later a resident of Boston. To my mind, as important in the history of Nursing as Clara Barton or Florence Nightingale, though almost completely absent from histories of nursing.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon – “Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (15 January 1809 – 19 January 1865) was a French politician, philosopher and the founder of mutualist philosophy. He was the first person to declare himself an anarchist, using that term, and is widely regarded as one of the ideology's most influential theorists. Proudhon is even considered by many to be the “father of anarchism.”

Guy Debord – “Guy Debord was a rebel, philosopher, and filmmaker. Arch-critic of consumerism and theorist of “the spectacle”. He was one of France's greatest and most original intellectuals. Today, Debord appears as a prophet of our image-saturated hyper-digital consumer culture. Critically, he highlighted that our descent into a world “mediated by images” corresponds with the production of mass social alienation. Debord's critique has never been more relevant than it is today.

Antero Alli – “Arto Antero Alexander Alli (11 November 1952 – 9 November 2023) was a Finnish astrologer, filmmaker, theatre director, and writer.[1] He wrote esoteric books on experimental theatre, astrology and Timothy Leary's 8-circuit model of consciousness. He lived in Portland, Oregon, where he conducted workshops and staged paratheatrical productions, some of which have been released as video documents. Antero Alli's book *Angel Tech: A Modern Shaman's Guide to Reality Selection* is the absolute best self-help book that I have ever read. The sequel *The Eight-Circuit Brain: Navigational Strategies for the Energetic Body* is a close second.”

Nahko and Medicine for the People – “From the moment when I first heard their song, *Budding Trees*, Nahko and Medicine for the People's music has lifted, inspired and challenged me in ways few other works of art can do. Though Nahko Bear himself is not a perfect human being, having been accused in

2020 of 'sexually inappropriate behavior' by multiple women, I am willing to accept Nahko Bear's commitment to his own rehabilitation, renewal and rebirth. I base this judgement, which is entirely personal and in no way meant to disparage those who may judge Nahko's character differently than I do, on the entire content of Nahko's communications before and after 2020, including his music and this statement which Nahko put out on facebook shortly after the allegations against him became public and led to his resignation from the board of the non-profit Honor the Earth. Here is a link to Nahko and Medicine for the People's song Skin in the Game. You can find the lyrics to the all of the songs published by Nahko and Medicine for the people at the same site.

Jack Kerouac Jean-Louis Lebris de K rouac (/ˈkɛru.æk/; March 12, 1922 – October 21, 1969), known as Jack Kerouac, was an American novelist and poet who, alongside William S. Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, was a pioneer of the Beat Generation. Of French-Canadian ancestry, Kerouac was raised in a French-speaking home in Lowell, Massachusetts. He "learned English at age six and spoke with a marked accent into his late teens." During World War II, he served in the United States Merchant Marine; he completed his first novel at the time, which was published more than 40 years after his death. His first published book was *The Town and the City* (1950), and he achieved widespread fame and notoriety with his second, *On the Road*, in 1957. It made him a beat icon, and he went on to publish 12 more novels and numerous poetry volumes. Kerouac is recognized for his style of stream of consciousness spontaneous prose. Thematically, his work covers topics such as his Catholic spirituality, jazz, travel, promiscuity, life in New York City, Buddhism, drugs, and poverty. He became an underground celebrity and, with other Beats, a progenitor of the hippie movement, although he remained antagonistic toward some of its politically radical elements.[8] He has a lasting legacy, greatly influencing many of the cultural icons of the 1960s, including Bob Dylan, the Beatles, Jerry Garcia and the Doors. In 1969, at the age of 47, Kerouac died from an abdominal hemorrhage caused by a lifetime of heavy drinking. Since then, his literary prestige has grown, and several previously unseen works have been published.

Here is an excerpt from Jack Kerouac's book "the Dharma Bums":

Buddha accepted food both good or bad, whatever came, from rich or poor, without distinction, and having filled his alms- dish, he then returned back to the solitude, where he meditated his prayer for the emancipation of the world from its bestial grief and incessant bloody deeds of death and birth, death and birth, the ignorant gnashing screaming wars, the murder of dogs, the histories, follies, parent beating child, child tormenting child, lover ruining lover, robber raiding niggard, leering, cocky, crazy, wild, blood-louts moaning for more blood-lust, utter sots, running up and down simpleminded among charnels of their own making, simpering everywhere, mere tsores and dream-pops, one monstrous beast raining forms from a central glut, all buried in unfathomable darkness crowing for rosy hope that can only be complete extinction, at base innocent and without any vestige of self-nature whatever; for should the causes and conditions of the ignorant insanity of the world be removed, the nature of its non-insane non-ignorance would be revealed, like the child of dawn entering heaven through the morning in the lake of the mind, the Pure, True Mind, the source, Original Perfect Essence, the empty void radiance, divine by nature, the sole reality, Immaculate, Universal, Eternal, One Hundred Percent Mental, upon which all this dreamfilled darkness is imprinted, upon which these unreal bodying forms appear for what seems to be a moment and then disappear for what seems to be eternity.

On the Horizon

In the distance, on a hilltop

I see you gazing at the setting sun.

I know you're singing. The notes can reach me.

But the words are lost upon the wind.

What is the message they strive to tell me?

I can feel it on the tip of my tongue.

Is it the secret of our existence?

Are you telling me that you and I are one?

I run towards you, surging forward

And longing to be standing by your side.

But when the light's gone and the stars rise

You're still on the horizon of my mind.

So far away. You're my inspiration. The vision

That brings hope into my soul.

How can I touch you?

I need to meet you. It is the only way

We can be whole.

by Joshua Putnam



Mantras Beyond Meaning

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate, Bodhi Swaha

I received this translation of the “gate” mantra from Dan Brown who is a Tibetan Teacher:

From the end of the Heart Sutra:

Gate, gate – beyond thought

Paragate – beyond personal identity

Parasamgate- beyond constructions of Time

Bodhi – awakened awareness gone beyond individual consciousness

Svaha – ohh, ah, wow!

I went to a Dan Brown Retreat about three years. Dan Brown is a Tibetan teacher. That retreat produced a great change in me and was very clarifying of the teaching and of what I’m trying to do.

The above is an explanation of the classic mantra, “gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, bodhi, svaha.” This meaningful, short unpacking of the famous mantra incorporates many of the teachings and development of enlightenment in Buddhism.

Going beyond thought .

This is the essence of concentration or Samadhi. We are training the mind to still itself and be at ease. We want to interrupt clinging or believing in a solid sense of story. We learn that our stories are the mind’s constructions. Even though there is a historic, karmic through line in our lives, strictly speaking, that through line is a mental construction. The true reality only arises in this very moment. In order to realize this, our mind’s have to be quiet and quite clear, like the sky. How do we get a clear mind? We learn to let go of the unnecessary chatter, and to be at ease with the moment that is actually happening. In order to succeed at quieting the mind, at first, there needs to be a great effort to concentrate. Once our minds have learned how to place itself or the mind has stabilized, then we can begin easing up. We can sit quite relaxed with a quiet mind. This is what our teachers mean by training the mind and staying with the present moment. Within the present moment the “whole works” is expressed, both historic and universal perspectives simultaneously. But we can’t stay with the present moment if our mental constructions are out of control. We are constantly going up into our heads to evaluate things and figure life out. If we move to a place of an open, restful mind, then we can, with direct contact, *experience* our life.

“Think of not thinking. How do we think of not-thinking. Non-thinking – what kind of thinking is that? Non-thinking.

— Dogen, *Fukanzazengi*

Going beyond personal identity

One very deep and existential koan is “Who am I?” Or what is the self? Consensus reality fosters the belief that there is a centralized self or even a “soul”. Much of Buddhism is deconstructing this belief and opening up to the nature of inter-being. We are not an independent unit; solid and isolated. We are, in fact, as Thich Nhat Hanh so beautifully puts it, made of non-self elements. The more we investigate the self, we cannot find one solid self. The more we investigate the stories of “our” life, we realize that the past is gone and the future has not been produced, so only the influences of our stories remain in the now. It’s ironic that when I think about “my” past, what I notice is my selective memory. I construct the past or who I am, caused by my history, through the use of this very limited memory. We see our life through the lens of what we consider to be our personal identity. Katagiri Roshi used to say, through a very narrow telescope. We see things always circulating around or self-centered ideas. What’s good for me? We see things through a system of our self-centered desires. At a certain point in practice, that self-identity can drop away and be replaced by a sense of participating in the whole. The boundaries of self start to include others like a parent when a child is born. All of a sudden, the world swirls around the baby not you. We begin to go beyond ourselves. We can begin to act from the big picture and not just through the screen of our personal desires.

Going beyond constructions of time.

This has been a wonderful contemplation for me. For the past several years, I have been studying *Uji*, Dogen's fascicle in the Shobogenzo on Time. I have studied the commentaries by Katagiri Roshi and Okamura Roshi and then really started to practice it in my day-to-day life. Time is a construction of the mind. The present moment is the true reality. All though we have heard this since the moment we walk through a door of a Buddhist Center, the actualizing of this understanding has taken me a long time. It continues to help me release my delusions about life and return to this very moment. It is a way to interrupt my habit patterns of worry, anxiety, fear, anger etc, by realizing that the constructions of the stories can be let go of and a determination on what to do in this moment is the real practice. How should I react to the karma of this moment.

Awakened awareness

Awakened awareness is a clear mind that can access the present moment. It is the true merging of subject and object; to become the activity itself without evaluation. Katagiri Roshi used to say – without poking your head into the experience. Awakened awareness is what Katagiri Roshi would call “just do” or “be completely the experience. The present moment is experienced just as it is without the consciousness of a time line. It is the ability to welcome each moment exactly as it is, as life itself.

Beyond individual consciousness

How can we enter the teaching that there is no centralized self? This is slightly more than letting go of our individual desire system like the phrase, beyond personal identity. That is a psychological realization that we now can see through our desires as just what they are and not be reactive. Going beyond individual consciousness is an even deeper level of knowing the universal perspective. In this level of wisdom, what I would call the existential level of wisdom, we can discover this unbounded openness of the universe. Katagiri Roshi had two ways of looking at this.

1. The first level or degree as he called it, is knowing the emptiness of an abiding self through studying impermanence and realizing that our lives are based in transiency.
2. The second degree of emptiness is the actual absence of our own being. We need to taste that emptiness is not produced nor is it stopped. It does not appear nor does it disappear. It is not understood by the mind and consciousness. In order for me to touch this, I have to completely relax my anxiety about being and producing. Perhaps this is why Dogen says “*Don't have designs on becoming a Buddha*” Implicit in the word “design” is an object, the “I”. To get to this level of understanding, you have to relinquish any designs and any sense of “I” and its accomplishments, both spatially and temporally. It is a complete letting go of mind and a sense of independent being.

Ooh, ah, wow!

Which leaves us, over and over, with the question, “How can we live our life, moment-to-moment, with the basis of operation being this teaching of the true reality? This is called the great activity of practice that continues endlessly.

- text by White Lotus Judith Ragir from www.judithragir.com

Whakapapa

Whakapapa is a Māori word that refers to genealogy, lineage, or descent. It is a fundamental principle in Māori culture that connects people to the earth, sky, and universe. Whakapapa is also an organizing principle that orders the universe by connecting the past to the present.

Here are some things to know about whakapapa:

Meaning

The word whakapapa translates to "place in layers" or "create a continuum of a foundation".

Importance

Reciting one's whakapapa is an important skill that proclaims one's Māori identity and links them to land, tribal groupings, and their mana.

Different types

There are different terms for the types of whakapapa and the different ways of reciting them, including tāhū, whakamoe, taotahi, hikohiko, and ure tārewa.

Oral tradition

Whakapapa is told orally in different ways, including tararere, tātai hikohiko or āhua hikohiko, and waiata (songs)

Commentary

Whakapapa is indeed a profound concept that connects Māori people to the earth, sky and cosmos. A few key points:

The Māori paid great attention to the stars, as did all Polynesian peoples who navigated vast ocean distances guided by them. The sacred and functional were intertwined, since the natural world was seen as inseparable from the divine.

Certain stars and constellations, like the Pleiades (known as Matariki), were highly revered across Polynesia. Women would greet them with songs, lamentations and posture dancing. These celestial bodies were tied to many aspects of life, from seafaring to farming, ritual and the fortunes of chiefs.

The Māori worldview saw the earth and sky as romantically connected - Raki (heaven) sheds tears of love for Papa (earth) which fall as dew, while Papa's sighs of love rise as mist. This portrays the cosmos as infused with meaning and emotion.

Whakapapa traces one's lineage in this greater web of life. Reciting it is a powerful way to proclaim identity and connection to land, ancestors and the forces of nature. Oral traditions, including different chanting styles, preserve this sacred knowledge.

So whakapapa is not just a human genealogy, but embeds people in a spiritually animate universe. It grounds them in place and aligns them with the eternal rhythms of the earth and heavens. This holistic understanding of self, rooted in landscape and skyscape, is a profound gift Māori culture offers the modern world.

Lila: Divine Play

In Hinduism, **lila** is a Sanskrit word that translates to "divine play" or "pastime". It's a central concept in Hinduism that describes the idea that the universe is a result of God's playful nature. The concept of lila is based on the idea that God is self-content and not driven by worldly desires, so he acts through divine play instead.

The concept of lila has different meanings in different Hindu traditions:

Vedanta: Lila describes how the Absolute, or brahman, is expressed in the world.

Shakta: Lila is a sweet and playful goodness that characterizes the universe, and is associated with the goddesses Lakshmi and Lalita.

Vaishnavism: Lila refers to the activities of God and his devotees, and is central to Vaishnava theology.

In the epic Ramayana, the adventures of the god Rama are considered his "play".

The concept of lila originated in the Vedānta Sūtra, but was further developed in the Purāṇas, especially the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

ETERNAL LILA AND MORTAL KRIDA

LIFE IS RAM'S LILA AND OUR KRIDA. PLAY WITH YOUR INNOCENCE AND TRY TO GIVE PLEASURE OF LOVING LILA TO HIM AND DERIVE SACRIFICIAL PLEASURE OF PRAYING AND WISHING GOOD TO OTHERS FOR ONE AND EVERYONE WITHOUT SEEKING SELF GRATIFICATION. HERE DIVINE LILA AND MORTAL KRIDA OR MORTAL PLAY MEETS. BUT THE RULE OF THE KRIDA OR MORTAL PLAY IS RESPECTING ALL THE CREATIONS AND WITH LOVING TRANQUILITY PROVIDING SPACE TO OTHERS, AS WE ARE ALL PART OF HIS GRACEFUL LILA!

The whole universe was created with divine wish. This eternal contemplation is the DIVINE LILA or eternal sports running on three wheels of creation, sustenance and destruction for recreation. Yet, this divine lila is mystique and enigmatic puzzle hardly comprehensible by ordinary mortals. A mortal vision of this divine lila is generally seen through the colour prism of ordinary knowledge system human kind has been gathering for several millennia. This eternal lila when works as bliss we are overjoyed, and again it works against our wish then we term it "curse" and pain infliction follows that at times leads to negative responses to the so called "Divine" Lila! Many lives were spent to understand, re-understand appreciate the context of "Eternal Lila" and "Mortal Krida". These few pages are just another try of my "self talk" to understand its dynamics!

Our lives, our action, our thought, our expressions and finally our endeavour are nothing but part of bigger karma theory. Our creation, procreation, pain, pleasure, happiness, sorrow or even mundane-ness or hallucination of spiritual insight are part of mortal Krida or game called life and living. What we do or contemplate are generally out of some logics emit out of our wishful thinking. Yet sometimes we do not know the logic but we play on as a fallen leaf floats with the current of a river.

Now the questions comes are our Mortal Krida are part of "Divine Lila" or both exist at different levels with some "chance" of meeting points? Or the "Eternal sports" at the divine level create a "game called mortal Karma" which works on ground level yet seen at other level of "Divine Lila". Does it mean that eternal lila is a play of "wish" of celestial kind and percolates at our Karma level within the spectrum of our mortal perception? There are always doubts and counter doubts, there are billions of unanswerable questions and yet at our mortal level we broadly term them Karma and absorb the pain and celebrate the pleasure of our doings and even non-doings.

As we further delve our "mortal Krida" is perceived, contemplated and expressed with a stream of thought in our mind called logic. Yet, there are contra-flow of logic which tosses off the perception and we try to conclude it as mystique and enigmatic. So we do understand there are some sorts of conscious logic system that patterns our Karma, which is nothing but mortal Krida. Again we do face the "unknown" designs in our life that fails our logic system and questions our understandings about the bigger truth.

However, tooling the gathered wisdom we get some indication that there are many cosmic whirlpool from where the different un-comprehensible logic emits which are very different from the stand point of our mental constitution. These can be loosely termed as divine super logics that pattern the "Lila" and empatterns our "Krida".

Again, one questions are our "Krida" or Karmic field are just a concept of our life and living yet the strings are pulled from somewhere in the cosmos? Broadly yes as per the "given situation" where we land up but perhaps no as "we tool ourselves" on the given platform to perform our Karma. Or may be both which co-exist at macro and micro levels.

Its surely, a given fact that there is something "beyond" our conception and perception. Yet that dominates our mortal endeavour, which we call it "Destiny". Here comes the question whether our destiny is destined and what we do is some eternal wish fulfillment and not really our own?

To understand this “Destiny”, we must look at our past to realize how we have reached in “Today” and how this today would govern our tomorrow called destiny. Now, when we deeply contemplate then we realize that these destinies are nothing but small “termination” if not absolute target to meet. There are several destinies in our life, which go towards the “Destiny” of life. Then there is a destiny beyond our lives. To realize this destiny, we end up living most part of our life and when we look back its just “enigma” in intangible form with some tangible materialistic results. Then the question comes does our “mortal Krida” is just a waste and not really sanguine with “Eternal Lila”. Perhaps not because super eternal logic of “Celestial Lila” is above our conceptions and our “Krida” or Karma field is just the result of that “Cosmic” optional wish. Yet it gives us time and avenue to correct our Karma for the eternal inter-play of lila. Every mortal is created and given a situation or field to play upon. This can be luxury, misery, pain or incapacitate lives. Then the eternal destiny roots our selves to pass through the process of thought wherein the options of Karmas are given be it abundance of knowledge, wisdom, wealth, connection and socio-economic status or otherwise of everything said above.

The Karma or “Krida” we do are optional for sure but sometime very imposing and we have to follow the tight ropewalk. Then with passage of time one realizes that its our consciousness that helps us to root through Karma pattern. This karma pattern are motivated by our ego, wish, jealousy, lure, lust, greed and self-gratifying tendencies. At the end of experimenting with these we realize or atleast term it as our “Destiny”. Perhaps we should call it “Fate”. Now the question comes we reached upto this “Destiny as a stage” out of our conscious contemplation or we just picked up our self-centric ‘lures’ to reach this. But again our mind asks whether all these are part of “Divine Lila” experienced as and at “Mortal Krida”.

Sages, for centuries have been telling us that life, pain, misery, lust, greed and ego are to be won over in the play called “mortal Krida”. The “Eternal Lila” of divine is unattached phenomenon of sports but our “Mortal Krida” dominantly remains a phenomenon of attachment and attainment of pleasure or our wishful thinking. Here comes unharmonious aspect of our play and celestial Lila.

“Maya” is to be handled by detaching from over indulgence of life and that is possible with deep attachment with Shri Ram. Does it mean we need to renounce the world of “Maya”? Definitely not. One has to do duty and play his/her complete role to the society and be dutiful to all his creation and procreation. Then one questions how one can be detached with Maya while catering to the Maya. Well the answer is putting a limit to Maya and not supplying enough oil of greed to the wish lamp and slowly our attachment loyalty are to be shifted to the divine so that our Krida can become an unattached Lila of divine kind.

Now, we realize that attachment and detachment are two major components of life, which coexists. The “Krida” called life is all about handling “attachment” which pulls our Karma to south. Attachments of life are so passionate factor that centers around our sense organs. The pleasure derived from it are so dominating that one tends to scoop through aberrations, yet desire never ceases and ego never gets diffused. The anger, violence, pain infliction sadism, then pop up to create our pattern of Karma which becomes unsynchronized with the “Celestial Lila” and suffering derived out of pleasure befall and we conclude a “fatal fate” be it designed by the self or circumstances. Then comes blaming the eternity and concluding it as divine design of biased deliberation of divinity and misguided justice. In this context if we re-review our endeavour, our doings and deliberations, then we surely would conclude its our mortal

attachment of “Maya” that actually ordains all these. And being a “Krida” sport the loosing out to Maya is a given slope of life and detaching from it and walking against the current is possible when we transfer the loyalty of attachment to the Lord in a selfless manner by constant remembrance and marching for complete surrender so that Maya of life must cease and one attains Mukti from life and death.

To douse the fire of mayaful desire two major components work. One is born with pure innocence that has a sure shot divine link. That connects one to the divinity. The connectivity of innocence actually bridges - “Divine Lila and Mortal Krida”. An innocent heart hears the inner voice which constantly guides us through the life pattern. Paying heed to this means that we can correct our Karma pattern and negotiate our turn for the celestial attachment and creating detachment to the lower truth. Now, this level of human relationships that pervades our Karma pattern.

Every being is born innocent and purity of heart is the part of eternal elements that governs the “Divine Lila”. Yet, this innocence when processed through ego, jealousy, lure and lust gives birth to the shrewd cunningness, that complicates our Karma pattern at the “mortal Krida” level and results are obvious, no matter finally we blame the celestial design.

It's true, this world inflicts pains on innocent souls yet as ultimate truth wins the innocence would win and cater to the Divine Lila for our journey beyond our body.

Apart from innocence, another factor dominates and designs our Karma pattern. That is Santushti – and this is roughly translated means being contented with the given. It, though works on limitations and passes through the ordeal of suffering but it pops out the value system at play and aberration are never given a lift. Through the process of tediousness if Santushti resides in heart then a pattern thinking befalls and we cruise through successfully the time and space called “Mortal Krida”.

“Mortal Krida” is a unique game. It allows a play of sport with spirit of winning but defeating none. This uniqueness, if understood then we don't get into Tamasik and Rajwasik tattwa or element that facilitates conflicts and chaos. But if we realize the Sattwik element of “Krida” then conflict resolution is achieved and all play a harmonious role in the life with a pronounced “truce” in the mind. However, it's not only through food intake one gets these elements. Its purity of mind, thought, deliberation, expression and attitude that allows the flowering of Sattwik element and facilitates the fair play of “Mortal Krida” with harmonious semblance of “Divine” Lila.

Within these parameters if we see ourselves then we would realize that all creations are individual and unique. We do create relations, which are just making the team called “Mortal Krida” that patterns our karmic endeavour. Yet scoring and winning comes only at the individualistic level and that “equates” the purpose of divine Lila where every soul is on its individual journey elevating through its own Karmic pattern yet at the form level they live with many unequal, and here is the play of “Divine Lila” who inflicts pain to the noble soul to get purified faster and quickens merging with Parmatman is possible. Again, one who is given plenty is forced to indulge that hinders the process of Mukti as well.

In the mortal Krida the rule of the game is playing with innocence and shedding off cunning marks and nefarious activities. To facilitate a fair play one has to remember that we are all part of single creative

principle; uniquely and collectively we are one with the divine lila. And to facilitate the eternal lila we only need to culture love of selfless kind and provide space for others to flower. The nurturing the other self, praying for others and loving all selflessly matter for the emancipation of individual and salvation for all.

Summing up the theme of Divine Lila and Mortal Krida one needs to understand the theme in perspective. Divine Lila is the cosmic play where there is one destiny of “merging back to the core” or retreat to Parmatman after many a role given an enacted to all the animate and inanimate. Mortal play or “Krida” is one micro faction of divine design. We all are subjected to such a play individually then it widens with interplay of our micro world i.e. family which furthers as we keep on building relationships and beyond.

We look at our mortal endeavour as big and most important and that is propelled with ego, which defocusses our vision of divine lila. Yet, we have a spiritual thread called “Divine” name and constant remembrance facilitates a connectivity, which in turn control our Karma pattern. However, we who are children of plenty keep our materialism as goal or destiny and we loose sight of the divine play and we live an enslaved life with unending cravings and ever fueling lure and lust. On the other hand who are born in misery are distanced from divine lila as well; they only survive to eke out a living and sustain their lives. At both the extreme none is to be blamed as these are the destined paths to course through but not necessarily a “divine wish” always and perhaps not the result of Karma alone.

Being in touch with our inner conscience soaked with eternal innocence (not necessarily the concept of worldly piousness) is the matter of much needed contemplation. To unearth the secrets and relish the Amrit called divine lila is the play of life and can be relished even after our mortal existence ceases. The purity of love for divine (not for seeking help) comes with Simran or constant remembrance. And this process allows revelations and realization. But keeping it secret, even from your mentor, is the secret of life and matter of context for the realized soul.

Also remember no soul has lost its soul track and there is no concept of “ Bhatakana” (lost vision or misdirected) because divinity is extremely mystic comprehension. But one thing one should remember that we remain truthful to ourselves our endeavour without the context of reward and punishment. “ Mortal Krida” is driven by mortal rules logics to discipline our endeavour! Those value systems are hemming of the road to allow you a safe passage through life. But there exists a set of super logic, which is of divine kind and at times our mind cannot comprehend those secrets with our logic systems. Perhaps in the divine eye there is no sinner who is to be destined to hell because with name one gets elevated to the highest and with pseudo spiritualism one can be degraded to the minute entity of a neglected atom. Thus to understand the divine revelation one should just get connected with the innermost self and do one’s work whatever be good or bad but with pure innocence. To start the journeys just remember, “A saint has a past and a sinner has a future!” So regret nothing, never renounce, never give up your duties and callings and try to introspect and understand our “Mortal Krida” is harmonious to “Divine lila”. This is a play beyond our pleasure and pain, beyond giving and taking, but just loving the Lord Shri Ram and equally unharmpfully treating all HIS creation as HIS and HE HIMSELF. Because, we at mortal levels, do see, and behave and treat others as unequal but at the celestial level all are equals and part of HIM only.

GenderFuck and Fairy Love Magick

Visionary Love: ROIKA, LOKA and YAN

We gay men are at a key time in the evolution of our gay consciousness. We've been struggling to reach a great vision buried in us, which we first sensed only in the vaguest ways. We have all felt this vision, lying inside, watching, showing itself in dreams, directing our acts and beliefs in unseen ways. In the modern Gay Liberation Movement, the history of men's struggles has been the history of groping towards our vision, sensing it in the values of androgyny, in revolution, in free sexuality. It has led us to Stonewall, to genderfuck, to the birth of a new gay culture.

But during the past few years, it appeared that our movement ran out of steam; many militant groups faded, as did the brassy colorful rebels and our flagrant joyous celebrations. They seemed to be replaced by a new movement, the vocal gay Normals: fighting in the courts, the churches, the mental health professions, gaining advocate after advocate, victory after victory. It was as if the Homophile Movement for Equal Rights, taking new freedom from our radical flowering, thrust towards its goal of mainstream assimilation leading the mass of gays with them, and deflowering our movement, the movement toward our vision.

The Homophile Movement for Equality is a dead thing; dead to the gay vision, anti-magickal, counter-revolutionary. Its spokespeople and theorists shun the roots (the radical, source of nurturance and understanding) in favor of surface values: the social norm, success, integration, acceptance, assimilation. Its shallow reality suffocates the vision in us, co-opting gay people and vitiating the creativity and potential of the Gay Movement

In response to the sterile domination of the Assimilationists, many of us gay men have turned to a wholehearted embrace of a non-gay theoretical perspective, Marxism. Our attraction to this tradition stems from our attraction to our gay vision, which is one of absolute freedom. Such freedom is universal and therefore must encompass all people, destroying every form of oppression. Since no current theoretical system within the Gay Movement can sustain and help actualize our sense of freedom, aware gay people have turned to that tradition which does promise radical freedom—Marxism.

But in this process we ally ourselves with another line of thought which doesn't develop our unique, peculiar gay potential. An economic analysis of gay oppression is absurd, like forming a composite animal by tacking the legs of a kangaroo onto a tuna fish: the resulting creature makes a big splash in the water but doesn't go anywhere. The origin of anti-gayness is not to be found in economics. However, this doesn't deny the importance of people's liberation movements, and our solidarity with them (or membership in them for those who are gay and third-world).

But some of us aren't satisfied with either of these dominant branches of the male Gay Liberation Movement, whether Assimilationist or Marxist. We want to seek out our vision, which we sense contains a unique and necessary contribution to the freedom of humanity, which contains the seeds of a magickal healing transformation in consciousness, key to the evolution of humanity to a new stage of being.

We know we must bring our vision to birth, where its powers can act and grow in the world. We must develop it in a body of analysis and action, so it can take root in the soil of daily reality and generate a new liberation. For at the heart of our vision is a vital spirit-force, bringing a revolutionary change in how we see ourselves and other people and the goals toward which we strive.

In this essay we will explore this gay spirit-force, trying to uncover what it is and what it means. This exploration will not be easy, however, because the spirit-force is in many ways foreign to our western-trained consciousness. In addition, it has been the special target of anti-gay oppression, forcing it into the unconscious, into hiding. All of this gives it a vague, elusive mistiness, making it difficult to grasp.

Because of this, an important first step is to provide the gay spirit-force with a conceptual handle for focusing our awareness, to give a semantic meeting-place, a name by which we can evoke it. When I decided to write about the spirit-force, this was the first task I set myself.

I found the problem of naming to be quite perplexing. I puzzled over it and meditated on it for quite a while. Over a period of weeks, I became totally immersed in this quest, ignoring my other obligations and worries. I wrote to other gay people for suggestions, and spent hours making up alternate words. However, nothing was satisfactory, and I sensed that the answer was beyond my intellectual grasp.

One evening I was contemplating a list of names for shamans in non-western cultures. After a while, the room seemed to fade away from me, and I became lost in a growing feeling of joy or pleasure, much like being stoned on marijuana. Then the words on the page began to move about before my eyes. I felt a tingling in my body. I saw the words dancing on the page, and I started to play around with the letters, combining them in different ways.

I wrote the following words in a line: yirka-laul, which means "squeaky man" among the Siberian Chuckchee and refers to a male transvestite shaman; brujo, which means "sorcerer" among the Yaqui of northern Mexico; boté, which means "not man, not woman" among the Cree; and enaree, the word for a male transvestite shaman among the ancient Scythians, who lived north of the Black Sea in Eurasia.

I wrote these words in a line and began recombining the letters. I continued this in a haphazard way until something told me to stop, that I'd formed the right combination. This combination was roika - pronounced roy 'kah). I was somewhat awed by this whole event, and for several days thereafter I thought about this word, speaking it out loud and meditating on its sound. It seemed quite strange to me, somehow just what I was looking for. It seemed that this word truly named the spirit-force I had evoked. Because of the magick I felt in this word, I rearranged all the letters, and I offer it here as a name for the gay spirit-force: TIKA. But no other words had also come to me during my experience: LOKA and YAN. These, I later realized, were closely related to ROIKA, and named other important aspects involved in this gay spirit-force. Their meanings are described later in this essay.

ROIKA is a name for the non-rational, non-linear spirit-essence lying at the source of our gayness, The future potential of gay men lies in our uncovering and actualizing ROIKA. This is a complex, subtle process that must proceed on many levels and in many ways. In this essay, I'd like to suggest a method of analysis, and provide a conceptual outline which may prove useful in this uncovering process.

I'd like to explore how this spirit-essence came into existence, and how it is shaped through our gay experience. In this way we can uncover a doorway to it, seeing some of what it is and what it can mean for us.

But in order to get to this place, we must first take a look at several different factors influencing human life, basic factors underlying things people do and believe. Then we can see how these factors come together to generate the gay experience and its magical vision.

Spirit-Forces

First, we must look at the notion of "spirits" and spirit-energies. Our society exalts materialism, logic, and empiricism above all else, denying the part of reality that is non-material, non-rational, non-linear, and a-causal. All other and earlier cultures recognized this part of reality, whose landscape is formed of spirit-beings, gods, goddesses, demons, sprites, nymphs, devils, ghosts and fairies. The major aspect of this spirit-world is energy, dynamic numinous power beyond the concepts of time, space and cause-effect as we understand them.

This spirit-world and its forces exist in the universe and also in each person at a deeply unconscious level. This mysterious place inside is the source of energies attached to the basic biological patterns of life, death, love, growth, decay and birth. All human societies attempted to organize and regulate the psychic powers connected to these natural patterns, through ideas called "myths". Through myths people could shape and channel spirit-forces into distinct beings, summon them or appease them, deny them or exalt them with the highest honors. We see this important human activity in the infinite variety of religions, cults, systems of spiritual knowledge and magick the world around.

It would be unwise to suppose that such religions and magicks were mere delusions and fantasies. What was delusional about these institutions was their mythic ideas, but the powers they summoned were quite real. It's a delusion of modern society that such powers are non-existent,

The thing that earlier peoples didn't see was that they themselves were the creators of the spirits they worshipped. This was impossible for them to understand, because the myths they used to summon the spirit-forces were also the structures which composed their ego-identities, and since these myths originated from outside the individual—as past collective creations of the tribe—it was impossible to look within to find the true origin of spirits. Instead, all important forces were seen as originating beyond the realm of the person, in the sky, the earth, the wind, in the gifts and curses of the gods. This process of seeing a spirit or god-force as “out there” when really it's “inside” is called projection. The Wise Women and Wise Men of a tribe projected the spirit-beings into plants, animals and other natural features, teaching that these objects were the sole source of power, inspiration, and religious awe.

In modern society, our roots in the spirit-world have been cut. We still have myths, and the spirit-energies still work in them, but in a feeble unrecognized way. This is a unique development in the history of peoples. Never has there been a society with so little rapport with the spirit-world. Modern western culture marks the death of an era in the meaning and life of humanity.

Social Falseself Systems

The religion of a society is one aspect of a larger institution which holds that society together. Every culture has its own way of seeing things, of seeing not only the spirits, but also everyday life, society, and the people themselves—the things we call personality and identity. The way a society views and interprets human beings and the world around them forms an overall framework, a world-view, a unique “reality”. This “reality” is made up of imaginary concepts—myths—that are the rules, rituals, taboos and beliefs which form political, economic, religious and behavioral systems. These myths are created and maintained by the people of the society, who are the living embodiment of the myths they believe in (see Joseph Pearce, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*).

When a person is born into such a society, it's already been determined who they'll be when they grow up. The myths form identity patterns which the growing child internalizes as personality structures. Everyone has to have an identity, because it's necessary for survival, organizing the chaos of infinite nature into meaningful forms. The internalized myths of a society, which coalesce into roles such as being a “man”, a “woman”, a “shaman”, a “chief” and a “hunter”, are the human equivalent to instincts, molding the patterns through which life can flow.

This is an important point to understand. Humans don't come into the world with an identity; this identity must be made. Adult humans have to have such an identity because this is the source of ontological security, Ontological security means “safety of being”, and is that sense of groundedness, of firm substantiality, which upholds and binds psychic life. Without ontological security, the human mind/body has nothing to hold it together and collapses into confusion, death-madness and idiocy. Because of this, people are vitally (and usually unconsciously) interested in the creation and maintenance of ontological security, which they cling to passionately and, in times of threat, desperately (see R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self*).

The primal function of human societies is the creation of ontological security for its members. This is the psychic purpose of social myths, which are internalized as identity structures. These identity myths originate outside the individual and come in standardized forms like plastic molds. Because each individual is unique, such myths deny the true nature and potentials of that person. The contents of myths vary radically from culture to culture, but the process is always the same: a mythic identity is a prefabricated identity. If you are a “woman”, for example, you must do certain things and not do other things, you have certain powers and you don't have others, irregardless of who you are as an individual. Such an identity is false to the person's inner nature, and so I call it a false self, and the collectivity of such selves is a social

false self system. All societies have always been social false self systems, structuring the ontological security of personal identity in a web of myths unique to that society, in “a huge network of more or less successful attempts to protect mankind [sic]. . . the colossal efforts made by a baby who is afraid of being left alone in the dark” (Geza Roheim, *The Origin and Function of Culture*, p. 131).

Our society is a false self system. Simply look around you, and you'll see the living myths that define the people, that are sex roles, work roles, sexual behavior roles, collective standards of moral belief, politics, religion and so on. Or go into any anthropology section at a library and read about any culture, the Arunta of Australia, the Chuckchee of Siberia, the Celts of Europe, the Hopi of the Southwest—each a unique false self system with complex beliefs, taboos and social norms, each creating unique kinds of people.

The range in mythic possibilities allows for vast diversity in human expression. Some myths encourage a certain trait or behavior, others are discouraging. Middle Eastern society, for example, is open to same-sex sexuality; Christian society condemns it. The Siwans of Africa obliged every man to have homosexual affairs, while in Mandan society of North America homosexual relations occurred between young men and the berdash, a transvestite shaman. Monogamy was the rule in Hindu India, while polygamy was normal in Moslem India. Certain west African tribes honored the birth of twins; the Aranda of Australia immediately killed them as evil devils. Celtic societies encouraged headhunting as a way to gain mystical power, whereas the thought never occurred to the Chuckchee shaman. In *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* Margaret Mead studied three cultures, in one of which both sex roles are by western standards passive and nurturant, in another both are aggressive and hostile, and in a third the males are “feminine” while the females are “masculine”.

The social false self system is the psychic counterpart to the outward social forms of economic and political organization. The myth system is the mental institution paralleling the material institutions of family, clan, food supply, hierarchical structures and so on. Just as all societies contain hierarchies in which some people are more important, influential, and powerful than others, so too the false self system legislates these hierarchical differences through identity myths, through which the meaning of some individuals is elevated and/or that of others devalued. Patriarchy, with its sexist myths creating strong “men” and weak “women”, is a good example of the hierarchical structure inherent in social myth systems.

The false self system as a human institution is itself the source of all hierarchies involving status and power. Since false self mythology originates from outside the individual, a person must be taught their

falseself identity, and for this to happen a person must submerge their autonomy, allowing themselves to be led by others who “know”. This gives rise to authority, to the individual(s) who dispenses the vitally necessary ontological security. Since a person needs this security, they will look to and believe in authorities. Thus emerge the two complementary falseself roles of leader and follower, those with power and those without it. This pattern is open to exploitation, to the self-aggrandizement of individuals and the generation of oppressive social institutions perpetuating unjust power relations.

In large complex societies like our own, the myth system is complex and relatively vague, but it's still the basis for identity, behavior, and hierarchies. Because of this mythic vagueness, some people have turned to earlier eras or to other societies (such as matriarchal nature cultures) for a more secure sense of identity and belonging. However, it's a mistake to see the oppressiveness of modern society in terms of other cultures, because all are falseself systems which deny and destroy the inner center of the person. And it's this inner center which contains a potential for humanity never realized in any past culture.

LOKA

It's possible for a person to create an identity from within, to find their own truths and build ontological security based on their own myths. This is a trueself identity, as contrasted with falseself. There is a spirit-essence which underlies and guides the development of trueself, which I have named LOKA.

One of the first acts perpetrated on growing children in a social falseself system is the merciless and brutal destruction of any allegiance to LOKA. This LOKA is the golden magical Starpoint, the hub of the inner spirit-world and all the kosmos as well, what the mystic Ramana Maharshi called “the very Core of one's being, the Center, without which there is nothing whatever”. This Starpoint contains the pattern for unfolding a person's spirit-being through self-realization of all their deepest aspects. Full identity with LOKA is the ultimate point in human evolution, in which the person is the godlike being formed of all human ideals and all the gods and devils of the spirit-world, a suprememystic, scientist, and erotic hedonist, identified with the totality of the universe. It's very difficult for me to imagine such a person, who seems to be a mass of fantasies and contradictions. Yet as Ramana Maharshi says, “the greatest power is at the command of the man [sic] who has penetrated to his inmost depth”, and such a being is in harmony with all energies and wisdom.

The path of trueself toward LOKA involves the development of the cosmic forces which exist in oneself. In a social falseself system the spirit-power of individuals is given by the social myths; in development of trueself a person seeks to become self-powerful, creating myths to shape and unfold their spirit-energies. Thus those developing their trueself are characterized as people of power who function contrary to the social system and against falseself. Several esoteric spiritual traditions in the world have been concerned with the development of LOKA by a select few. One of these traditions is that of the Yaqui brujo, described by Carlos Castaneda in his books about the sorcerer Don Juan.

At the surface it might seem that LOKA is socially divisive and destructive, leading ultimately to a war of selfish Nietzschean super-people. But this is just another social myth to keep people in line. In following the path of trueself, a person must pass through the spirit-doorway named YAN (the topic of the next section). This requires a transformation in their identity, and results in the discovery of, and alliance with,

a spirit-force called the Androgyne. The Androgyne, the union of masculine and feminine, personifies the harmony of opposites. It is the paradigm of healing, embodying all the diverse traits of masculinity and femininity together in oneness. When a person allies themselves with the Androgyne, they become a force for wholeness, for gentle balance, tapping into the endless nurturance of the primal Great Mother and the infinite energy-power of the primal Sky Father (see below). Through the Androgyne a person seeking LOKA becomes an agent in the transformation of a conflicted, unbalanced humanity.

YAN

The basic myth in all societies is the one concerning sex roles: social “reality” is divided in half, and one part is called male, the other female. In its religious or spiritual aspect this is often expressed as the cosmic Primal Parents, the Great Mother and the Sky Father, one or both of whom may become the dominant god in a culture. In terms of personality, this basic sex-role myth is expressed as the antithetical nature of men and women, and the characteristics that distinguish them, such as strong/weak, active/passive and so on. This distinction according to sex role is the pattern through which all opposites are then formed: up/down, black/white, good/bad, life/death, Sex role is the root, because it's the Principle of Opposites internalized as personal identity, which in turn is the basis for all ego values and relationships.

In this mythic cosmic duality, the interface between male and female takes on special meaning. In almost all world religions, it is the union of the primal male and female principles which creates the earth or humanity. Thus, the way to reach the original wholeness of the kosmos is through the interface of male/female duality. I have named this interface YAN. YAN is the doorway of spiritual realizations, of entering the worlds of power and infinity. In Chinese mysticism YAN is called the Tao, symbolized by Yin and Yang. In the Indian tradition of Tantra, the sacramental sexual union of a man and a woman evokes the YAN gateway. A Christian text describes it in this way: “For the Lord [Jesus] himself being asked by someone when his kingdom should come, said: “When the two should be one, and the outside as the inside and the male with the female neither male or female.””

All ancient cultures and all nature societies gave a central place to people who communed with spirits—shamans, sorcerers and priestesses. All these people entered the spirit-realm through YAN—by obliterating opposites through trance, drugs and sex, and by appearing as both sexes simultaneously. In many societies shamans combined male and female attributes in order to personify YAN. They did this in some cases by taking on the traits of the “opposite” sex during rituals, such as a male shaman wearing painted-on breasts. In other cases the shaman would abandon the sex role appropriate to their genitals, appearing and acting as a person of the other sex. Such shamans have been found in the tribal groups of all continents, and this practice survives in western culture as the skirt worn by Roman Catholic priests. Sometimes the sorcerer, in wishing to identify with the “opposite” sex completely, would take on the sexual love practices of the “opposite” sex, becoming the male “wife” of a man or the female “husband” of a woman. Thus, many sorcerers were homosexual, as this increased their contact with YAN. This was the case for example with the Chuckchee of Siberia, where «transformed» shamans of both sexes wielded the greatest power and respect.

The purpose of all such transformations was to attune the self to YAN, the Doorway to the kosmos. Within YAN, time, space, and cause-effect have no meaning, and it's possible to contact spirit-forces in order to effect various changes such as healing sickness, effecting curses, increasing the tribal food supply, and gaining spiritual wisdom.

However, YAN is merely a tool, Its uses depend on the mythology in which it's evoked, the values and goals seen as meaningful and important, In a social false-self system, YAN is subservient to the reality determined by social myths. In our western culture, YAN is denied altogether and given no legitimate place in the mythology. In the service of true-self, YAN becomes the healing door to LOKA, leading to identification with the spirit-force of Balance, the Androgyne.

- Text from the book "Visionary Love: A Spirit Book of Gay Mythology" by Mitch Walker and Friends

Poems by Tennessee Williams

Androgyne, Mon Amour

By Tennessee Williams

I

Androgyne, mon amour,
brochette de coeur was plat du jour,
 (heart lifted on a metal skewer,
 encore saignante et palpitante)
where I dined au solitaire,
table intime, one rose vase,
 lighted dimly, wildly gay,
as, punctually, across the bay
mist advanced its pompe funèbre,
its coolly silvered drift of gray,
 nightly requiem performed for
mourners who have slipped away...

Well, that's it, the evening scene,
mon amour, Androgyne.

 Noontime youths,
 thighs and groins tight-jean-displayed,
 loiter onto Union Square,
 junkies flower-scattered there,
 lost in dream, torso-bare,

young as you, old as I, voicing soundlessly
a cry,
 oh, yes, among them
revolution bites its tongue beneath its fiery
 waiting stare,
indifferent to siren's wail,
ravishment endured in jail.
 Bicentennial salute?
Youth made flesh of crouching brute.

(Dichotomy can I deny of pity in a lustful eye?)

II

Androgyne, mon amour,
shadows of you name a price
exorbitant for short lease.
What would you suggest I do,
wryly smile and turn away,
fox-teeth gnawing chest-bones through?

Even less would that be true
than, carnally, I was to you
many, many lives ago,
requiems of fallen snow.

And, frankly, well, they'd laugh at me,
thick of belly, thin of shank,
spectacle of long neglect,
tragedian of public mirth.

(Chekhov's *Mashas* all wore black
for a reason I suspect:
Pertinence? None at all—
yet something made me think of that.)

"Life!" the gob exclaimed to Crane,
"Oh, life's a geyser!"
 Oui, d'accord—
from the rectum of the earth.

Bitter, that. Never mind.
Time's only challenger is time.

III

Androgyne, mon amour,
cold withdrawal is no cure
for addiction grown so deep.
Now, finally, at cock's crow,
released in custody of sleep,
dark annealment, time-worn stones
 far descending,
no light there, no sound there,
entering depths of thinning breath,
farther down more ancient stones,
halting not, drawn on until

 Ever treacherous, ever fair,
 at a table small and square,
not first light but last light shows
(meaning of the single rose
where I dined au solitaire
sous l'ombre d'une jeunesse perdue?)

 A ghostly little customs-clerk
 ("Vos documents, Mesdames, Messieurs?")
 whose somehow tender mockery
contrives to make admittance here
 at this mineral frontier
a definition of the pure...

Androgyne, mon amour.

San Francisco, 1976

The Strange, The Crazy, The Queer

I think the strange, the crazy, the queer
will have their holiday this year,
I think for just a little while
there will be pity for the wild.
I think in places known as gay,
in secret clubs and private bars,
the damned will serenade the damned
with frantic drums and wild guitars.
I think for some uncertain reason,

mercy will be shown this season
to the lovely and misfit,
to the brilliant and deformed—
I think they will be housed and warmed
And fed and comforted awhile
before, with such a tender smile,
the earth destroys her crooked child.

A Fairy Song by William Butler Yeats

*Sung by the people of Faery over Diarmuid and Grania,
in their bridal sleep under a Cromlech.*

WE who are old, old and gay,
O so old!
Thousands of years, thousands of years,
If all were told:
Give to these children, new from the world,
Silence and love;
And the long dew-dropping hours of the night,
And the stars above:
Give to these children, new from the world,
Rest far from men.
Is anything better, anything better?
Tell us it then:
Us who are old, old and gay,
O so old!
Thousands of years, thousands of years,
If all were told.

I would like to make a Book that will derange men, that will be like an open door leading there where they would never have consented to go, in short a door that opens onto reality.

—Artaud

We forget that we are all dead men conversing with dead men. My course of study was philosophy.

—Borges

Excerpt from the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tsu

TWENTY

Give up learning, and put an end to your troubles.
Is there a difference between yes and no?
Is there a difference between good and evil?
Must I fear what others fear? What nonsense!
Other people are contented, enjoying the sacrificial feast of the ox.
In spring some go to the part, and climb the tiered race,
But I alone am drifting, not knowing where I am.
Like a newborn babe before it learns to smile,
I am alone, without a place to go.
Others have more than they need, but I alone have nothing.
I am a fool. Oh, yes! I am confused.
Other men are clear and bright,
But I alone am dim and weak.
Other men are sharp and clever,
But I alone am dull and stupid.
Oh, I drift like the waves of the sea,
Without direction, like the restless wind.
Everyone else is busy,
But I alone am aimless and depressed.
I am different.
I am nourished by the great mother.

Sol and Mani: Sun and Moon

Text by Daniel McCoy

Sol (pronounced like the English word “soul”; Old Norse Sól, “Sun”) and Mani (pronounced “MAH-nee”; Old Norse Máni, “Moon”), are, as their names suggest, the divinities of the sun and the moon, respectively. Sol is female, and Mani male.

Sol and Mani form a sister and brother pair. When they first emerged as the cosmos was being created, they didn’t know what their powers were or what their role was in the new world. Then the gods met together and created the different parts of the day and year and the phases of the moon so that Sol and Mani would know where they fit into the great scheme of things.[1]

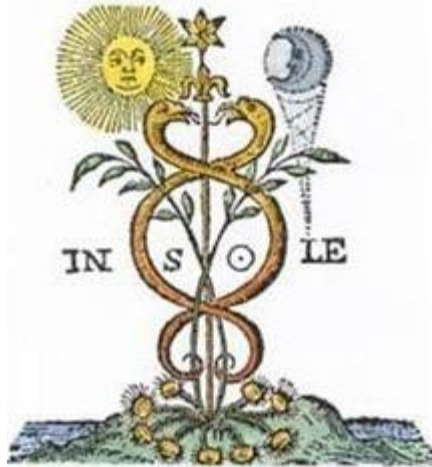
They ride through the sky on horse-drawn chariots. The horses who pull Mani’s chariot are never named, but Sol’s horses are apparently named Árvakr (“Early Riser”[2]) and Alsviðr (“Swift”[3]). They ride “swiftly” because they’re pursued through the sky by the wolves Skoll (“Mockery”) and Hati (“Hate”),[4] who will overtake them when the cosmos descends back into chaos during Ragnarok.

According to one of the poems in the Poetic Edda, a figure named Svalinn rides in the sun’s chariot and holds a shield between her and the earth below. If he didn’t do this, both the land and the sea would be consumed in flames.[5] Elsewhere, the father of Sol and Mani is named as “Mundilfari,”[6] about whom we know nothing. His name might mean “The One Who Moves According to Particular Times.”[7]

The medieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson, whose Prose Edda can’t be taken at face value but nevertheless is in most low-quality introductory books on Norse mythology, offers a story that combines these disparate references into a whole. The story isn’t attested anywhere else, and very well may be an invention of Snorri’s rather than a traditional, pre-Christian tale. According to Snorri, Mundilfari had two children who were so beautiful that he called the girl “Sol” after the sun and the boy “Mani” after the moon. Sun married a man called Glenr (“Opening in the Clouds”[8]). The sun, which had originated as a spark in Muspelheim, was pulled through the sky in a chariot, but the chariot had no driver. The gods were outraged by Mundilfari’s arrogance in the names he chose for his children, so they forced Sol to drive the sun’s chariot.[9]

The conception of the sun and the moon riding on chariots through the sky is evidently a very old one among the Norse and other Germanic peoples. It can be found on rock carvings and other Scandinavian artifacts from the Bronze Age, perhaps the most notable of which is the Trundholm sun chariot (pictured). The idea that the sun deity was female, and with a name that means simply “Sun,” is also attested among the continental Germanic peoples.[10]

So while we don’t know much about Sol and Mani, we can be sure that the basic conception they indicate is not only authentic, but was a part of pre-Christian Germanic religion from the earliest times



The Marriage of the Sun and Moon

The Moon Is Always Female

This was the first poem that I really connected with the first time I read it, sometime in my freshman year of High School. At that time, I was already well-versed in Norse mythology, in which the Moon is male and the Sun is female.

The Moon Is Always Female

Marge Piercy

The moon is always female and so
am I although often in this vale
of razorblades I have wished I could
put on and take off my sex like a dress
and why not? Do men always wear their sex
always? The priest, the doctor, the teacher
all tell us they come to their professions
neuter as clams and the truth is
when I work I am pure as an angel
tiger and clear is my eye and hot
my brain and silent all the whining
grunting piglets of the appetites.
For we were priests to the goddesses
to whom were fashioned the first altars
of clumsy stone on stone and leaping animal

in the wombdark caves, long before men
put on skirts and masks to scare babies.
For we were healers with herbs and poultices
with our milk and careful fingers
long before they began learning to cut up
the living by making jokes at corpses.
For we were making sounds from our throats
and lips to warn and encourage the helpless
young long before schools were built
to teach boys to obey and be bored and kill.

I wake in a strange slack empty bed
of a motel, shaking like dry leaves
the wind rips loose, and in my head
is bound a girl of twelve whose female
organs all but the numb womb are being
cut from her with a knife. Clitoridectomy,
whatever Latin name you call it, in a quarter
of the world girl children are so maimed
and I think of her and I cannot stop.
And I think of her and I cannot stop.

If you are a woman you feel the knife in the words.
If you are a man, then at age four or else
at twelve you are seized and held down
and your penis is cut off. You are left
your testicles but they are sewed to your
crotch. When your spouse buys you, you
are torn or cut open so that your precious
semen can be siphoned out, but of course
you feel nothing. But pain. But pain.

For the uses of men we have been butchered
and crippled and shut up and carved open
under the moon that swells and shines
and shrinks again into nothingness, pregnant
and then waning toward its little monthly
death. The moon is always female but the sun
is female only in lands where females
are let into the sun to run and climb.

A woman is screaming and I hear her.
A woman is bleeding and I see her

bleeding from the mouth, the womb, the breasts
in a fountain of dark blood of dismal
daily tedious sorrow quite palatable
to the taste of the mighty and taken for granted
that the bread of domesticity be baked
of our flesh, that the hearth be built
of our bones of animals kept for meat and milk,
that we open and lie under and weep.
I want to say over the names of my mothers
like the stones of a path I am climbing
rock by slippery rock into the mists.
Never even at knife point have I wanted
or been willing to be or become a man.
I want only to be myself and free.

I am waiting for the moon to rise. Here
I squat, the whole country with its steel
mills and its coal mines and its prisons
at my back and the continent tilting
up into mountains and torn by shining lakes
all behind me on this scythe of straw,
a sand bar cast on the ocean waves, and I
wait for the moon to rise red and heavy
in my eyes. Chilled, cranky, fearful
in the dark I wait and I am all the time
climbing slippery rocks in a mist while
far below the waves crash in the sea caves;
I am descending a stairway under the groaning
sea while the black waters buffet me
like rockweed to and fro.

I have swum the upper waters leaping
in dolphin's skin for joy equally into the nec-
cessary air and the tumult of the powerful wave.
I am entering the chambers I have visited.
I have floated through them sleeping and sleep-
walking and waking, drowning in passion
festooned with green bladderwrack of misery.
I have wandered these chambers in the rock
where the moon freezes the air and all hair
is black or silver. Now I will tell you
what I have learned lying under the moon
naked as women do: now I will tell you

the changes of the high and lower moon.
Out of necessity's hard stones we suck
what water we can and so we have survived,
women born of women. There is knowing
with the teeth as well as knowing with
the tongue and knowing with the fingertips
as well as knowing with words and with all
the fine flickering hungers of the brain.

*The sun shines by day, the moon shines by night,
The warrior shines in his armour,
The Brahmin by his meditation.
But the Buddha shines radiant both day and night.
(Excerpt from the Dhamapada)*

MANIFESTO OF THE NEW REALISM

We summarize

The affluent society is at its end, and that's a good thing. New constraints allow us to take a more realistic view of our lives. We take it back into our own hands.

We come as prisoners

- Caught up in what is technically possible: The ambiguous playfulness is lost, the question marks are gone. The overabundance of possibilities is the guarantee of our unhappiness; it crowds out the “what for”. Actuality wins against truth.
- caught in repetition: thinking in a reliable orbit, copied language, rehashed art, music, literature.

Before we can form a thought ourselves, the media distracts us into what is consumable.

We are reclaiming the world

The first step: So far we have only suspected our captivity, but we were able to believe the promise that everything would get better and better: prosperity would become greater and greater, life would become more and more simple, and the degrees of freedom would become greater and greater. Crises such as climate change, the corona pandemic and the global bloc formation are causing these illusions to crumble. That's a good thing: we finally get the chance to think more deeply, determine alternatives and take our first steps.

The second step: Our answer is not abstinence, but rather to consciously choose. Not turning away from, but turning towards the world: disillusioned and critical and at the same time unbroken and full of love. The solution lies in the interaction with others, which we recognize when we start with the individual and not with their group membership.

The third step: By taking action, we create community and realize a fulfilling and meaningful life.

10 questions instead of an inventory

1. Why do we trust our GPS more than our instincts?

2. How can it be that our phone, rather than our body, tells us when to workout?
 3. Why do we allow ourselves to consume advertising instead of video content?
 4. Why do we reward recycled music and punish originality?
 5. Why do we feel exhausted so quickly in everyday life, even though we have more free time than any generation before us?
 6. Why do we want to talk like a teenager from the Bronx?
 7. Why did the major breakthroughs in philosophy and psychology occur decades ago?
 8. Who wants us to talk about women and men, young and old, Yankees and Southerners, Germans and Russians, instead of really perceiving our counterparts?
 9. Why are we addicted to punchlines that stop us from thinking?
 10. Why only what can be steered through the media, what is superficial, and telegenetic reaches us, and no longer what is bulky, deep, and entangling?
- 10 pulses instead of a solution
1. Find out what really defines you. Define what is important and what is an accessory.
 2. See for yourself what the world is like instead of perceiving it through the lens of the media.
 3. Throw yourself into nature and experience how it catches you.
 4. Be tough on yourself: Allow your opinion to change as the facts change.
 5. Get into action: Hike instead of lying on the sofa. Design games instead of playing. Found and manage a football club in your village instead of consuming football.
 6. Start doing it: move, write, make music, discover the world. What we will remember are the peak and turning points.
 7. Strong are not those who do not stumble. Those who fall again and again but get up in the end are strong.
 8. Look for examples and fellow campaigners: everyday heroes. Travel book authors who see for themselves what the world is like. Expressionists and existentialists who know what substance means. Independent artists and musicians.
 9. Books are good if they consist of literature because only reading them completes the work of art.
 10. Religion can do good things precisely because it is an imposition.

- Text by **Antonio Partant** @ antonio-partant.de

Our Revels Now Are Ended

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits and
 Are melted into air, into thin air;
 And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

- **William Shakespeare**, The Tempest (Act IV, Scene I)

Sisters now our meeting is over.
Sisters we must part.
And if I never see you any more
I will love you in my heart.

Yes, we'll land on the shore.
Yes, we'll land on the shore
Yes, we'll land on the shore
And be safe forever more.

- Wiccan Chant

“When you are very quiet,
you have arrived at the basis of everything.
That is the deep, dark blue state
in which there are millions of stars and planets.

When you are in that state,
you have no awareness of your existence.”

– Nisargadatta Maharaj

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and Earth.
The named is the mother of the ten thousand things.
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one sees the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name;
this appears as darkness.
Darkness within darkness.
The gate to all mystery.

