

Creativity and Art in Process Work, Spirituality and Life

The Journal of Process Oriented Psychology

Art Creativity and
Process Work

Standing Before the Muse:
Dance and Process Work

Is Process Work Art?

A Collage of Thoughts on
Art and Process Work

In Pursuit of Passion



Art: My Path of Heart
Einstein, Sleeplessness
and Girls

The Daimon Creativity
Poetry

Process Acting

Painting: The Beauty,
Fun and Discoveries of
Inner Work

Present Tense: Healing
as We Speak

A Message in the
Bottle: Process Work
with Addictions

The Journal of Process Oriented Psychology

A research journal
in Process Work

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What is Process Work?

Process Oriented Psychology, or Process Work, developed by Dr. Arnold Mindell, is an innovative and comprehensive psychotherapeutic modality designed for working with the entire spectrum of human consciousness. This dynamic approach to the unity of mind, body, spirit and world has its roots in Jungian psychology, Taoism and modern physics. It integrates dream work, bodywork, relationship work, meditation and large group work into a single theoretical framework. This issue of the Journal focuses on art and creativity, and the interface between art, creativity and Process Work.

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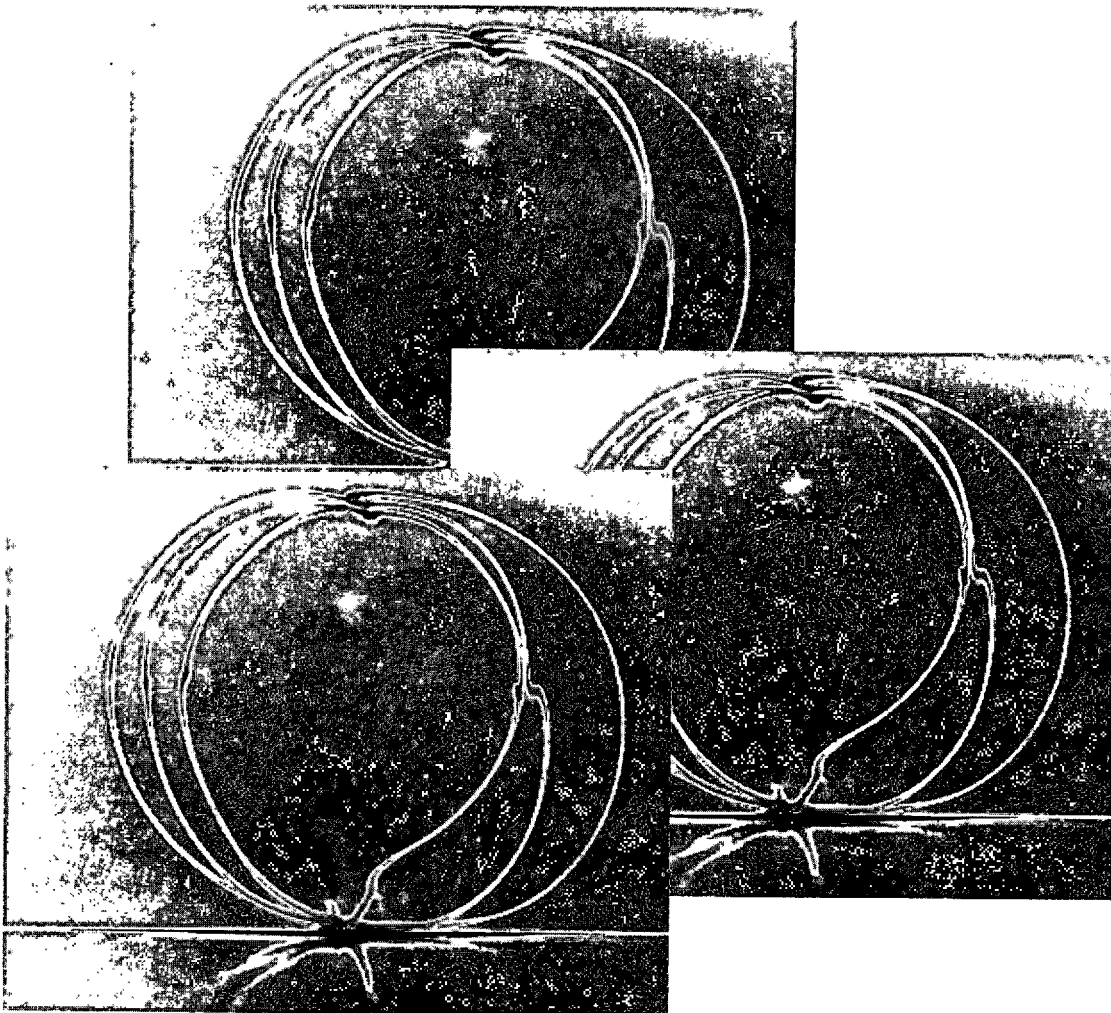
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PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA STONE

Movement with Flashlight

Comment: Creativity and Art

The heart of creativity is an experience of the mystical union; the heart of the mystical union is an experience of creativity.

Julia Cameron

This editorial comment emerged from many conversations we've had about creativity during the incubation and production of this issue of the Journal. Living so closely with the topic over the past six months, we've been debating the nature of creativity and the artistic process. Following are a few of the many points that fascinated us. This is only one of many ways to look at creativity. It is intended to be thought provoking rather than definitive.

The creative spirit

Many people feel that during the act of creating they are in contact with some eternal force, personified in various forms as the muse, the daimon, inspiration or the higher self. Often people who consider themselves creative feel driven by their creativity. Even if creativity destroys relationships, health or the quality of life, it becomes an irresistible element, a life and death matter. For some people, creativity is like a divine calling to a spiritual path: it's next to impossible to refuse the summons.

One common view of the relationship between spirituality and creativity is that the artist is a conduit for a muse or creative spirit. The idea that the human steps out of the way and lets divine inspiration do the work has a long tradition. Ancient Greek poets called upon the Muse to speak through them. Medieval European church artists did their works for God. Since their expression was from and for God, not for individual recognition, these works were never signed. In this view of creativity, the artist's identity needs to step aside long enough to allow whatever is trying to emerge to find its way out. Being creative becomes a relationship between the person, or the artist, and the energy or spirit that is channeled or expressed. The artist's job is to learn how to relate to this spirit. As in spiritual traditions where one's goal is to express god's will, many creative people say they struggle to learn how to get out of the way sufficiently to let the creative spirit through.

From a slightly different angle, spirituality and creativity are related by the desire to contact a greater spirit. In this view, the artist's identity remains intact, and being creative is a meditative practice, similar to prayer, a way to reach a state of grace. Regardless of whether creativity is perceived as passing through a person or as a way to contact the spirits, people seek this ecstatic state, longing for inspiration and a sense of connection to a source.

Many of us find inspiration in wild and far out times when we are possessed by an idea or an image, when we forget to eat and sleep. This state of grace is seductive. The idea of perpetually living in an inspired state of connection to a creative source seems ideal. It is wonderful to imagine, but there are at least two problems with it. First, inspired grace is elusive. It's like trying to remember a name you've forgotten. When your goal is remembering, it's next to impossible to remember. The name is more likely to float back in the middle of the night, or when you're involved in something else. So it is with inspiration. The harder we try to have it, the further away it seems.

Second, if one of your goals is to create art, this state alone isn't sufficient. It is ideal for the initial inspiration but falls short of forming the final piece. The ecstatic state exists in relationship to ordinary reality or daily life. Many people find that in order to be creative, their normal identity needs to "die." When we enter the inspired state, we lose our "I," our sense of identity. We have to get out of the way enough to allow space for the unknown. At the same time, we need an identity to mediate communication between the inspired state and the ordinary world. This is a delicate balance. Too much attachment to the "normal" identity may block creative impulses that might be around. The identity takes over, and life can grow dull. On the other hand, we need an identity to help sift through, shape and express what has been experienced in wild and inspired states. The state of ecstasy, connection with the spirit, is one stage of the creative process. Another stage is "translation," capturing the experience from the inspired creative state and transforming it into the finished piece of art, be it sung, danced, painted, sculpted or written.

Living life as art

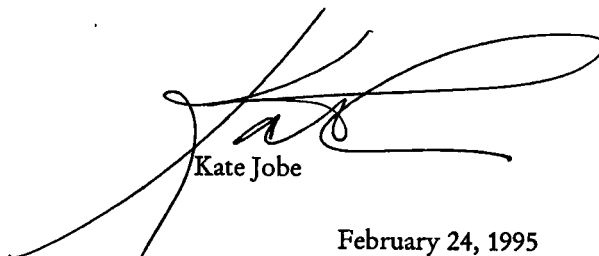
If creativity and art are seen as a means for getting closer to the spirit, it would seem that living as if one were a piece of art would make life richer: we would become the artwork and the creator would be some larger spirit. But we are more than clay waiting to be molded by a greater spirit. We actually co-create along with a larger spirit. We have our own impulses, and the interaction between our impulses and impulses that seem to come from the spirit is what makes life truly creative. Sometimes we have conflicts about what the spirit sends us. For example, it might give us the impulse to yell at someone, and we don't want to yell. The conflict between these two impulses has the potential to shape the original impulse into something new, like talking about our irritation with the person rather than simply screaming at them. In this case, the impulse to yell probably made us aware of our feelings about the person. The artistic life results from the relationship between inspiration and our normal identities.

Group life can be seen similarly. If we see individuals as conduits for a creative spirit, then whatever impulse one group member experiences is a relevant part of the group's experience. For instance, if someone has the courage to say that they feel sad in a group where feelings are not welcome, often others will say that they also feel sad but were afraid to say so. Expressing this feeling can relieve the atmosphere of the group. We could say that the person who expressed sadness is connected with a spirit or creative source in a similar way that an artist is connected to creative impulses. Expressing this emotion in the group is actually the creation of art, in the sense of bringing something new into the environment.

The person who lives creatively can help change the entire group's identity. The ability to use oneself as an indicator of a direction for a group is a characteristic of leadership or wisdom in a group. One of the skills of a leader, especially one with a caring attitude for all parts of a group, is being aware of and valuing both inner impulses, which may be radical, and the reactions that we have to them, mediating the relationship between them in a way that turns the impulses into something useful for the whole group. In both art and group life, creative people, who are willing to explore the unknown, often illuminate emerging trends. Thus creating art and being a leader in a group are similar. Both involve mediating an original impulse, shaping the original spurt from the spirit into a finished piece of art or an artistic contribution to community life.



Leslie Heizer



Kate Jobe

February 24, 1995



Kate Jobe

When I first encountered Process Work I was impressed by how useful it was to me as an artist. At the time I was a choreographer/dance teacher/body worker looking for depth in my work and ways to connect with my audience or the person with whom I was working. As my identity has shifted toward being a therapist I am impressed with how useful art is to being a process worker. Both dance and Process Work have enriched my life and enhanced my personal growth. Some aspects of art and Process Work are similar; what I have learned in one I apply to the other. In this article I will talk about ways these two areas interact for me and some of the details of how they support each other.

Arnold and Amy Mindell have encouraged the use of art and dance in Process Work by developing many of the original ideas about movement and art in Process Work and supporting clients and students to experiment with movement. Many of their ideas are reflected here.

Learning and training issues

In my experience, training in the disciplines of dance and Process Work is very similar. Both have a common element of vocation. Most people who study dance or Process Work aren't looking for a job, but feel personally drawn to the discipline. Like most satisfying fields, both disciplines demand a lot of people who study and work in them: it seems to take approximately the same number of years (5-30) to become somewhat proficient in either. Both require a propensity

or talent, active continuing education and personal involvement.

Each person has her reasons for pursuing dance or Process Work and her own path for doing so. My path to dance started in high school when it was introduced as part of our physical education program. At that time dance satisfied my need for physicality and had the depth of social action (in choreography) and self expression that helped me discover aspects of myself. It lacked the competition of sports and allowed me to escape from my dreaded school to take specialized classes.

In college a few years later I had the chance to go to Russia to study ballet. I went to St. Petersburg, then called Leningrad, with a small group of high school and college students on a six-week summer exchange program. Although it was primarily a language program, the director of my dance school arranged for us to study at the Kirov Ballet. I was 20 years old and a relative beginner.

Some mix-up happened and we were put in the soloists' classes. We were dancing with some of the most accomplished ballet dancers in the world. Although in ballet classes you practice many of the same steps from your first to your last day, the combinations and constructions are more complicated and difficult in advanced classes. As a beginner I was totally sunk. I would do as much of the class as possible and then sit, watch and cry with frustration at being unable to do what the other dancers were doing. That frustrating summer became magical, transformative and empowering. I struggle to describe exactly

how my commitment to dance shifted. Something clicked in me and I understood that it was going to take everything I had to become a dancer. Dance had to become me instead of being something I did. During those six weeks I made the decision to really go for it, to pursue dance in a single-minded way.

In Russia I saw how dedicated the dancers were to their art. While we were there, one woman was asked to dance her first minor solo part in *Swan Lake*. We watched her rehearse, and it was touching to see her try a movement, over and over again failing to satisfy herself and her teachers. She looked like she was suffering and simultaneously refusing to be satisfied with less than her utmost. She seemed to put her personal issues aside long enough to achieve something that at first seemed far beyond her abilities. Seeing someone who was such an accomplished dancer being so humble was an inspiration.

Dance and Process Work: intuition, inspiration or skill

Inspiration often seems to draw people to dance and Process Work. I remember my first piece of choreography. I was inspired, longing for dance to pour out of me. I wanted to dance about Harriet Tubman, the African American woman who led slaves out of the Southern United States as part of the underground railroad. I worked and worked on the piece, but nothing happened. Performance looked so easy when I went to dance concerts and saw the wonderful movement and meaningful choreography. Years later I realized that I was missing the tools to accompany my inspiration and passion. Fortunately, I had a teacher who let me struggle just enough to get the lesson and then helped me out.

In both dance and Process Work, I have had an ongoing conflict about whether to focus on skill building or on inspiration as a means for creation, learning and teaching. In my experience, inspiration and skill give each other forums in which to exist. One without the other is rarely satisfying. The dance between the two often keeps an event alive. Many of us have had the experience of thinking that intuition and the freedom to follow passion and impulses is what really makes a dancer, artist or process worker, then being convinced that skills and structure are the only way, followed again with the realization that we need to be free and impulsive. Lao Tsu addresses the dance of polarities in the Tao Te Ching.

Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty
only because there is ugliness.

All can know good as good only because
there is evil.

Therefore having and not having arise
together.

Difficult and easy complement each other.

Long and short contrast each other;

High and low rest upon each other;

Voice and sound harmonize each other;

Front and back follow one another.

(1972: Chapter Two)

Along the way toward becoming a dancer I often wondered if all of the careful training I was getting was in fact limiting my natural expression and inspiration. Did the countless "pliés" dull my lust to move? Did strict training inhibit my sense of freedom? I think my training stifled me at times, but I was also frustrated by not having sufficient physical skills and experience to feel free. Consequently, my inspiration was short-lived. Skills have finally given me a firm foundation and support to use my intuition, imagination and creativity. I often think it is a miracle that anyone sticks with difficult disciplines long enough to become proficient in them.

Breaking rules is a basic creative freedom, but that freedom can be limited by lack of a strong skills foundation. Years ago a friend told me the following story. He was a talented flutist and was just starting to study with a famous flute teacher. In one of his first lessons, he missed a note, and she said to him, "That's a mistake that you don't make. Practice and come back to me when you don't miss notes." This philosophy maintains that a solid foundation is the beginning of artistic freedom. When you know your craft so well that you don't have to think about what you are doing technically, you become highly flexible. At a certain point, you are no longer ruffled by mistakes, and so called "mistakes" become the soul of inspiration.

Recently on National Public Radio I heard Cassandra Wilson talk about her rendition of the blues song "Baubles, Bangles and Beads." Her version of the piece emerged from a difficult performance situation. She had been singing with her family for most of her life and was making her first solo appearance at a club in New York. The already tense situation was further complicated by the fact that the song writer was in the audience. This rather upbeat song was the first on

her program. She reported opening her mouth and singing, "Baubles...." Then she couldn't remember what came next. Slowly, she recalled the word, "bangles..." and going on, slowly, "hear how they jing-ling-a-ling...." As she followed the pace set by forgetting the words in the beginning, a haunting performance of the song emerged. This slow version became her standard rendition of the piece.

Contrasting this, in one of my early performances, I was very anxious to please and impress my audience. I was in a new city and important members of the dance community were in the audience. About a third of the way through the piece I fell flat on my butt. I was upset about the mistake and unable, with the skill and experience that I had, to use the moment as inspiration. I scrambled to my feet, and I am sure everyone in the audience knew I had done something unplanned. It takes a lot of practice to get to the point where "mistakes" are one of the roads to inspiration.

I recently had the chance to make a "mistake" that got to the core of a client's process. About 50 minutes into the hour, I felt that nothing was happening and I was not being very useful to her. When all else fails, I try movement, so I suggested that we move a little. We got up and began to move, when suddenly she backed up and said, "I don't trust you." My first impulse was to assume I was doing something wrong and shouldn't have suggested that we move. Then I realized that this "mistake" was actually perfect. It helped her protect herself and to make our interaction real. She later reported that this experience had helped her feel more independent and better able to recognize how mistrustful she was of many people in her life. The work was satisfying because of her courage to voice her thoughts and my ability to be fluid enough to use the moment as a new direction for our session.

Considering skill as a necessary foundation for inspiration has been very helpful to my training in Process Work. Structural aspects such as primary and secondary processes, channel structure, edges and dreaming up provide a road map that, when needed, can guide a lost therapist. Having practiced and practiced not only gives the therapist freedom to try new things, it also helps her understand what is going on.

Frequently what looks like intuition on the part of a process-oriented therapist is a result of careful observation of structural elements. An example of observation which could appear magi-

cal recently happened in my everyday life. I was driving a car with several passengers. We were looking for a parking space, and to everyone's amazement, I pulled into position to park where a car was already parked. When the car backed out, my passengers commented on how intuitive I was at finding parking spaces. What they didn't know was that as we drove into the parking lot, I had seen a person getting into the car. Anyone could have guessed that there was a relatively good chance that the car would soon leave.

Humility

Another area that Process Work and art share is humility. Although artists have a reputation for being anything but humble, relating to the muse is a humbling experience. I remember later years in my dance career, when I was doing a lot of choreography. I wanted to have more and more control over my work and found that I had less and less..I would start to plan a dance, full of ideas about content, how it should look and the movements, but all I could do was what came to me in the moment. I could no longer predict the dance. Fortunately these dances always turned out to be more interesting than what I had in mind, but it was disconcerting until I began to see my dances as about what the muse had in mind instead of about what I had in mind.

In Process Work, humility is important in the relationship between the client or group and the therapist. It is easy to be deluded into thinking you know something that the client doesn't and that you can actually solve a problem or know the direction of their growth. At one time or another, most of us who practice therapy feel we can "save" someone from what we think we see coming for them. The danger of this thought is that in thinking it, or acting as if you could do it, you devalue the client in relationship to yourself. You also miss the spontaneity and vitality of the unknown. In Process Work, as in dance, the direction is unpredictable. The muse one stands in front of is the same. Some call this muse the Tao, mystery or inspiration.

Patterns for growth from dance and art

Dance and art have helped me develop new patterns in my life. Things that I could do in choreography fifteen years ago I am just beginning to recognize as important in my personal life. I feel that art and dance can provide new patterns and satisfy the need for contact with

something eternal in a different way than life or therapy can. People will do the most amazing things for art. A timid dancer might identify with a starkly confident character in a dance, or a writer who feels unwanted in life might write a poem about universal acceptance. Why is this? One useful thought is that art gives us a way to disidentify with our more personal selves and helps us access some part of ourselves that is already connected with the eternal. In this way, art challenges the limits of being human and gives us access to greatness, to a connection with some universal level of experience. A couple examples of this stand out to me. One is personal and the other is from my work as a therapist.

Earlier in this article I mentioned a time when I wanted more control over my choreography. I recall standing amongst the dancers and saying I didn't know what to do. As a last resort, I just moved as the spirit moved me and invited the dancers to do the same. It was then that I understood the idea of the muse as something that graces us with creativity and art. I felt as if we were the instrument for something greater than ourselves and that our task was simply to embody it on the stage. It was an exciting way to work. The question of what should or shouldn't happen next was easily answered when I took the time to notice how I felt. The question was not aimed at me, but at a spirit or muse in the background. My body simply answered the questions. How was I going to use this in everyday life!?

Like most people, I tend to think I can control who I am, what my feelings and impulses are and, to a certain degree, the direction of my destiny. With the help of a Process Work therapist I have taken the pattern of contacting and following the "spirit" which I learned from choreography and applied it to my everyday life. Thinking that the "muse" is behind my feelings gives me a little distance from my impulses, especially ones that I feel are not me. For example, I might feel hurt about something. My usual identity would say, "Don't worry about it. Everyone gets hurt. It's not going to kill you, just ignore it and go on." Connecting with being the conduit for experience allows me to experiment with expressing hurt, thinking that it simply is there and someone needs to express it for the world. Often when I or others express what is inside of us, especially in group life, there is a ripple of recognition and or relief in the environment.

In another example, I had a client who was a painter. She felt that in her relationships she was insufficiently spontaneous and too good at keeping the peace. On an impulse I asked her what she was working on in her art. She answered that she was enjoying the outcome of her recent work in which she was exploring breaking all of the rules she learned in art school. Rules about color, proportion, line, form and composition came under her scrutiny and were dashed on her canvases. Her explorations created visual tensions that intrigued her and brought life to her work. I suggested that she try the same thing in her relationships, treating them as if they were pieces of art. She liked the idea, and when she tried it with me, was refreshingly lively in asking forbidden questions.

Because dance and art are not necessarily expected to fit into the mainstream, they provide freedom to act outside mainstream expectations. The painter had a forum for experimenting with rebellion and finding her own truth outside of the dangers of direct relationship. There she could establish a pattern that helped her outside of her studio.

Process Work in art

As a consultant for many dance productions I have helped choreographers with works that seemed awkward or dead. Process Work can help find life that is hidden in a failed creative attempt or a problematic moment in a piece. When it looks like nothing lively is happening, I look for what is happening and help that unfold. I often ask the dancers what they notice that is not only the choreography. Often they are distracted by thoughts and concerns about the quality of their performance. At other times they have said that they do not even feel present, but are just doing the movement without understanding why. In one case I asked a dancer who said she "left" during her performance, to go ahead and go wherever it was that she went. She found herself by the sea enjoying the power of the wind and waves. I asked her to do the movement as various aspects of her experience: herself, the sea and the wind. In this experience she found the motivation for the movement and her performance was chilling.

On a group level, I had an experience teaching a dance class in Zürich. Things were grinding to a dull halt. Toward the end of the class, I asked the dancers to walk, simply walk, across the floor.

Learning to walk this way is not easy. I was looking for a certain style. Over and over I demonstrated it and said, "Now go ahead and do it." The dancers couldn't seem to do what I was looking for. We were all getting frustrated.

Suddenly I realized that the walk I was looking for wasn't happening, but we could follow what was happening. We did a very basic movement exercise from Process Work. I asked the dancers to notice and to amplify whatever wasn't walking in the way I had asked them to. When they did this the most interesting and vital movement filled that room. There were all kinds of movements and images: huge monsters, limping people, and generally not so graceful things. We danced these characters for a little while. It was exciting, lively and satisfying. When we had gone as far as we could with this, I wondered what effect it would have on the more technical skill-building aspect of dance. At the risk of bringing us back into our earlier frustration, we decided to try the walk again. When the dancers walked this time, it was lively and perfect. In this example we were getting stiff and frustrated with trying to develop skills. When we looked for the mysterious movements, we were able to bring life into the room and ultimately into the walk we were trying to do.

Noticing the thing that is happening and unfolding it demands a lot of detachment. One has to give up, for the moment, expectations about how the work will go and what its outcome will be. It has been said that if you already know what the work is going to be, it is not yet creativity. This yielding to the Tao, higher spirit or inspiration invariably brings life and excitement to the work. Developing a tolerance for the unknown, for what Láo Tsu calls "the Tao that can't be told" (1972: Chapter One) is a tremendous asset.

Dance in Process Work

There are countless ways in which dance is not only useful but invaluable to Process Work. Dance has the ability to transport one directly into powerful, dynamic and lively experiences. As an art form it has the unique characteristic of not being separable from the body so that the expression and expresser are the same. Aside from the sheer enjoyment of movement and the "high" of exercise, movement offers an opportunity to join something beyond normal everyday life.

In one of the first group processes I facilitated I instructed the "dancers" simply to be aware of themselves and each other. Twenty minutes later I found myself agape at what I had witnessed. It was as if each person had melted into the group, which moved and responded as if it had a mind of its own. The individual completely disappeared. Decisions about where the group went, what rhythms it made, and what movement qualities flowed out of it happened as if it were a single individual. The dancers reported not knowing who was leading and who was following. No one could have guessed such unity existed in this group. After that experience the same group went on to produce many public workshops, concerts and a training program. We were relentlessly dedicated to the organization we subsequently formed together.¹

Curt Sachs wrote about the dance experience in the following way:

The dance is the mother of the arts....
The creator and the thing created, the artist and the work are still one and the same thing....man [sic] creates in his own body in the dance before he uses substance and stone and word to give expression to his inner experiences.

The word art does not altogether express this idea.... The dance breaks down the distinctions of body and soul, of abandoned expression of the emotions and controlled behavior, of social life and the expression of individuality, of play, religion, battle, and drama—all the distinctions that a more advanced civilization has established. The body, which in ecstasy is conquered and forgotten and which becomes merely a receptacle for the super-human power of the soul, and the soul, which achieves happiness and bliss in the accelerated movements of a body freed of its own weight; the need to dance, because an effervescent zest for life forces the limbs from sloth, and the desire to dance, because the dancer gains magic powers, which bring him victory, health, life; a mystic tie binding the tribe when it joins hands in the choral dance, and the unconstrained dance of the individual in utter devotion to the self—there is not "art" which includes so much. (1938: 3)

When reading the above passage, I could almost replace the word dance with Process Work. Although the outcome would be a rather grandi-

ose portrayal of Process Work, it represents some aspects of how I experience it. The sense of getting to the numinous, mysterious, unknown aspects of life is a common thread between dance and Process Work.

Sachs says, "The creator and the thing created, the artist and the work are still one and the same thing" (1938: 3). Process Work frequently utilizes this concept that movement and the unknown are one and inseparable when therapists help people embody their experiences.

I remember a woman who worked on her experience of asthma in a seminar. When asked how it felt, she said it felt like bands around her chest. The therapist encouraged her to create a movement with that feeling. She bent her knees, brought her elbows to her torso with both fistful hands sticking straight out from her waist. When invited to go into the movement more, the person went lower into her stance and said that she felt she was one of the figures on Easter Island.² The work developed along this line until the therapist suggested that she dance the feeling and the movement. After she danced the experience for some time she looked up and said that she was protecting the sacred in herself, and that was why she needed that stance.

If this person had not had the chance to embody the dance of the process she may not have been able to identify with her own protector. She not only identified with this protective force, but profoundly effected the group's atmosphere. Everyone present seemed to resonate with the experience. Dance ethnologists, like Curt Sachs, have talked about similar effects of dance in indigenous cultures, where dance is used in ritual and healing as an important part of community life.

The ability that dance and movement have to reach into the depths of human experience is at times quite astounding. In the example above there is direct access to unknown, mysterious aspects of life that seem to bypass those sense-making mechanisms that rob us of life-giving experiences. What, for example, would have happened if the therapist had asked this woman what the meaning of her asthma was, or if he had attempted to interpret her image of bands around her chest? She probably could have had an experience, but she would not have had the chance to identify with the statues from Easter Island. The mystery of these forms is perfect for our discussion. The definitive origins and meaning of the

Easter Island figures have eluded scientists and anthropologists. Their power is carried through a direct message to some part of us that does not need words to understand. We seem to know what these massive figures are and are touched by some eternal aspect of being when we see them. In some ways it is a blessing that little is understood about them; it enriches our own experiences of them.

Stuckness

Most of us have had the experience of getting stuck in a process or being with someone who is stuck. One gentle way to work with stuckness is to ask the person to do the difficult or impossible thing that is holding them up as a dance or a piece of art. Art creates a frame, allows space and time for an energy to unfold and evolve without the scrutiny of cultural dicta such as, "What you do and say must make sense."

Bringing movement into "normal" Processes Work

Many people ask me how to bring movement into their work as therapists with people who are not dancers or identified movers. I used to think that the client had to be the right one for movement. More recently I think that the more at ease the therapist is with movement, especially her own, the easier it is for her to use movement. Another helpful attitude is to believe in the experience the client is having. By directing the person's attention to their experience and believing in it, one can go a long way in making movement not only possible but attractive.

Dancing a relationship pattern

There are many ways that dance can be helpful in Process Work with relationships. In the following example, a man came to therapy wanting to work on his relationship to his partner. He particularly wanted to know more about their interactional style. He felt that he was open to his partner and that she was saying no and shutting him out.

Since he had a great fondness for movement, I suggested that we incorporate movement. As we began to role-play their relationship, his partner said something confrontational and in response he made a hand gesture that went along with the sense of his words. He said, "I want to follow your lead," while his hand made a graceful arc from the front of his body past his side to the back. He noticed what he was doing and said that it was like Aikido, where the martial artist uses

the energy of her opponent to diffuse an attack. The next moment he was saying, "I want to do my own thing." When his hand went in the same pattern he looked confused and said that the movement no longer went with the sense of his words. I encouraged him to find a movement that went with his words. He put his hand up as if blocking someone coming. We went back and forth finding words that went with movements and movements that went with words. Suddenly he experienced and recognized that he had two aspects inside, one that wanted to follow and one that wanted to be independent, say no and shut his partner out. He found great relief in following the hand that fended off relationship and in the knowledge that he needed time to focus on himself.

Conclusion

Process Work with movement can bring a person, group or community directly in touch with deeply mysterious and sometimes distant aspects of the dreaming process. Identifying with these aspects of one's self is often a deeply fulfilling experience. Art is a vehicle for bringing these experiences into a public forum, allowing them to influence and shape our times. Process Work also

is a means to deepen these experiences, stay open to the unknown and to bring social change into a public forum.

Notes

1. We formed a group called Western Ordered and Random Movement (WORM). Our organization studied together everyday for two hours, starting at 8 a.m.!
2. Easter Island, located 2000 miles off the coast of Chile, is famous for its stone monoliths. There are over 600 of these enormous figures on the small island. See illustration behind the title of this article.

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Is Process Work Art?

A Ruminaton

Joe Goodbread

Process Work, besides its function as psychotherapy, has a very public aspect. As a way of illustrating its basic principles, it is commonly demonstrated in large groups. Such publicly enacted Process Work has a therapeutic effect which goes beyond the subject of the work. Often, the entire group is drawn in, as into a sacred space where something of great import occurs. Many participants have transformative experiences, sharing the feeling that something highly significant has happened. At such times, you may hear people say, "That was a work of art."

Over the past twenty years I have been observer, subject and therapist in perhaps thousands of such group demonstrations of Process Work. I have often wrestled with the questions, "What are we doing? Is it therapy? Is it science? Is it art?" I have come up with a lot of ideas, but no concrete answers. In the past five years, while grappling with similar questions regarding the existence or "reality" of many constructs used in process theory, I have come upon some philosophical theories relating language, concepts and experiences which suggest to me that the question "Is Process Work art?" can never be definitively answered.

Instead, my readings in philosophy, particularly the philosophy of language, have convinced me that far richer questions would be, "In what ways is Process Work art? In what ways is it not art?" These questions are useful because they help us sharpen our awareness of exactly what we consider art to be.

A full exploration of these questions, which would require that I define just what I mean by "art," and just what I mean by "Process Work," is clearly beyond the scope of this article. Alternately,

I could explore my intuitions to become more aware of how I think about Process Work and art, alone and in relation to one another.

In this article, I present some of my own rather intuitive ideas about Process Work and art, and illustrate them with an example of a piece of Process Work in which poetry played a prominent part.

Some intuitions about art and Process Work

The process worker has no goal other than to follow nature. The client with whom she works is at the center of the process. A therapist who consistently sees her client only as a medium upon which to impress her own vision would be stretching my notion of Process Work. Besides this main dissimilarity, I also see many similarities between Process Work and art.

Art can never be fully intentional. The artist visits nature, releasing forces which were there long before she arrived. Michelangelo claimed he was a servant to his stone, simply releasing the form that dwelt within it. Long years of apprenticeship and practice make the artist a worthy vessel to receive inspiration, the muse or the spirit. Without the blessing of nature, there is no art, only mechanical technique.

To do Process Work without the cooperation of nature is to be a mere technician. Like a midwife, the process worker can only help into the world that which was already gestating in the client. The highest goal of Process Work resembles Michelangelo's: to find and release the form in the stone. The skill and sensitivity required of the Process Worker is like that of the artist who follows rather than overpowers nature.

Then there is the matter of universality. One view holds time to be the arbiter of what is and isn't art. The quality which distinguishes art from craft, and great art from transitory entertainment, is the quality of universality. Does it outlast the fashion of the times? Does it endure? Does it reach beyond the boundaries of the culture from which it sprang to touch the hearts and minds of people with radically different outlooks on life?

Qualities of Process Work which seem universal prompt us to compare it with art. When Process Work is a private matter, it is like a bit of poetry spoken between lovers. When Process Work happens in the midst of a group, and apparently private concerns touch all of us, we feel something artistic in its doing. Great Process Work has the capacity to connect us with fundamental issues in our lives: matters of life and death, love, conflict, compassion and humility. It is art because it affects us in much the same way that art affects us.

There are ways, then, in which Process Work is and isn't art. But this question is only the beginning of a more interesting line of inquiry into the ways art enters into and mingles with the practice of Process Work.

Process Work and the poetry of experience

In some ways art is indispensable in the practice of Process Work. I would like to support this claim by showing that there are strong parallels between the work of the poet and the process worker. Specifically, I hope to show that the kind of creativity which goes toward the production of a poem is similar in both intent and execution to the kind of creativity which is a hallmark of Process Work. The ideas I present here were stimulated by my reading of *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, by George Lakoff and Mark Turner.

A personal view of Process Work

In my view, one of the main goals of Process Work is to help individuals, groups and large collectives embrace disavowed aspects of their experience. I previously presented a partial theory of the disavowal of experience (see the *Journal of Process Oriented Psychology*, Vol. 5 No. 2). Put briefly, people and groups tend to disavow, through any of a number of processes, contradictory aspects of their experience which, if embraced, would lead to serious existential conflicts.

What kind of conflicts do I mean? Some examples include: violation of identity, incompatibility of contrasting aspects of experience, and fear of the unknown.

1) Violation of identity. People readily disavow experiences which lead them to question their established identities. A person who sees herself as peace-loving will tend to project, repress or otherwise disavow any evidence of aggressive thoughts, feelings or behavior she finds in herself. A group which considers itself peace-loving may marginalize or dismiss members whose styles or ideas they see as excessively aggressive. The same group will tend to repress awareness of its own aggressive action in marginalizing the "offenders."

2) Incompatibility of contrasting aspects of experience. People often find themselves in experiential double-binds, as when:

- They find that they simultaneously love and hate someone close to them.
- Those who have been abused may wish to defend themselves against injury by a parent or a partner, but find that to do so would open them to even greater injury by that person.
- Their opinions differ from those prescribed by a tyrannical government, but to express or even think them could mean imprisonment or death. This almost always results in repression of the dangerous or "rebellious" thought or behavior.

On a collective level, this incompatibility of experience expresses itself in open or covert warfare between holders of conflicting viewpoints.

3) Fear of the unknown. Large, abstract and partly incomprehensible issues, like life, death and suffering, are generally disavowed in everyday experience. They may suddenly be forced to the forefront of our awareness through personal loss, illness or spiritual crisis. If we continue to disavow them, various trance-like and extreme states of consciousness may result, or they may be preserved in the form of physical symptoms or other somatic experience. (See Mindell 1985, 1988.)

Approaches to experiential conflicts

Experiential conflicts may grow quite extreme without crossing the threshold of our awareness. However, when ordinary processes of repression fail, we are brought face to face with irreconcilable aspects of our experience. We may then feel the need to relieve the unbearable conflict in which we find ourselves.

I have been able to identify three main ways that people resolve experiential conflicts, although there are countless others.

1) Change: Experiential conflicts may be resolved by changing the disturbing aspects of one's experience. Many of us try to resolve inner conflict through psychotherapy or counseling in an attempt to change our behavior, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts. On a social level, institutions such as prisons, psychiatric hospitals and schools are meant to fulfill this function.

2) Search for meaning: Rather than change our experiences, we may try to understand them. Religious and spiritual practices are the oldest attempts to deal with conflicting aspects of experience by finding a framework of meaning under which the various terms of the conflict make sense. How, for instance, shall we deal with the death of a child or beloved partner in a world which we otherwise find kind and supportive? How can we accommodate the spectrum of feelings: grief, fury, perhaps even relief? How to deal with the unexpected ebbing of our own life energy? Religion addresses itself to such questions, typically positing a myth which makes sense of the contradictions. Some analytically oriented forms of psychotherapy also seek to resolve experiential conflicts by discovering their meaning. A young man who suffers from a chronic inability to hold a job may find a great deal of comfort in knowing that he is not bad or mad, but is "working out a complex" with his male superiors.

Although understanding may resolve experiential conflicts, it can have the disadvantage of taking us out of the experiences themselves. This can itself be a form of repression through avoidance. Understanding the origin of a severe pain is a different matter from processing the experience itself, which is the focus of the third approach to experiential conflict.

3) Search for experiential coherence: We often find that what we think about disturbing experience may be worse than the experience itself. When we find the courage to explore the experiences which we most fear, we often find them quite different from our initial preconceptions. Experiential psychotherapies of all sorts have developed ways of helping clients "over the edge" of their preconceptions and into "the experience itself." Body-oriented therapies, Gestalt Therapy, and Process Work are but a few examples among many.

Process Work approaches experiential conflicts with the insight that even strongly disavowed experience is neither static nor totally unconscious. It can be "unfolded" by noticing and encouraging its spontaneous extension into the person's imagination, movement, body feeling and relationships. Such unfolding encourages the client to permit seemingly incompatible aspects of her experience to co-exist, without necessarily building a conceptual bridge between them. Apparently contradictory experiences may then become coherent, in the sense that they stick together in larger experiential patterns which are free of the initial conflict.

Psychotherapy is a relatively modern instrument in the search for coherence among contradictory aspects of experience. A similar function is served by those works of art which touch us most deeply, and those which have the greatest universal appeal. A central function of artistic expression is to reveal new and helpful ways of comprehending those experiences which are hardest for us to grasp: life, death, suffering and the spirit. These three modes are not mutually exclusive: creatively applied, they can interact to yield new and efficient ways of helping us embrace previously disavowed experience.

Art, Process Work and unfolding experiential conflict

The search for experiential coherence highlights a very interesting relationship between Process Work and art. Although any form of art may be a vehicle for exploring novel ways of dealing with experiential conflict, I wish to focus on a particular event in which poetry and Process Work merged in a complex and interesting way to help someone come to terms with a seemingly intractable experiential conflict.

Poetry and Process Work

At an introductory seminar on Process Work, which took place in Europe, a man in his late 40s asked for help with a difficult life situation. He was depressed, felt he was losing most of his relationships, and was having a crisis around his job. In short, he felt miserable and isolated. The most troubling aspect of his experience was his feeling that people ignored him even when he was in their presence, as if he were invisible to them. He felt that he was depressed because in spite of his vast need for human relationship, he seemed to be growing more and more isolated.

As he described his difficulties, I kept asking him leading questions, encouraging him to unfold the nature of his experience of isolation. Suddenly, his eyes flashed, he smiled and giggled, and said "I feel like I'm on Mars!" His face then became morose again, and he continued his sad story.

I mentioned that a central objective of Process Work is to encourage clients to embrace the totality of their experiential world, especially disavowed aspects. Disavowed experience typically announces itself through the sort of behavior this man, let's call him Fred, displayed when he said "I feel like I'm on Mars!" The fleeting, seemingly joyful expression which came over his face contrasted strongly with his rather depressed appearance as he talked about his troubles. His remark about Mars was a mystery; it didn't fit with the bulk of the information he provided. But the apparent joy which accompanied it suggested that it might be useful for him to be invited on a trip to Mars.

I suggested to him that he might care to explore his passing remark about going to Mars. He looked at me quizzically, and said that he often had the fantasy of isolating himself completely and telling the whole world to get lost. I asked him how he might do that now, in the moment. He said that he would simply sit in a chair facing the wall and turn his back on the whole group. He did this, and sat motionless and silent for several minutes.

I anticipated that the group would eventually grow bored and restless, but to my astonishment, they sat in rapt silence, carefully watching Fred. After three or four minutes, Fred turned around, looked at the group, and began to apologize for keeping them tied up for so long. Several members of the group protested, saying that they were not at all bored, and encouraged him to go back to his Martian isolation. He began to talk again, trying to explain how he was feeling, but I encouraged him to go back to what he was doing.

After another few minutes, Fred began to speak to us. He continued to face the wall this time, and spoke in a ringing, commanding voice. He said that he was suddenly reminded of a fragment of a poem, the epitaph of W. B. Yeats. He recited:

Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!

From his position of isolation, he began to speak as though he truly cast a cold eye on life

and death, in the manner of one who has gained a measure of detachment from his worldly cares. From that position he was able to speak to himself, the earthly Fred, and tell him that it was not important whether people liked him or not. It was vital that he find and follow what was important to him. All else was irrelevant.

Fred was visibly moved by his own speech. Although he felt that the advice was very relevant, he felt that the experience of sitting with his back to the group and immersing himself in his own feelings and thoughts was equally important. He said that all his life he had been terribly dependent on what others had thought of him, and suffered from not being able to keep his own counsel.

Many members of the group were deeply affected by Fred's experience; quite a few had tears in their eyes. I suggested that Fred and the others take a few minutes to stay with whatever they were feeling.

When Fred and the others were ready, we discussed what he and they had experienced during the work. Fred said that he had rejoiced in his new freedom to establish the rules of interaction. He found himself enjoying his own company, regardless of what others thought he should be doing. He felt a spirit of rebellion; from his lofty Martian state he could assert his will with the troublesome people in his life without worrying about the consequences.

When Fred recited the Yeats poem, something shifted both in his mood and in the emotional atmosphere of the group. Fred feared he had bored them with his personal problems; to the contrary, many participants said that his work had moved them deeply, putting them in touch with their own need for detachment and independence of outside judgments. All agreed that his reciting the poem brought something powerful and universal into the room.

That was the work. Let us now look at the various ways Process Work and art mingled as we unfolded the drama of Fred's life.

The poetic and the therapeutic

I see at least two specific ways in which psychotherapy and poetic art mingle in the work with Fred. The obvious one is Fred's recital of the Yeats poem. The less obvious instance might be called spontaneous "cooperative poetry" which occurs between Fred and the therapist. It revolves around Fred's use of poetic metaphor to describe

his isolation, and the therapist encouraging Fred to select and expand upon the experience lying behind that metaphor.

Poetic metaphor and underlying experience

Lakoff and Turner suggest metaphor is poetic to the degree that it creates new connections between seemingly unrelated or contradictory aspects of our experience (1989: 67-69).

When Fred speaks of his sense of isolation as "being on Mars," he uses a poetic metaphor for a state of consciousness in which one is "absent" from one's desired or usual state. It is poetic because its imagery contrasts with his more mundane description of his depression. It is also poetic because it encapsulates the complexity and mystery of Fred's experience without reducing it to literal descriptions.

If we do not recognize the poetic quality of this expression, we may simply think he is choosing a quirky or extravagant way of saying he feels lost or lonely. We would then run the risk of reducing his experience to a triviality, cutting off precisely that spontaneous extension of his experience which is the goal of our work.

We are likely to overlook the poetic quality of his metaphor because it is not incorporated into a crafted piece of poetry; it takes a practiced eye to spot an uncut diamond in a handful of pebbles. Part of the process worker's craft involves noticing unusually rich or contrasting metaphor while looking for a handle on disavowed aspects of the client's world of experience.

Poetic language provides such a handle by encapsulating rich patterns of experience within its imagery. Poetic language is often accompanied by other expressions of a person's underlying patterns of experience: remember that Fred smiled and giggled as he spoke of going to Mars. Unlike his typical feelings of depressed isolation, his Martian experience seemed to make him happy!

Unfolding language into experience

Because poetic language encapsulates experiential patterns, it provides an excellent starting point for unfolding those patterns into immediate experience. When I asked Fred to go to Mars, I invited him to let this experience unfold and extend itself, to permeate his immediate awareness. He chose to do this by turning his back on the group to better immerse himself in his own thoughts and feelings. It was his way of unfolding the image of "going to

Mars" by letting it extend into movement, relationship and feeling.

Cooperative poetry

Conventional wisdom requires a work of art to be the act of a single person. The artist must translate her initial inspiration into concrete imagery by skillfully manipulating her chosen medium. If we require artistry to have all of these elements, it would be idiosyncratic to call Fred's lone image of "going to Mars" poetry.

If, on the other hand, we wish to use the poetic quality of language to get a handle on underlying patterns of experience, we should be liberal in our evaluation of the poetic. We might conceivably evaluate a person's language on a "scale of poeticity" to determine which expressions would most readily unfold into their underlying, possibly disavowed patterns of experience.

Since it is usual for the poet to perform this evaluation, assembling poetic language into finished poems, neither the client who produces poetic language, nor the therapist who evaluates it, could be considered "the poet." Instead, the generative and evaluative functions are shared by process worker and client. Process Work might therefore be viewed as "cooperative poetry," whose goal is to unfold the client's experience, rather than to produce finished pieces of poetry. As we shall see in the next section, the result is no less poetic than intentionally created poetry. The poetic aspect of Process Work transforms concrete, personal experience into a universally accessible pattern which, in turn, can elicit meaningful personal experience in others.

Poetry as an ally in Process Work

Poetry played a second, more explicit role in the work with Fred, when he, from the standpoint of his Martian isolation, recited the Yeats poem:

Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!

This was the second instance where poetry, this time an "off the shelf" poem, gave him a powerful image for unfolding yet another piece of his world of experience.

Considering three questions may help us understand why the Yeats poem had such an effect on Fred and the rest of the seminar participants:

- 1) What experiential patterns lie behind the Yeats poem?

- 2) How did these patterns help Fred in unfolding his experience of his situation?
- 3) Why did the introduction of the poem take these experiences beyond Fred's private world and create a deep feeling resonance in the other participants?

First, let us look at the experiential patterns in this poem.

Horseman, pass by!

Although there are many avenues to approach a poem, I will focus the following exploration of the poem on the kind of metaphorical analysis presented by George Lakoff and Mark Turner in *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. I have chosen their approach because it most closely matches our notion of poetry as encapsulated universal experience. Lakoff and Turner present a rather complete analysis of these three lines from Yeats' much longer poem, "Under Ben Bulbin" (1989: 189-91). Rather than cite details of their analysis, I will present my understanding of it. The metaphorical structure of the Yeats poem means something like the following.

There is a conventional metaphor which equates "cold" with dispassionate. A cold eye is a dispassionate eye. Another conventional metaphor compares seeing with understanding. To cast a cold eye on something is to understand it in a dispassionate way.

Another conventional metaphor connects the concept of life with the concept of a journey. This is possible because we see journeys and lives as having similar structures. A journey has a beginning, a destination and a middle part. We experience our lives as beginning at birth, moving toward a final destination of death, and involving various activities along the way. Journeys are a useful metaphor for lives, because they give us concrete events on which to base our understanding of the more abstract concepts of birth, death and human activity.

Thus, we can understand the Yeats poem something like this: the poet is speaking from the grave. He has reached the end of his journey and is now at rest, with a lifetime of experience behind him. A horseman rides by and reads the epitaph, the dead poet's message to him. The message exhorts him to "Cast a cold eye/on life, on death." From the standpoint of the end of his life journey, the poet can advise the rider to have a more dispassionate understanding of life and death.

Who is the horseman? Again, applying the "life is a journey" metaphor, we may understand the horseman as someone full of vigor in the midst of life. Why does he need the poet's advice from the grave? Someone in the midst of life might tend to cast a hot, or emotional, eye on life and death. This might mean seeing the events of life and the threat of death to be of overriding importance. It might lead one to cling desperately to life and to fear death inordinately. An overly emotional attachment to life and fear of death might divert one from one's path; the horseman might stop, pondering his life and death too emotionally, and interrupt his journey prematurely. We all know people who, for fear of death or of not living life fully, experience a kind of deadness or chronic depression. Yeats is therefore exhorting the horseman not to dwell too long on life and death, but to carry on with the business of life. This is the function of the last line, "Horseman, pass by!"

This analysis, based on Lakoff and Turner's reading of the poem, hardly begins to exhaust the richness of its imagery. Before we go further into the poem, I want to call attention to the fact that all of this rich imagery arises out of a poem fragment which is three short lines, eleven words in length! This ability to capture an immense amount of life in a seemingly simple creation is one of the marvels of what we call "art."

Let's look more closely at the poem. Although the poem appears to be advice given from one person to another, we might also view this poem as Yeats' advice to himself. He obviously did not write from the grave. It must therefore reflect a duality of viewpoint Yeats held during his lifetime.

The first viewpoint belongs to a man already dead. From the perspective of the grave, he can look back over a life full of emotional concern for life and death, and realize that a colder view might have served him better.

The second viewpoint belongs to the horseman, who probably corresponds to Yeats in the midst of a passionate life, very much concerned with matters of life and death. After all, he wrote the poem, which is concerned with just those themes!

If we consider that contrasting viewpoints of a single situation correspond to contrasting experiences of that situation, then we may understand this poem as Yeats' attempt to find a novel resolution of an experiential conflict. Here is one possible formulation of both the conflict and the resolution offered by the poem.

While we are in the midst of life, an excessively emotional concern with life and death may depress us and distract us from the business of living. We may arrive at the end of our lives and realize we have not lived as fully as we might have, had we possessed the insight we now have from the standpoint of the grave. This might give us cause to regret that we have wasted so much of our lives worrying about death. On the other hand, had we not lived as we had, we might never have achieved the dispassionate viewpoint which we now hold.

This is roughly the pattern of experience which lies behind the poem. The next question we must deal with is: How does this pattern help Fred unfold his experience of his own life situation?

There are strong parallels between Fred's situation and the experiential conflict portrayed by the poem. Fred's initial complaint was of isolation and depression. He did not know why he was depressed, but also felt too dependent on others' judgments and not attentive enough to his own needs. The first part of the work, his "trip to Mars," gave him access to the value of his own introverted world of experience. He had the opportunity to experiment with being his own man in the midst of a group of people. Contrary to his expectations, he neither bored nor alienated them. Paradoxically, Fred's dispassionate attitude toward human contact actually brought people closer to him!

The poem puts Fred's experience into a broader context by supplying him with an explanation for his depression. In light of our understanding of the poem; we can imagine that Fred's depression may come from an overly emotional preoccupation with life and death. Fred's viewpoint as he recited the poem corresponded to that of the dead poet. It was advice from beyond the grave, given to a younger man in the midst of life. The poem casts a new light on the relationship between Fred's depression and his need for a more detached view of his everyday life. They are different aspects of the same process. Viewed from the standpoint of the end of life, his depression and isolation are attempts to gain access to that detachment. Viewed from the standpoint of one in the midst of life, they are frustrating disturbances which seem to render him incapable of relating to his fellow human beings.

From what should Fred seek detachment? It is not only from his personal cares, but from the abstract, universal concepts of life and death. Fred shares his quest with some of the great spiritual traditions of the world. The question, "How shall I balance my passion for life against the reckoning which I fear will come at the time of my death?" is one that has plagued humankind since the dawn of consciousness.

We can now understand our third question: why did Fred's introduction of the poem have such a profound effect on the other workshop participants? It transformed his private concern over his depression into a universal concern about the right way to lead one's life. His approach to his own experiential conflict modeled a way for others to approach their own similar conflicts. The poem, within the context of Fred's personal struggle, offers us two viewpoints which we may hold in parallel at any stage of our lives. It goes beyond advice and action by showing us how to entertain two seemingly contradictory experiences in a way which brings them into meaningful relationship to one another. The poem is explicit: we can embrace both of these experiences by identifying with the poet and the horseman. Through doing so, we see both of their experiences as aspects of one coherent whole.

Poetry and Process Work: a complex relationship

Poetry and therapy interact in complex and interesting ways in this story. This interaction helps me to answer the question, "Why does Process Work sometimes look like art?"

Process Work resembles art because both arise from a similar impulse, an impulse to create new representations of the contradictory and indeterminate complexities of human experience. While their immediate goals may differ, both share an attitude which values the irrational, untidy and disturbing aspects of the human condition. They see this untidiness not as something to be remedied, but to be celebrated, framed and unfolded, in the ultimate faith that human beings have the resources to make something meaningful, useful and even beautiful out of the most awful-seeming parts of their natures.

Because both their immediate goals and forms differ, Process Work and art complement one another in their approaches to human experience. While an artist may intend to change people through her work, she must do this by appeal to universal principles. It is left to each viewer to

make his or her own sense of the work, to make its universal message personal. Process Work starts at the other end of the spectrum, focusing on the individual and particular aspects of concrete experience. Through the work, clients often discover universal experiences behind apparently mundane personal troubles. The process by which they do this is not so different from the artist's. It is the job of the process worker to notice the universal in the particular, the poetic in the mundane, and to reconnect each client with the source of his or her own creative impulse.

Here the boundary between art and Process Work becomes indistinct. Creativity, skill, a sense for the artistic and a reverence for the complexity of human experience all play a role in setting the style and tone of a given piece of Process Work.

Lakoff and Turner comment on the value of poetry in modern society:

Western tradition, which has excluded metaphor from the domain of reason, has thereby relegated poetry and art to the periphery of intellectual life—something to give one a veneer of culture, but not something of central value in one's everyday endeavors...[t]here is an ancient and unbroken debate over whether poetry is misleading fancy to be dismissed or truth

to be studied. The terms of this debate are mistaken: poets are both imaginative and truthful. (1989: 214-215)

In a similar way, I feel that the debate over whether Process Work is art is mistaken: it is both art and therapy, creation and empirical discovery. Trying to pin down human experience to any one category is like trying to wrestle with an eel. You can't win without killing it.

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A Collage of THOUGHTS on Art and Process Work
Jytte Vikkelsoe

The art in this article was created by the author.

Art

The aspect of art that most attracts and interests me is the indefinable quality that moves the artist during the creative process and influences observers long after contact with the piece of art. Art as expression is much more than the object of art itself. One definition of art is that the degree to which an object is considered art is related to the artist's capacity to capture and express the essence of an experience.

This definition becomes especially interesting when considering art from the perspective of Process Work, or looking at Process Work from the perspective of art. I would like to focus on the following aspects of this definition:

1. The artist's creative process;
2. The captured experience, or the art object;
3. The art object's power to touch and influence similar areas of experience in the observer;
4. The intriguing similarities of art and Process Work.

What is the magic of art that touches us and draws our attention? Art can help us question habitual perceptions and reawaken our senses to the world around us. Art can express beauty and bring awe back into everyday life; it can portray ugliness and awaken us to disturbing situations we have come to consider "normal." Art can touch our essence and transform a moment into communion with what we might call the divine. Art can celebrate life, introduce new worldviews and challenge our senses. Expressionism and Cubism did this through subordinating "reality" to the expression of emotional experience. In other words, art connects us to new or forgotten worlds.

Art's influence is often profound and far-reaching. Novel artistic ideas often appear simultaneously with other large transformations, leaving irrevocable changes in the world. For example, when Expressionism and Cubism introduced another way of perceiving reality, ground-breaking thinking was also occurring in the areas of philosophy, psychology and physics. The causal view of reality was expanding into a less causal, more quantum-mechanistic way of perceiving reality. Because the nature of art is to search beyond consensus reality, it can absorb and express emerging trends of the times we live in long before these new ideas are absorbed into mainstream consciousness. One example of this is the work of avant-garde architects and designers in the 1950s and 1960s. Their aerodynamic space designs remain the primary inspiration behind current home, automobile and furniture design.

Art has the ability to excite and stimulate us, fill us with hope, wonder and inspiration. It can also annoy, irritate and disturb the status quo. Art finds fertile ground for inspiration at the edge of consensus reality.



Heaven & Earth, crossing the threshold of hope...

The artist

Generally, it seems that everyday life experience is not highly stimulating to creativity. Artists are often attracted to the incongruences of consensus reality, to poignant or contradictory moments, beauty, dirt and the incomprehensible. An artist's birthright includes license to express what is outside of consensus reality without the audience taking too much offense.

Since the rational world rarely inspires the artist, the total expression of an art object is much deeper than what first meets the eye. Inspired artists leave known spheres and enter other dimensions, capture and express experiences from other realms. The pieces of art which these artists produce speak to the same level in observers, bringing forth unusual perspectives on the familiar.

Artists hold certain similarities to shamans. Like shamans, many artists have a special sensitivity and love for the unknown, and travel between this reality and the dream-fantasy world. In the entanglement with the unknown, the inspired artist discovers the spirit in many forms: figures emerge from the uncarved block, pictures appear on blank canvas, tunes fill the flute or vibrate through the strings of the violin.

Anthropologist Carlos Castaneda tells a story about how the Yaqui shaman don Juan teaches him to use his peripheral vision (Castaneda 1972). Using peripheral vision, Castaneda no longer sees the consensus reality version of his environment, but the power aspects, or spirit, of things. On one of their twilight walks, Castaneda suddenly gets scared because he glimpses a coyote. When he looks again, he is relieved that he actually saw only a branch. Don Juan gets very upset about Carlos' lack of attention to the other reality, and points out that from the other reality, it was a coyote, which Carlos lost the opportunity to experience.

Similarly, the artist, without analyzing or having fixed ideas about where the spirit of creation is leading, may see "coyotes." She has no goal: rather, her love and appreciation of becoming one with the unknown allows her to unfold what don Juan calls the *nagual*, or the other reality (Castaneda 1972). The artist is pulled to struggle and dance with the *nagual*, and finally to manifest the creative impulse in a medium. The result is not a coincidence, but a manifestation of this captured inner experience.

Gertrude Stein (1984) tells a related story in her book about Picasso. Picasso painted Stein's portrait in Paris. Despite repeated attempts, he could not express his experience of her face. Only after he returned from a trip to Africa, where he saw masks that fascinated him deeply, did he realize what he had been trying to capture. Previously he was not able to give form to this inner experience, to what don Juan would call the power aspect of her face.

The observer

A couple of years ago, I met the nagual through some pigs. A Danish artist cut up and sewed back together a number of pigs, which were exhibited in the finest museum in Denmark and later sold for a large sum to a German museum. When I first heard about the pigs, I was appalled, and found cutting them up decadent and disrespectful. These pigs became a koan for me, challenging my moral and aesthetic values. They made me wonder about the "why" and "what for" behind the art event. I began to think deeply about living flesh and about how easily I can take for granted that awesome something that inhabits the flesh.

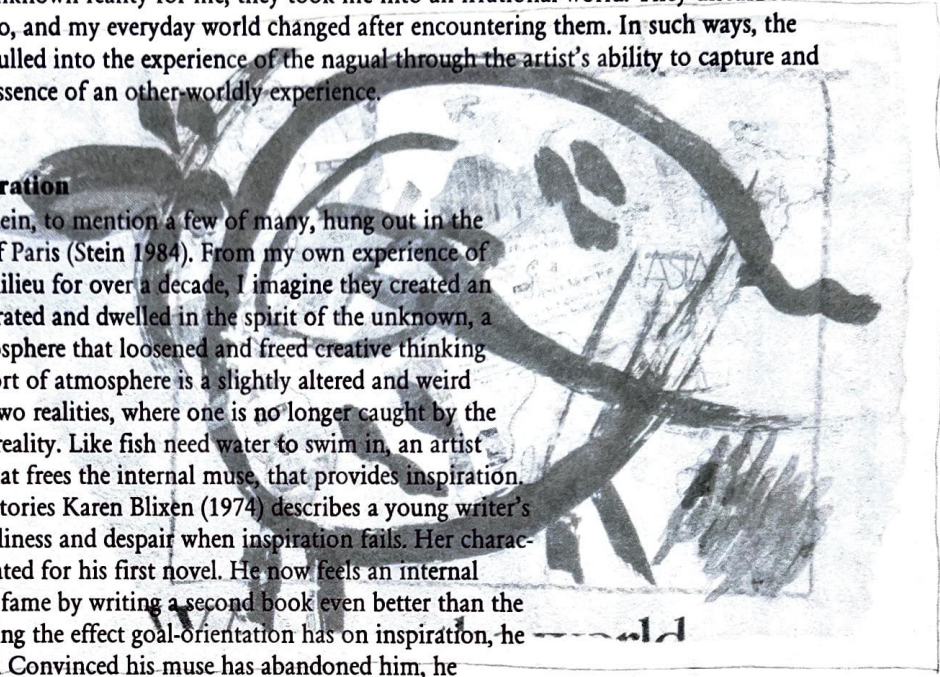
Is such an expression art or social activism? It is certainly different than the art of Rembrandt, Da Vinci, Michelangelo. Will anybody admire the remains of these pigs 100 years from now? Does it matter? When I finally saw pictures of the pigs, I was actually amazed by the aesthetics, spirit and challenge in these "sculptures." I said "yes" to them as art. The pigs became an unknown reality for me; they took me into an irrational world. They disturbed my status quo, and my everyday world changed after encountering them. In such ways, the observer is pulled into the experience of the nagual through the artist's ability to capture and express the essence of an other-worldly experience.

The muses and inspiration

Sartre, Picasso and Stein, to mention a few of many, hung out in the same Bohemian areas of Paris (Stein 1984). From my own experience of living in a Bohemian milieu for over a decade, I imagine they created an environment that celebrated and dwelled in the spirit of the unknown, a mysterious, fertile atmosphere that loosened and freed creative thinking and inspiration. This sort of atmosphere is a slightly altered and weird twilight zone between two realities, where one is no longer caught by the necessities of everyday reality. Like fish need water to swim in, an artist needs an atmosphere that frees the internal muse, that provides inspiration.

In one of her short stories Karen Blixen (1974) describes a young writer's experience of fear, loneliness and despair when inspiration fails. Her character has just been celebrated for his first novel. He now feels an internal pressure to increase his fame by writing a second book even better than the first one. Not considering the effect goal-orientation has on inspiration, he is overwhelmed by fear. Convinced his muse has abandoned him, he believes he will never write another word. The writer grows close to suicide. In the depths of his despair, the struggle of depression and frustration becomes the very point around which inspiration accumulates. His artistic mind is fertilized and inspired by an experience bigger than himself, which once again opens him up to his muse.

Many creative people share a fear of losing contact with creativity and inspiration through making the unknown too known. Many artists have an intuitive sense that creativity has to be captured in its own realm. This perspective gives rise to a belief that if one starts working on problems psychologically, one will get "straightened out," lose contact with creativity, and return to a consensus hypnosis. This, in the artist's reality, means leaving the twilight zone of inspiration and creativity, with its freedom to explore and dance with the unknown. In this area Process Work offers the artist another view (see section on Process Work).



a fat sheep eating up the world ...

Art as a therapeutic tool

Most psychotherapies use language as their primary expressive modality. This preference may inhibit free expression, since the mind often judges and censors verbal content, leaving little room to freely explore the mysterious reaches of experience. Among other functions, art serves as a means of communication, fulfilling the same basic human need as verbalization. Art can thus be used as a tool to access material which the mind might censor. Art can be a vehicle for emotional expression, reflecting emotional states and unknown aspects of oneself.

For example, when I find myself stuck in relationships, not only unable to communicate what I am thinking but not even allowing myself to think, I often experiment with colors. Through my painting, unexpressed feelings and thoughts pop out, along with what I want to express, bringing me further insight into what blocked me and who I am.

Used as a therapeutic tool, art taps into our dreams and ultimately into our self-expression. Art as a treatment approach tends to be playful and non-threatening, able to navigate around the censoring mind and reach directly into the unconscious world. Depending on a client's experience and a therapist's tendencies, artistic approaches may include drama, dance, painting, singing or writing. Art can create a container that can "hold" individuals and support them in expressing themselves.

Every person seems to have a desire to communicate. Work with people in comas and other extreme states demonstrates that often part of the person is still available and wants to communicate (see Bernstein 1979; Mindell 1988, 1989). Often, communication difficulties occur because the people around individuals in extreme states don't know how to communicate with people in these "unusual" states. Art can assist people to externalize feelings which cannot readily be expressed in speech but can be shared through a symbolic medium. The early art and dance therapists demonstrated this when they communicated with psychiatric patients through movement, dance and painting. Art therapy has been especially successful in reaching people in states outside consensus reality, i.e., schizophrenic states (Bernstein 1979). Nonverbal symbols can cut across communication barriers, providing a medium through which individuals can recall previous experiences, journey into undiscovered territory and communicate with the outer world.

Generally the medium of art offers a great tool for going beyond conventions, morals, fixed ideas and frozen situations. When an internal situation is given shape externally, it may be possible to relate to the experience in new ways. This provides an opportunity to stay with something difficult, painful or unknown without feeling stuck within the problem. Art can give the freedom to explore and mold a situation from novel angles, often creating experiences which lie beyond judgments of good or bad. Art can help the individual experience the essence of an event and describe its nature without getting overwhelmed by difficult emotions. This freedom may eventually bring forth the capacity to alter and transform the situation.

During difficult moments in my years as an artist and designer, my most useful tool was expressing my desperation through painting. In the middle of the creation, I never knew where it was going. I just followed the feeling of rightness until the experience became rich, full and somehow complete. Something deeper and new emerged in me. I often felt a strong connection to a larger part of myself, a part that was less disturbed by the situation. On this level, transformation of the pain could happen. It didn't always last, since I didn't know how to bring new insights into other areas of my life (see section on Process Work). But for the moment I felt freer, and a sense of meaning entered my experience.

Process Work and art

...I look for the absurd, the nonsensical thing in an individual or group, the thing which others ignore. I look for the spirit of the incomprehensible statement, gesture or error and then care for it and let it unfold...the gold lies in the messages we do not intend to send...thus the process-oriented mode is interesting because you must reverse your normal mode of consciousness. (Mindell 1992: 19)

Therapies that tend to stay within consensus reality miss the creativity found in the twilight-zone. Process Work, with its concept of the dreambody, the idea that part of us is always dreaming, supports and focuses on the unknown.¹ In this way, it is similar to the artistic process. Additionally, Process Work brings new perspectives to artistic expression.

While artists are intuitively sensitive to unknown aspects of life, Process Work offers other possibilities to access unknown areas through consciously identifying primary and secondary processes and edges.² These aspects of Process Work can assist in rapidly catching and unfolding creative energy. By consciously concentrating on mysterious, unknown or disturbing things which catch our attention, we can use disturbances as focus points for inspiration. Instead of hindering creativity, disturbances can open gates into creative worlds.

One way Process Work explores the unknown is through amplifying it. Amplification methods include expressing disturbances in color, movement or sound. For example, the process worker might ask, what is the "feeling" of a disturbance? How does it sound? Move? What color is it? Exploring the unknown through different means multiplies the possibilities of exploration for the artist and encourages more than one expressive modality. Also, exploring color by using movement and sound helps the artist really get to know the emerging creative energy.

Even while certain elements catch the artist's attention, the emerging experience as a whole is still unknown. Frequently, what fascinates the artist is also personally meaningful. On a therapeutic level, Process Work provides an opportunity to continue and complete the creative process to gain more awareness of oneself. After the artist creates an object, Process Work can be used to go on with the experience. A next step could be for the artist to experiment with becoming the object of art, to see how the experience of the created object relates to her life.

This may not be of interest from an artistic point of view, but it can provide enjoyment and insight for people who like to approach their lives as creative projects. Looking at the world from the viewpoint of the piece of art, or finding how this art is trying to manifest in one's life, can be fun. The artistic process also offers a helpful approach to problems, often providing sustainable solutions to difficult situations. Remember my example about painting my pain? I experienced some sense of relief through giving creative outer expression to my feelings. When interacting with my art, I can go further. I may discover how the point of view of the piece of art is meaningful, how it is relevant to my present life situation, and if it contains the beginning of a solution to my problem.

I remember a young woman who painted a big fat hen laying an egg; the egg was the world. She painted the hen out of a body experience of feeling too fat. Afterwards, she started to move around, experiencing being the hen. After she had been walking for a while, she started to speak from this experience:

This hen feels so well and at home on the earth. If I were like this hen, I wouldn't be afraid of the world. I would see it's just my egg developing. And as such, everything becomes my concern, not something to shy away from. Every hurt, every joy on this planet becomes my concern if I am the big mother hen.

The artist can be a model for the process worker as well. A process worker may tend to remain the observer and analyzer of mysterious material instead of helping the client live it. During the creative process, the artist becomes one with secondary experience. Like the riverbed, the artist is shaped by as well as shaping the stream of water. The artist is the medium for, as well as one with, the experience that is channeled through her creativity. Until its completion, the art object lives and breathes within the artist.

The known and the unknown in the creative process

The creative process can be described as shaping inner experiences into outer forms. The word creativity implies that something beyond mechanical skills is applied. Although most artists study extensively and practice for years, fine-tuning their skills, the creative process itself is actually something else. All people, regardless of their skill level, have an inherent source of creativity.

Because many of us have very fixed ideas about creativity and art, especially high art, it is easy to believe that art and creativity only appear in certain forms. When too much focus is placed on the outcome, aesthetics or craftsmanship of art, the creativity is stopped before it enters the unknown. The creative spirit needs freedom to unfold.

The artist identity, which enters the creative process with an intent to create, for example, a good picture, has to "die" in order to provide space for whatever wants to emerge. The most useful tools in letting go of ideas about what is "good" are attitudes like the beginner's mind, which sees everything for the first time, openness to all aspects of experience, and freedom to let go of familiar ideas.

The spirit of creation, the artist as process, rather than the artist as identity, spontaneously emerges through meeting with the unknown. The artist as a process allows, embraces, follows and serves the unknown, and then expresses it. Temporarily losing self-awareness, not having any idea of where things should go, just following the impulses of the moment, is being on track in the creative process. Once the spirit has been captured in its own realm, insights will come, and the expression can be completed and polished.

Edges

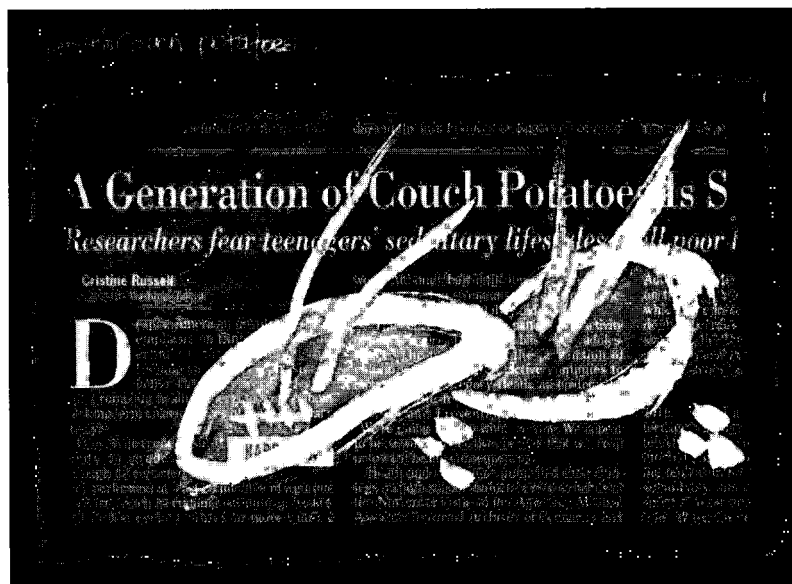
Even when the unknown is followed, the creative process may be interrupted by creative blocks or self-criticism, by what Process Work calls the edge. The edge is the significant moment where the process is stuck. There are no answers to questions of what to do, how to go on, where to turn the new creation. Momentarily, the boundary of the creative identity is reached, and all roads seem blocked. Fortunately, the edge concept adds another very significant piece of information to the situation. An edge can be crossed! Process Work offers both a framework and tools that support interaction with the situation of being stuck.

Awareness of edges in my artwork often comes through body experiences. As long as what I am doing increases energy in my body or excitement in my being, I know I am on track. When the energy decreases, I know I am off track and on some sort of edge, losing the creative impulse. I then return to the point where I started to lose my excitement and continue from there. The energy usually picks up again. Imagine making a collage, adding bit by bit. As the picture builds up, excitement builds as well. A few more pieces are added, and the collage suddenly starts to look too "normal," or to become a little too familiar. The tension in the composition vanishes, and so does the excitement. Removing collage pieces until the visual image becomes an exciting challenge again helps me deal with my creative block. This helps me back into an experience of flow. Following my happiness about what I am doing through my body sensations is useful, as my eyes often criticize partially completed work.

Process Work offers other ways of dealing with edges. Changing the mode of expression, from color to movement or sound, or imagining how some great artist would continue at this point can be helpful. Sometimes the awareness that you are on an edge is enough to know exactly what to do next. At other times, the courage to try something outrageous may be the missing piece.



For the fun of it, imagine that Picasso reached an edge when he got stuck painting Gertrude Stein's face. From Stein's story it is clear there was something specific he wanted to express, which he was not able to do before he went to Africa. On his return, he immediately completed the face. The African masks brought him in touch with what he had been trying to grasp and express. A guess is that he must have known what it was all along and recognized it once he saw it. Who knows, if Picasso had known more about channel changes, he might have found the face by starting to dance and sing the energy he was trying to express in the picture. Perhaps an image of an African mask would have emerged.



The inner critic

Blocked creativity can also be related to internalized criticism. The inner critic personifies the ways we inhibit ourselves by telling ourselves that we're no good. Too much self-criticism freezes us within the realm of the known, where the critical aspect is in charge, leaving little space to further explore who we are.

Creating art, which follows no known path, is a pioneer's journey. The pioneer creates the path as she walks, leaving room for trial, error and individual expression. This provides an antidote to the inner critic, since it is difficult to judge the unknown. For this reason, art has always made me happy. Art provides amnesty from a strong inner critic. When inner work has a tendency to be dominated and structured by the inner critic, art can make it more playful and fun. Art can help to go beyond the critic. Conversely, inner work can help free the creativity when an inner critic inhibits it.

A couple of years ago, when Amy Mindell and I taught a class on Process Work and art, we did a fun experiment with the inner critic. Realizing that many people get stuck and blocked around the critic early in the creative process, we used a process-oriented idea to create an exercise. In this experiment, we transformed the inner critic into the artist. When the critic appeared, the trick was to listen to the critic and follow it as if it were the artist. For instance, someone was drawing and the critic suggested tearing up the picture because it was too stupid and awkward. The person followed the critic's instructions. Tearing up the drawing was not the end; the critic introduced an impulse that indicated a new direction and added to the creative process. Through the tearing, the drawing transformed into a sculpture. This exercise was very successful in leading the creative process into new areas. Many unusual pieces emerged, and the exercise gave everybody a new openness toward following all kinds of impulses that emerge during the creative process. Personally, it transformed and liberated my own creativity more than anything else has.

The process worker

My beginning definition of art stated that the degree to which an object is considered art is related to the capacity of the artist to capture and express the essence of an experience through her medium. Another way of saying this is that art equals the degree to which the unknown is given "life" or expression. This holds true for the art of Process Work as well. When she works with a body symptom or any other problem, the process worker uses a similar approach. The body symptom becomes the sculpture to be sculpted. The subjective experience of the symptom becomes the muse that leads the process worker beyond consensus reality into the nagual. Once the energy of the symptom emerges, it can be amplified through dance, sound and color until the message of the symptom is chiseled free. A new art piece is unveiled. Thus the process worker and/or client become both the artist and a living piece of art.

I chuckle inside as I imagine people walking around as art pieces with different colors, stripes, dots and funny things sticking out everywhere. A lot of behavior actually becomes much more understandable from this perspective! In a sense this is what Process Work is about. People go beyond ideas about who they are, and unique angles of creation emerge, taking shape, form and color through their work. The individual makes sense in new and unique ways. Like a piece of art, the dreambody is sculpted, painted, danced or sung according to the individual. The observer who witnesses this transformation is pulled in by the essence of the expression, recognizing parallels to her own uniqueness.

Notes

1. The dreambody is a name for unusual experiences and altered states of consciousness that try to reach your everyday awareness through signals such as body symptoms and movement impulses, dreams, and messages from the environment.
2. Primary: The body gestures, behavior, and thoughts with which one identifies or which it can be assumed one would identify with if asked.
Secondary: All the verbal and nonverbal signals in an individual's expressions with which the individual does not identify and would probably disavow if asked about.
Edge: The experience of not being able to do something, being limited, hindered from or scared of accomplishing, thinking or communicating. The edge separates the primary process from the secondary.

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In Pursuit of Passion: the Search for an Artistic Life

Leslie Heizer

Passion preoccupies me. I grow easily irritated and melancholy when I don't feel connected to a stream of life, and I recognize a quiver in my cells when I live close to the mystery, the unknown, the vital energy that is passion for me. Pursuing the mysterious, the passionate, provides meaning and context for my life. I'm excited by any passion: connecting with spirits, another person, or myself; the ecstasy of grasping the numinous, crying over music, stretching a sore muscle, my mind. In my experience, the passionate belief in and pursuit of the mysterious are common to Process Work and art. Both art and Process Work use specific skills and tools to track the unknown, encourage its development and nurture its full expression.

My creative path begins with an attraction to something unknown. When I begin to write or paint or work on myself, I sense a formless mass which can't even be called a concept. It may be a nameless feeling, an image that flickers and recedes, a slight ache in my stomach or the color red in my mind. If I begin from this point and pay close attention, a whole story may develop. Red, movement, the woman in the red dress dragging the child along the sidewalk, shards of the wine glass the woman broke last night, and so on. When attended to, emotions unfold in a similar way; vague physical or psychic sensation becomes detailed description in poetry, prose or a picture. Paying careful attention to flickers of image and sensation is a key aspect of Process Work and art.

Second attention and the artist's brain

In order to follow the unknown as it appears, Process Work and art both pay a specific kind of attention to the extraordinary. Carlos Castaneda,

in his stories about his apprenticeship to the Yaqui shaman don Juan Matus, introduces the concepts of the first and second attention. Don Juan taught Carlos to pay attention not only to the everyday world, the first attention, the tonal, but to the world of the unknown, the second attention, the nagual (Castaneda 1974). Mindell has expanded these concepts and applied them to working with oneself and the world. Mindell says that "the second attention is the key to the world of dreaming, the unconscious and dreamlike movements, the accidents and slips of the tongue that happen all day long" (1993: 25). This dreaming world is the birthing ground of art, passion, creativity. It is the home of the mysterious, which occasionally reveals glimpses of its nature to be discovered. In contrast to the second attention, which notices the unknown, the first attention pays attention to daily life, notices ordinary reality (Mindell 1993: 23).

Most of us have been encouraged to develop the first attention more than the second. We are taught to focus on the tangible world, encouraged to pay attention to the concepts of multiplication in math class and discouraged from daydreaming about the hairs curling out of the math teacher's nostrils, forbidden to see the teacher as the bear we dreamed about last night. Bill Watterson's widely syndicated comic strip, *Calvin and Hobbes*, frequently plays on the incongruences between the worlds of the first and second attention, making us laugh at the juxtaposition of two realms which we all recognize. Calvin, a child, spends his time in the world of the second attention, flying through outer space, playing games with his stuffed tiger Hobbes who is alive with

Calvin but “only a toy” to everyone else. Calvin’s parents, dwelling happily in the world of the first attention, lack patience when Calvin runs screaming from the table because he sees a fierce monster rise out of his spinach. Calvin, with his free kid’s mind, is endlessly creative. In order to be fully creative, to explicate the unknown, I believe we too need to develop (or remember) the second attention which values and focuses on the odd visions, feeling sensations, sounds and movements which are not part of consensus reality. This attention to the extraordinary provides a way of perceiving which helps make it possible to notice and follow creative impulses.

In *The Shaman’s Body*, Mindell talks about how to develop the second attention.

The shamanic hunter [or process worker] masters awareness by using his [sic] second attention to notice inner feelings and fantasies and unusual outer signals from the environment. He feels things and senses the unknown parts of himself, even before they force themselves upon him. He follows and supports the irrational and uncanny, that which belongs to the nagual, i.e., the unconscious. He knows that his power lies in catching and tracing his double signals, his own incongruities, dreams, fantasies, and symptoms. (1993: 65)

This example applies equally to the artist, who also needs to follow and support the irrational, to help it emerge in a unique format. Julia Cameron, who has made a life work of teaching all kinds of people how to discover and recover their own creativity, calls these two types of perception “logic brain” and “artist brain” (1992: 13). The qualities of logic brain coincide with the qualities of the first attention, noticing the world as consensus reality perceives it, staying in neat categories and safe constructs. Artist brain is the creative brain, awareness of the mysterious, the perception that associates feelings, ideas, things, with no regard to the rituals of consensus reality. Artist brain sees the ghost on the garage roof, plays with its food, spots a bag of cookies and thinks with artist logic “fig newton isaac newton, issac sack of potatoes I think I’ll have a cookie.”

Art, Process Work and cultural revolution

Warning: following the mystery leads to cultural revolution

In my mind, art stretches the envelope of reality, travels outside the borders of the known world to bring back images from lands of mystery

and passion. Art has the potential to change culture simply by introducing the unknown. Process Work is an art form which ventures beyond the world of cultural assumptions and brings back new possibilities (see Menken 1989).

Perceiving the world with an artist’s mind, a shaman’s vision, is a skill and life-style which can be cultivated through practice. One of the challenges of living and expressing the mysterious is that the world of the unknown often challenges consensus reality and cultural norms. The first level of challenge lies within the shaman/artist/process worker’s inner culture. Long before a finished creative piece impacts the outer world, it must be born and raised in the artist’s inner milieu, which is often a veritable den of censorship, discouragement, disbelief and fear.

I am most intimately familiar with the intrapsychic dynamics around bringing in the unknown through my experiences with improvisation in dance and music (see Arye 1991 for more on music and sound). Bearing witness to the mysterious and attempting to express it through movement and sound has consistently stretched my personality beyond its previous limits. My version of inner revolution goes something like this. Take out the violin to play around and enjoy myself. Lift the bow, make a sound, and instant inner dialogue jumps in. “Oh, that’s an interesting sound. Hmmm, let’s do that more. Oops, that doesn’t sound very pleasant, better back off and make familiar noises.” Half a minute of pleasant tonal music, then oops, the bow is sliding close to the bridge again, creating that squeaky high sound which should be avoided at all cost. Now my first violin teacher appears in my mind, glaring at me. I’d completely forgotten the powdery texture of her face, but here she is, crepe paper skin and all, pursing her lips and saying “Haven’t you practiced?” At this point comes an outrageous inner choice. I can attempt to conform, avoid making that sound, or I can follow what’s interesting to me and purposely explore sound which has been carefully trained out of me. If I’m in a brave, foolish, or artistic mode, I go for the sound and suddenly become, in one small way, a new person, expanded and changed through inner revolution. Gone is my identity as the good pupil, the classically trained violinist. On a much larger level, which is also impacted by my momentary expression of the unknown, gone is the good girl, the good woman, the one who only makes cultur-

ally pleasing sounds and statements. This creates a specific form of cultural revolution, not overthrow but impact through the individual becoming different in the world.

Making a screechy noise instead of a smooth polished sound may seem minimal. However, making a screechy noise when the world values smooth sounds introduces a new way of being, provides a possibility of expressing whatever is inside me without censorship, without adjusting my expression to what will be welcomed or accepted. Living an artistic life requires courage and conviction. A truly artistic life-style does not begin and end with creating pieces of art, music, or poetry. An artistic life is a way of being in the world, a calling to believe in mysterious flickers of perception, a commitment to worship the weird, and an unwavering desire to tell one's personal truth, regardless of feedback from the mainstream. Since mainstream culture for the most part does not support the weird, those seekers who follow their fascinations are destined to eventually offend somebody or a whole lot of somebodies.

Paying second attention, having an artist's brain, means following and expressing the unspeakable in all aspects of life. Any creative thinker who brings a new idea into the mainstream lives on the edge of culture, expressing the barely articulate, the forbidden, that which we fear. Living this way can literally be hazardous to one's physical body. Historically, those who dared challenge norms and conventions risked their reputations and lives. In the 16th century, Galileo introduced his discovery that the earth revolved around the sun rather than the sun around the earth. This view proved so heretical to Catholic doctrine that Galileo was tried by the inquisition, forced to recant and spent his last eight years under house arrest. The mainstream culture of his time made it clear that those who ventured too far from orthodoxy would be silenced. More recently in the United States, artist Robert Mapplethorpe consistently stayed true to his homosexual and erotic self in his art. He lost government funding and was barred from exhibition in certain museums and galleries. He died without recanting. Living artistically is a risk.

Process Work, like art, pays attention to the unknown. Following the unknown in life can be hazardous; the unknown has the potential to transform, perhaps at times destroy, the world view of the ordinary personality, the logical

mind, the first attention. Truly following the unknown leaves the personality in a state of flux, with infinite possibilities for transformation. In process-oriented inner work or therapy, unexpected parts of oneself emerge. Through following an unknown movement, sound or vision, a person who has identified as caring and warm may discover parts of her/himself which are angry, direct, excitable, and don't go along with the previous identity.

This is both evolutionary and revolutionary growth. Passionate pursuit of the unknown leads to new possibilities, which may create a new inner climate. Actually living these new personality parts may lead us to different ways of being in the world, to transformation of relationships. Some friends may be excited, others may be upset and refuse to tolerate the new growth. Here passion, following the unknown, leads to outer revolution, outer change. Truly living the unknown goes beyond the traditional definition of art as product. Art becomes a commitment to follow and live the unknown that appears. Process-oriented therapy is revolutionary both on the personal level, where it allows and encourages the unknown aspects of the person to emerge, and socially, as new ways of being are encouraged in the world.

Artists, who follow their passion and creative demons, the magical, are timespirits for culture.¹ They introduce new concepts to culture, come bearing the terrifying, the different, the possible. Catching the numinous and expressing it on paper, on stage, in clay, is a service art provides its audience, the culture it lives in. Art presents possible new experiences.

I believe the next development in our culture is up to not only identified "artists" but to all of us who feel challenged to live the unknown in everyday life, to bring the mysterious into all aspects of being. Living the life demanded by a spirit is not an easy task. Being called to follow the mysterious may mean dealing with collective censure, disdain, fear and violence. Rilke writes to the young poet, who seeks outer approval for his poems,

...you ask whether your verses are good....you are disturbed when certain editors reject your efforts. I beg you to give up all that....There is only one single way. Go into yourself. Search for the reason that bids you write; find out whether it is spreading out its roots in the deepest places of your heart, acknowledge to

yourself whether you would have to die if it were denied you to write. This above all—ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: must I write? (1934: 18)

Rilke asks his young admirer to discover the spirit, relate to a demon, find the source of his desire to write and then follow it only if his passion is a call from beyond the known world, a spirit seeking expression. Anyone who expresses the extraordinary will be challenged by culture. Artists, freethinkers and change agents pay special attention to a source, a mystery, a demon which will not rest until it expresses itself. This appears terrifying from the viewpoint of the logical mind. Lived, it is ecstasy.

Living the numinous which has been discovered in art and therapy has the potential to stir up outrage from the environment. On the other hand, not living one's full artistic and outrageous nature can lead to sacrificing one's spirit in order to navigate more smoothly through culture. Artists, writers, thinkers, therapists, anyone with a temperament and tendency which follows and expresses the unknown, have the potential to create revolution in culture simply by introducing the forbidden for consideration. All of us willing to consider the unknown can create models for cultural change.

Writing as revolution

When I look around, I notice people who not only express the forbidden in art, but who live what I consider an artistic life. These people incorporate following the unknown, the culturally taboo, the mysterious, into their daily lives. One of my heroines is Dorothy Allison, an artistic cultural change agent and self-identified "feminist queer" who is deeply committed to speaking out on issues of class, power and privilege. She fits my criteria for an artistic life in her living and expressing of cultural taboos. I discovered Allison through her novel, *Bastard out of Carolina* (1990). This is fiction. It is also pure emotional truth, the realest, rawest story I have ever read. Allison illuminates the reality of growing up dirt poor and female, being regularly beaten and raped. She also captures the mystery of a child's world, the beauty of nature, the agony of being ostracized simply for not fitting in, for being born into the white underclass in the United States.

Allison says, "I wear my skin only as thick as I have to, armor myself only as much as seems absolutely necessary. I try to live naked in the world,

unashamed even under attack, unafraid even though I know how much there is to fear" (1994: 250).

Thickening one's skin is tempting, growing a surface dense enough to divert the blips in perception which disturb us. If we truly follow what fascinates us, we risk banishment from the comfortable logical world of the first attention, risk losing any chance we may have had to fit into a homogeneous framework where difference is bad. In my mind, by refusing to thicken her skin, Allison commits to a revolutionary life. She brings her perception into the world, triumphantly, despite it not fitting mainstream conventions about class, appropriate behavior, and positive sexuality—if that's even a concept in our culture! Allison's courage to write honestly about her life, to make her passion available to the public, has inspired me both to believe that the powerful, the extraordinary, can appear anywhere in life, and to speak out about personal experience, no matter how gruesome or seemingly mundane.

Her writing clearly demonstrates how much a marginalized person knows and has to say about the mechanics of marginalization. Allison writes about class and power, bringing the experience of being disempowered by a collective emotionally alive. She makes this accessible perhaps even to those born into more privileged positions in the strata of culture. Writing from a non-mainstream perspective creates the potential for change by introducing points of view different from those sanctioned by and commonly available in the mainstream. Patrocínio Schweickart addresses this in *Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading*. She says that

the point [of feminist criticism] is not merely to interpret literature in various ways; the point is to *change the world*. We cannot afford to ignore the activity of reading, for it is here that literature is realized as *praxis*. Literature acts on the world by acting on its readers. (1986: 39)

In other words, writers interact with and impact readers. Literature can introduce new possibilities and new world views, especially literature from outside the cultural consensus. Additionally, readers and critics who comment from their points of view, especially those (like feminist critics) who introduce a non-mainstream perspective, have an impact on culture, a chance to create and change our worlds.

When Allison says that "writing is still revolutionary, writing is still about changing the world" (1994: 91), she is talking about the writing of the second attention, the writing of the mysterious, of passion. Writing itself is neutral. Simply picking up a pen is not a revolutionary act. I can use my pen to make a grocery list, write notes, letters, reports. This is risk free writing, writing which supports everyday reality, the first attention, the logical mind, culture. My grocery list is not going to change the world. It is not going to encourage people to stare at me in the street. And, I do not experience creative block when writing my grocery list, in large part because there is no cultural taboo against it.

Another kind of writing, the revolutionary sort of which Allison speaks, involves personal and political risk. This kind of writing wanders off the map, leaves familiar parameters. When I pick up a pen and allow myself to let go, I lose control over the words, emotions and ideas that emerge. At some point, revolutionary writing gives up to the spirit, allows it to emerge, and believes in it sufficiently to give it life. Second attention leads naturally to all that is outside my known world.

Over and over I'm amazed at the ideas I find when I look at old journals. I dared think that? Say that? Often my thoughts are years ahead of my actions in the world, but I discover the seeds of growth in my free form writing. The kind of writing nobody ever reads provides an opportunity to meet aspects of myself that rarely peek out around the edges of my daily identity. Simply being open to these new experiences is the beginning of a personal revolution, the overthrow of my narrow-minded view of who I should be. This revolution grows in strength and becomes political as I live my expanding nature in the world.

As a woman, a bisexual in a lesbian relationship, and an abuse survivor, my reality and my life experiences do not mesh nicely with an idyllic vision of mainstream America. For the most part, the world does not want to hear about the oppression of half its population, about women who love each other, about rape. If I really pay attention to my perceptions and then open my mouth, pick up a pen, tap away on the keyboard, I commit a revolutionary act. If I talk about my life, consensus reality rocks a little. Telling the truth about my experience as a member of a marginalized group has the power to expand the

known world by introducing new worlds. This is revolution, the creation of new norms.

Any person who speaks about experiences from outside the mainstream has the potential to shape and change culture. Any press publishing such work is involved in cultural revolution, making available experiences, stories and lives which are outside of norms and thus stretching and pushing the borders of culture. Like Dorothy Allison, people who introduce points of view from outside the "norm" form a vanguard, changing culture by bringing in new voices and previously hidden experiences for consideration.

Censorship and the shifting rivercourse

The political debate around censorship, which addresses deeply held beliefs, is ongoing and emotional. The cultural mainstream and those pursuing the extraordinary are involved in back and forth discussion over what will be permitted and what forbidden, marginalized. Creative thinkers introduce new possibilities, the mainstream reacts with stronger norms, and cultural tolerance levels rise and fall. This ongoing debate influences the growing edges of culture, and thus defines the qualities of edge figures, our cultural censors. As women speak out, challenging the "quiet feminine" stereotype, assertiveness for women becomes more widely accepted into mainstream culture. Fewer female children are told not to speak up, and the cultural edge about outspoken women shifts slightly, the norm widens to include more styles, louder and less harmonious voices.

All artists, creative thinkers and seekers of the unknown are called to engage in a debate around human and cultural possibility. The myth of the "crazy" artist is part reality, in the sense that following the mysterious makes one fluid, unpredictable, outrageous. On the other hand "crazy" is meaningful only relative to a cultural norm. The construct of the crazy artist is created by a culture which does not consciously want to encompass the parts of itself lived out by those who don't conform (see Mindell 1988).

The cultural mainstream is a broad river. Changing the course of such a river requires a lot: a big dam, a massive flood, a long drought, or the slow gradual deposition of silt on the river bed. Living an artist's life has an impact on the river; artists follow the creative demon, the mysterious, and through doing so, the nature of the river, the mainstream, changes. Some changes happen in floods, like the flow of feminist writing and

criticism in the United States in the 1970s or the outpouring of African-American authors and artists following the birth of the civil rights movement. Although these have been large movements, feminist and black perspectives remain far from mainstream.

Other changes come gradually, many drops before the flood. Freud created a first blip when he wrote about childhood sexual abuse as the chief cause of hysteria in adults a hundred years ago (Freud 1988; Masson 1984). From that time until the present, many have spoken up only to be silenced. However, the gradual increase of women and men speaking out, combined with larger cultural waves such as the women's movement, have raised mainstream awareness about sexual abuse in the United States. Any person who follows and expresses the unknown, who lives the mysterious, has the potential to change the immediate environment and thus the larger culture.

Awareness shifts and metacommunication: translating the unknown

Trying to bring the unknown into my ordinary world is a special challenge and source of excitement. For example, in writing a poem, one of the things I consistently find remarkable is the shift from an emotion or image, which are two of my beginning points in writing, to expressing not only the emotion or image but also something about it, a broader perspective on the original impulse. I shift from a subjective point of view to a still subjective but more detached point of view, the beginning of metacommunication, of not only experiencing but communicating about an experience. Often, this shift involves movement from sensing the emotion to an additional perspective. If I begin with a feeling and add vision to the emotion, I often discover more about the story and gain some distance or detachment. This progression happens in therapy and inner work as well as in creativity. All involve moving from an original disturbance or inspiration which occurs in a certain way to other perspectives of the original experience.

I find these shifts in awareness and times of metacommunicating deeply satisfying. Once I dive into or stand outside an experience, name it, see what it is, I have more choices than simply being tugged by an original vague feeling or problem. Being able to follow the oddities, fill them out, bring them back to the world, helps me expand the possibilities of everyday life.

A toast to mystery

So little is truly known, so much mysterious. Like many, I have suffered from the seduction of logic, from my indoctrination into having to analyze and understand in order to value. I find myself now at the beginning of a journey into the artistic life, into living passionately, following the unknown and having the courage to bring it into the world. This is a scary and wonderful moment, knowing that passion for the unknown leads to revolutionary overthrow of my identity. I both dread and anticipate such growth.

Both Process Work and creativity, particularly writing, have brought me the gifts of discovering the mystery waiting outside my known world. I'm grateful to Process Work for helping me believe in the mysterious and for providing tools to bring the unknown into my awareness and thus into daily life. And I am grateful to the nagual pioneers, all those people who have the courage to go exploring and to tell the truth about their lives, no matter what. One of my greatest dreams for the world, for all of us, is that we be able to live all the mystery and passion inside and around us, fully, madly, deeply. Happy mysterious travels to us all.

Notes

1. Mindell coined the term "timespirit" for the shifting roles that emerge in any field. These roles are timespirits in the sense that they emerge in a certain time and place, and can change and develop. See Mindell 1992: 23-27 for more on timespirits.

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- Leslie Heizer, Ph.D., lives in Portland, Oregon, where she works as a therapist and editor of the Journal of Process Oriented Psychology. She has a background in music, classical languages and philosophy and is coming out of the closet as a poet.*

There is the poet to whom the muse dictates his [sic] chants, there is the artist whose hand is guided by an unknown being using him as an instrument. Their reason cannot impede them, they never struggle, and their work shows no sign of strain. They are not divine and can do without their selves. They are like prolongations of nature, and their works do not pass through the intellect.¹



Art: My Path of Heart

Robert King

My greatest aspiration as an artist is to allow myself to be used as an instrument for the unknown. Since I was a child I have been fascinated by the process of letting a drawing draw itself.

The drawings you see here were created as illustrations for Arnold Mindell's book, *The Shaman's Body*. They were inspired by my profound love for the shamanic tradition. Arny's powerful articulations carried my spirit into the core of that love; from there these images emerged. Certain drawings were called forth by specific passages, which I have included. I absolutely loved, hated, despaired, agonized and was momentarily possessed by ecstatic rapture in acting as a conduit for these drawings. My basic creative challenge was to remove my ego so my acquired artistic skills and innate talents could be used in wholehearted service of the spirit. When I was able to drop my personal history, the spirit could express its idiosyncratic visions based on Arny's powerful articulation of the interrelationship between shamanism and Process Work. In other words, I tried to put into practice what he so poetically wrote in his book. "The warrior on the path of heart is like a flute that lets the wind blow through it, making its own music."²

Now I continue in this direction by inhibiting my urge to explain myself and my work. Through these drawings, I offer you a chance to experience whatever the spirit says to you about the dreaming body and the shamanic path. Let the spirit sing its song in lines and forms. Listen and look. You might feel or catch sight of power.

Notes

1. Herschel B. Chipp, ed. *Theories of Modern Art: A Sourcebook by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968) 231.
2. Arnold Mindell. *The Shaman's Body* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993)143.

Robert King has been a self-taught artist since childhood. He won state and national awards for his work in high school and surprised everyone by becoming a psychotherapist instead of an artist. For twenty-one years he worked in an out-patient clinic where he used his extensive experience in Process Work, Gestalt Therapy and Bioenergetics. He also taught for many years at Antioch University in Seattle. Currently Robert practices and teaches Process Work in Portland, Oregon and conducts seminars throughout the world with his partner, Jan. In the moment, death is his teacher and life drives him crazy-wise.



African witch doctor



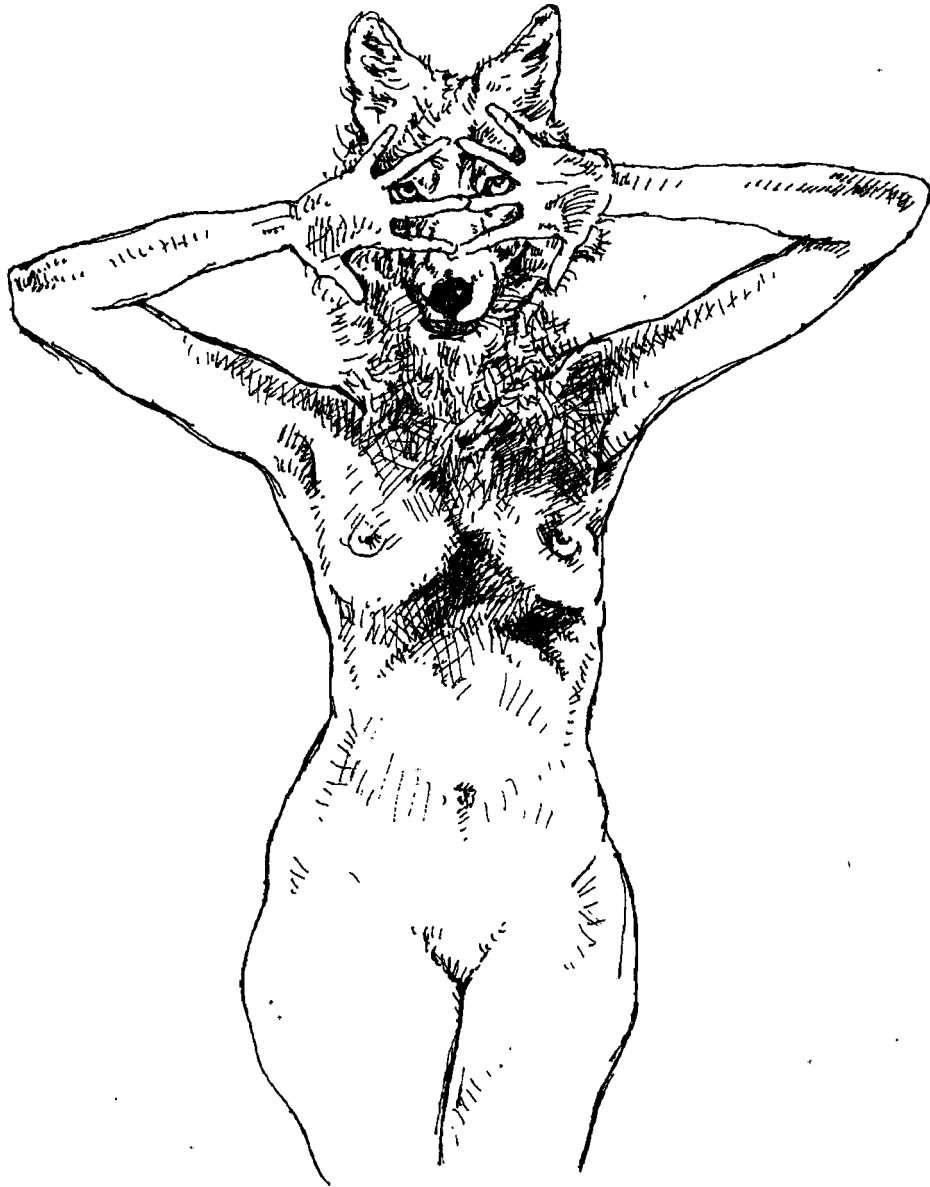
Native American medicine man



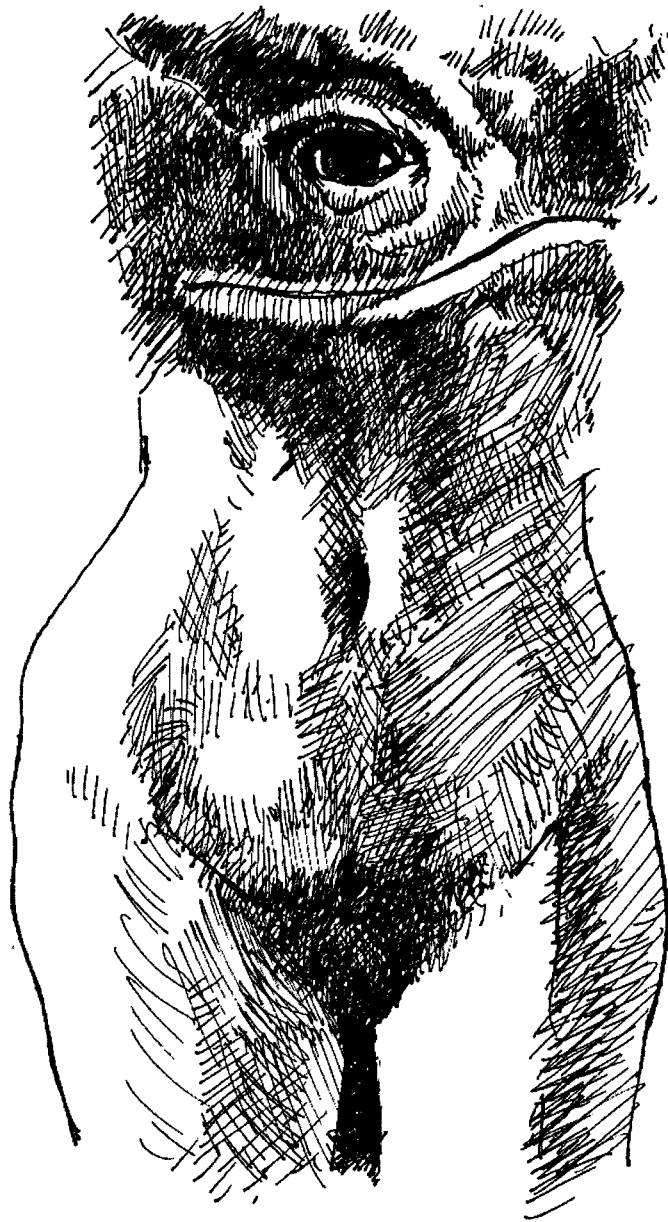
Australian aboriginal healer



Mexican shaman



Coyote woman



Whale woman on the path of heart



Raven man

The ally's mirror-like aspect is that he reflects the face that fights him. Thus, the ally is the forerunner of the double—the picture of your eternal, whole self: the dreaming body with your face. (Mindell 1993: 124)



Honor your teachers

I experienced the spirit that moved me in a few of my teachers. They called themselves by different names. They were therapists, witch doctors, shamans, and gurus, yet they all played the crucial role of the spirit for me. (Mindell 1993: 181-82)



Rainstar maker

I sensed my body's ally in my heart-beat. A drumming figure appeared, dancing around a gigantic, magical tree, with stars attached to the tips of its limbs like leaves. The vibrations of the drumming loosen and free the stars to shower down to earth. (My experience with an exercise from Mindell 1993: 108)

Einstein, Sleeplessness and Girls

Amy Mindell

In this article I write about an experience with creativity which arose spontaneously in December of 1994. My creativity appears at some of the most unexpected and often inconvenient times. Just when I think I am the organizer of my life, when I am set on doing other things, a creative urge springs forth and guides me down unknown pathways. I'm always surprised at the richness of this unexpected meandering!

I know something creative is trying to happen when I climb into bed at midnight and at 3 a.m. I am still waiting for precious slumber to overcome me. I wait expectantly for the moment when I can drift off into a world where my body recuperates and my fantasies soar. After a few restless hours, I wonder if I should perform the Herculean task: get out of bed and do something interesting. But, I'm sure if I wait just a little bit longer...

Night-time hours have always been both magical and frightening to me. They are a time of dreaming, a foggy place where worlds collide and I am unsure what is "real" and what is "fantasy." During these hours, ghosts and spirits, colors and all sorts of horror stories and adventure epics pour forth.

The last time I couldn't sleep and was able to pry myself out of bed, I spent three full nights reading and writing about revolution as my blurry eyes watched the sky turn from bluish-black to whitish-blue. This is not something I ever thought I would do. Energy and sleep are mysteries which I am only beginning to understand.

Last night I took a short break from my work. I had been planning my classes for next semester. I put my computer aside and got up to stretch. While walking over to our bookshelf, I glanced briefly at a copy of Ronald Clark's book, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (1994), which sat innocently on a shelf. I thought Army must have planned to

study it as part of his current immersion in physics. Why hadn't I noticed the book before? When I read the Einstein's name a strange "pang" went through me. I returned to my computer.

A few minutes later, I caught myself glancing up again at that book. Immediately and intentionally I looked back down at my computer. "Go away! I am doing my work!" I thought. But something like Newton's gravitational force began to work on me and I could not keep myself away from the bookshelf. I wondered how I could even consider following this absurd impulse. I was in the middle of something else! Where could this possibly go? Why in the world would I want to enter the baffling field of quantum physics, relativity or Einstein's thoughts on the nature and work of god? A hundred pages and a few hours later, I was spellbound.

I've always had trouble with the sciences. I was a good student of mathematics but any time I got near scientific thinking or the discussion of physical matter, I gave up, assuring myself that this was someone else's natural domain. I felt I was going down a one way street in the wrong direction. To me, electricity was what happened when you turned on a light switch. That's all! I decided to leave science to others "made" for that kind of study. I pursued dance, psychology and theater.

Now, lying in bed at three in the morning, I half consciously turned over as I simultaneously turned over the facts and discoveries of Einstein's life! I couldn't get rid of these thoughts. Creativity bursts forth in the oddest moments. It has no respect for plans, ideas, sleep or consensus reality. My half drowsy mind held on to what I had read, pondered the laws of physics, and saw Einstein's face wherever I turned. What was Albert doing in

our bed? (By the way, a couple of nights later Army dreamt about Einstein!)

I finally moved my weary limbs, got up and continued reading. I loved reading about Einstein's life, character and discoveries. He had a beginner's mind which always asked the simplest questions, questions often overlooked or taken for granted by others. He did not fall into the trap of hypnotically following the accepted scientific and educational beliefs of his time. He loved playing the violin, fascinated by the mathematical structure of music. This tickled me because I had just begun to learn the violin. He had a brilliant understanding of higher mathematics and a deep interest in Kant's philosophy by the age of 13, yet apparently could not talk fluently until he was nine. Most people thought that because of his intellectual hindrances and his tendency to rebel against any dogma or authority, he would never amount to much. After his studies at the ETH (technical institute) in Zurich, his friends were all given assistant professorship jobs, and he was not.

Einstein viewed his childhood learning difficulties as advantages. He said that while most children ponder space and time at a young age and give up this speculation when they get older, his delayed learning ability made it possible for him to ponder space and time in much greater depth.

Einstein said that he was not all that interested in everyday human relationships, but that his interest in physics was his lifelong drive and preoccupation. The search for understanding of the physical world consumed him and superseded everything else he did. His beginner's mind and ability to question what was "known" in physics were keys to his fundamental discoveries. His theories finally swept the world.

I was entranced by what I read. Names and properties that I had studied during my basic Process Work exams—Newton, Maxwell, Heidegger...field, wave and particle theories—turned up like old and distant friends. But I was sure I could never, ever understand the basic properties of matter, the complex theories and equations, the qualities of light, atoms, and electromagnetic fields! I planned to skim the more theoretical sections of the book, yet found myself reading every word.

I have always thought creativity belonged to art, painting, music, dance—and that is true—but I had forgotten my early lust for learning, reading,

gobbling things up and thinking them through. I was supported in my intellectual achievements in school, yet I always had this creeping feeling that a "girl" was not supposed to do such things.

I had to take "home economics," to study cooking and sewing, when I, like many girls, would have preferred "shop," learning to work with wood and metal. I wanted to learn carpentry but heard that was not for me. So, off I went to home economics classes. I never had the patience to follow exact patterns for clothes, though I made many for myself. As long as it worked, I didn't care about the details. I loved cooking and still do, but I hated cleaning up. My home economics teacher didn't like me and even criticized the way I filled out a check! How could I be a woman and also fail at home economics?

The early morning hours passed. I was stuck. Where was this all going? I was tired of reading. When unable to solve a problem, Einstein played the violin or sailed on the lakes of Switzerland. In this relaxed state, he came up with solutions and ideas he could not get to otherwise. I loved imagining him out on the lake I often passed during the years I lived in Zurich.

The next afternoon I took a nap and dreamed about a couple getting back together after a long absence. One person was very feeling, the other very thinking-oriented, intellectual. In my psyche, these two are uniting and I am trying to follow them. I had forgotten that creativity has many faces, and that intellectual attraction is as valid as any other. The evening I spent reading about Einstein gave me the gift of returning to my thinking nature and interest in the physical world.

I have since been reading about well drilling, water purification systems, road building and ceramics. From all of this I realize that remaining in any one identity or program can be devastating. Einstein taught me that following the tiny flickers of imagination, passion or interest can be the beginning of new ideas, creativity, recipes, splendid theories about the world, or simply learning why the light goes on when I turn the switch!

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The Daimon Creativity: My 800 Year Old Soul

Jan Dworkin

Many of us are driven to live creatively. We risk showing the most impossible parts of ourselves and suffer our fates. Rather than trying to tame or integrate our energies, we allow them to live through us. Often our acts do not abide by consensus standards, and as a result our lives are filled with inner and outer conflicts. We may feel ashamed of our troubles and choose not to speak about them. In this article, I discuss my own creative path as it has been inspired by alchemy and Process Work. I address destructive and constructive aspects of the creative process and propose a creative imperative for living madly in today's world.

My spirit baby

I've been cooking a spirit baby for twelve months. Last year I experienced a pregnancy and an abortion. The dreaming world indicated that something other than a human child was meant to come into my life (see Dworkin 1994). My partner Robert and I chose to terminate the living being in my womb in order to make space for a spirit life. As we processed our pregnancy, it became clear to us that our baby was an 800 year old soul, not meant to be born as a human.

Instead, it is an aspect of myself and my relationship with Robert, meant to live through me in the world. In some indigenous cultures, shamans believed that when women became pregnant, their task was to discover whether they carried an 80 year old baby or an 800 year old baby. If the baby's spirit proved 80 years old, it was the seed of a human child, meant for birth in this world. If the couple discovered an 800 year old spirit, the woman did not give birth to a

human child. Instead, a shamanic calling was indicated and the couple was given a task. They were meant to find their song and bring it back to the community as an offering. This baby is my creativity trying to discover itself, pushing towards birth, sometimes damaging myself and others in the process.

The pregnancy became a daily reminder of our procreative potential. Each month I secretly hoped I might be pregnant again, looking for a sign that we were meant to have a child after all. For the first time in my life, I experienced a deep longing to be pregnant and give birth. My fantasies were mostly impractical. I thought having a baby would bring me a simple life; we could move out of the city and I would write and paint. Once I became clear that a child would not furnish me with my longed for inner life, we chose a secure method of birth control. With that decision, I ended my fantasies of human procreation.

Eros the creator

Faced with my creative void, I developed what the clinician in me might call a sexual obsession. I was sex-crazed, driven by some force or itch or irritation. I had to make love when I wanted, how I wanted, as frequently as I desired. I didn't need more closeness and intimacy, but yearned to express a deep aspect of myself.

Freud saw a direct connection between sexual energy, or libido, and the creative process. Although he contradicted himself on the topic, he finally seemed to reduce creativity to the process of sublimation. According to Freud, when libido is thwarted from its natural sexual aim, it attempts to find partial fulfillment in other aspects of life, resulting in creative products. One

has a limited amount of libido; if all is spent sexually, nothing is left for artistic creation (see Freud 1908; Arieti 1976). Freud's theory touched something in me. I decided to economize my libido and use my horniness to create!

Similarly, in ancient Greece, sex and love were seen to have creative potential. Plato considered Eros to be a god or demiurge which constitutes the creative spirit of the human being. Eros is the drive which impels us towards sexual union and other forms of love, and towards knowledge and artistic creation. He says that in creativity we come as close as humanly possible to becoming immortal (see Plato 1951; May 1969).

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, a Greek creation story from 750 B.C., Eros is one of the original team of gods and goddesses who create the world. Eros holds a unique role. While creating, he "breaks the limb's strength... (and) overpowers the intelligence in the breasts (of human beings) and in all their shrewd planning" (Campbell 1964: 234). More simply said, Eros overpowers and destroys in order to create.

In my view, Eros destroys our identities whenever we surrender to a lover, momentarily giving over who we are and opening ourselves to the energies and emotions which come through us. The throes of passion may destroy our self-images. We might find ourselves behaving in ways that do not abide by collective standards or by our usual behavior patterns. For example, I recall a client, a poet and holistic healer, who became sadistic and violent during sex. This behavior greatly threatened his loving persona. I also think of the teacher who, against her best judgment, fell madly in love with a student. In sex we often lose rational control: we may risk our emotional and physical health or disobey our valued professional ethics.

Eros yearns to destroy and create outside the bedroom as well. I am beginning to know the destruction intrinsic to my own creativity. I had intended this article to be impersonal and academic. I promised myself not to mention my abortion, my sex life or my personal experience. I want to control my creative products so they go along with my identity and intentions and make me look intelligent and spiritual. This urge to control is not uncommon. For example, it may appear in parents who try to create children in their image, hoping the offspring will reflect the parents' virtues in the community. But control

impedes creativity and can kill it. My creative spirit lives its own destiny. It destroys my intentions and the identity which I so cherish.

The alchemists' nigredo

My shift of focus from procreation and sexuality to other forms of creativity requires ongoing discipline and attention. I find it nearly impossible to discover and nurture my creativity without school and assignments, in between workdays and in our noisy city apartment with the phone ringing. There are always excuses, so many reasons not to focus on myself, so much busy-ness created by my self chosen life-style. So much horniness and desire to relate. No wonder I fantasize about having a child—I need a radical change of focus and life-style.

In my struggles to birth my own creativity I have been inspired and guided by the spirit of the alchemists. I was drawn to them twelve years ago in my early studies of Process Work and creativity (see Dworkin 1984). The alchemists have helped me understand some of the more difficult and conflictual aspects of the creative process.

Alchemists appeared in China and North Africa as early as 3000 B.C. and in western Europe around the time of the birth of Christ. Their lineage includes shamans and medicine people. The alchemists' task was to facilitate and study transformation (Mindell and Mindell: *Chance, Taoism and Alchemy Seminar*, March 1994). On a concrete level, some were scientists attempting to transmute base metals into gold. If we consider them to be predecessors to modern psychologists, we note that they observed the process of transforming undifferentiated consciousness, the *prima materia*, into something full of hope and expectation. Spiritually they strove for fluid awareness, immortality and oneness with God, which was known to them as the Divine Child or the Philosopher's Stone. In my mind, they lived and studied the creative process (see Dworkin 1984; Eliade 1956; Jung 1944; Lossowski di Rola 1973; Mindell 1985).

In the west, the alchemists generally cooked their metals in a vessel. In the east, the vessel was often the human body, and the transformations took place on an introverted level. In both regions, they were radical women and men, living at the fringe of their communities, totally dedicating themselves to their work. When I use alchemy as a pattern for the creative process, I am reminded that there is no creation without anni-

hilation, the plunge into the fiery depths known to alchemists as the nigredo.

During the nigredo phase of the alchemical process, the metals turned a dark, charred color and were said to emit foul, noxious vapors. The fumes sometimes drove alchemists insane or fatally poisoned them. Indeed, some alchemists threw themselves into the fiery furnace during the nigredo, sacrificing their lives for their work (Eliade 1956). Although the nigredo was a violent phase where the opposites did battle, alchemists insisted that the appearance of the nigredo, or "black of blacks," indicated the first sure sign they were on the right track towards creating gold (Lossowski di Rola 1973: 11). Alchemy was not meant for the sensitive of heart or body.

Daimonic as creative inspiration

As I cook in the heat of my inner and outer conflicts, destroying myself again and again, I come to know the daimonic aspects of my creativity. The ancient Greek word "daimon" refers to an inner deity both divine and diabolical. It translates into Latin as "genii" or "jinn," associated with the genius of a person. It is said to be synonymous with one's fate and is also seen as the voice of the generative process within the individual. Yeats called the daimonic the "other Will." Plato informs us that the daimon is "a divine madness that seizes the creative person" (in May 1969: 124-25).

Although the daimon is commonly thought of as the artist's inspiration, the angered or frustrated daimon can be negative. Transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilbur cautions:

there is a strange and horrible thing about one's daimon. When honored and acted upon, it is indeed one's guiding spirit; those who bear a god within bring genius to their work. When, however, one's daimon is heard but unheeded, it is said that the daimon becomes a demon, or evil spirit—divine energy and talent degenerates into self-destructive activity. The Christian mystics, for example, say that the flames of Hell are but God's love denied, angels reduced to demons. (1991: 58)

Sometimes I live in the flames of hell, flames fueled by a critical, self-loathing, frustrated spirit which expects great things of me and has been disappointed too many times. These flames burn my skin, creating inexplicable rashes. They also singe people I love as I lash out with my irritable moods. The fire cooks the 800 year old soul in

my womb, fueling my creative struggle. This struggle often leaves me feeling hopelessly human with no creative potential, no link to god, the victim of my daimon, destroyed, bruised and discouraged.

At those moments I remember alchemy and am grateful for the knowledge that transformation may be heated by despair. I recall frequent references in alchemical texts to torture and dismemberment. In my more dramatic moments I relate to the vision of the alchemist Zosimos, in which he sees a man who "has been pierced by a sword, cut into pieces, decapitated, scorched, burned in fire, all of which he suffered in order to change his body into spirit" (Eliade 1956: 150).

The daimon as ally

I have found it useful to think of the daimon as an ally. The daimon is generally considered an inner deity. Allies, however, may appear as outer figures: powerful or abusive parents, impossible partners, exceedingly loving or jealous friends, authority figures. They can show up as haunting fantasies or predatory animals. Sometimes they appear as aspects of nature: an icy wind, the scorching sun, the vast ocean. Their energies are unmistakably other and terrifying (see Mindell 1993; Castaneda 1971, 1972).

Arnold Mindell devotes several chapters in his book, *The Shaman's Body*, to a discussion of the ally. He says that

the archetypal and most powerful ally... is an impossible god of darkness... the thing that scares you most and is furthest from your ability to control.... The encounter with the ally is potentially lethal.... The bottom line is death. (1993: 116)

Process Work has shown that these apparently destructive forces, which devastate, horrify or drive us mad, can be used consciously to creative ends. The most venomous criticisms may be wake up calls, demanding us to identify less with the known world and more with their uncanny and awesome tendencies. Often these forces intend to destroy our identities.

My studies and experiences in Process Work help me know my ally. I recently dreamed of a sadist in leather who chained me to my desk and whipped me with her switch as she insisted that I write. This daimonic ally demands a disciplined and brutal attention to my creativity, my writing and my artwork. When she is ignored, the process flips into masochistic self-hatred and

depression. Often I meet my animal ally, one who attacked me in my youth and terrorizes my dreams to this day. My vicious dog power almost took my life once, when two Dobermans cornered me. In my dreams my dog ally does not hesitate to bite off my hands, turning his teeth on me when I do not live his power.

Existential psychologist Rollo May believed the task of psychotherapy was to assist an individual in getting to know, integrate and use the daimon. He said that we must integrate the daimonic into our "self systems," so it does not possess us. "If the daemonic urges are integrated into the personality, which is, to my mind, the purpose of psychotherapy, it results in creativity" (in Greening 1984: 14).

May tells us that an unintegrated daimon will come out in violence, rage, compulsions and sex.

While the daimonic cannot be said to be evil in and of itself, it confronts us with the troublesome dilemma of whether it is to be used with awareness, a sense of responsibility and the significance of life, or blindly and rashly. (1973: 129)

Most of western psychology has valued integration and responsibility to the status quo above destruction of the identity or radical changes in culture.

The poet Rilke warned that psychoanalysis, with its focus on civilizing the id instincts and adapting to society's rules and conventions, is a threat to creativity. Upon declining to enter psychoanalysis with Freud in the early part of this century, he exclaimed, "If my devils are to leave me, I am afraid my angels will take flight as well" (in May 1969: 122). The emphasis in Jungian analysis on integration of unconscious material (the shadow) into the personality might also be thought to inhibit creativity (Jung 1951). However, Jung himself was sometimes overwhelmed by his unconscious and driven to creative madness. "The daimon of creativity has ruthlessly had its way with me," he reflected in his autobiography. He confesses having had to obey an "inner law" which was imposed on him, leaving him no "freedom of choice" (Jung 1965: 356-58). Many other creative artists and thinkers, including Friedrich Nietzsche, Vincent Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo, were driven to the brink of madness in service of their creative processes. Yeats cried, "in my heart the daemons and the gods Wage an eternal battle" (in May 1969: 127).

Although the daimonic often expresses itself in socially unacceptable ways, I believe this unacceptability is its gift and its demand. Creativity does not result from taming the daimon and making it part of the identity. Quite the contrary—we are driven to the brink of madness, murder, mayhem and self-sacrifice for these spirits. Only then, on the edge of our so-called sanity and the far reaches of our identities, comes our imperative. We must redirect daimonic energies in order to create.

Recall the alchemists, who threw themselves into their fires to make the work progress. Recall Eros, who must overpower and destroy in order to create. This sacrifice of identity is a requirement for creativity. "It is the mad you, the perverted you, the ecstatic you, the rebel, the suffering and wise you," says Mindell of the creative ally (1993: 119). If we look too good or too normal or too mainstream, then it is not the daimon, but rather our standard selves, trying to fit into the world as it is, wanting to make a name for ourselves.

Living creativity

Sometimes I live my creative self as a therapist. In these moments time stops and therapy becomes mystery. Usually, I don't risk losing my therapeutic routine unless I am driven by boredom to the edges of my identity. Then I brace myself, kick my butt and follow irrational and unconventional tendencies. Perhaps I do not feel helpful. I am hopeless or depressed or want to close my eyes and focus inward. Sometimes I feel like dancing madly or screaming or pulling my hair or jumping for joy or crying for the person's pain. At worst, I am irritated or turned off by the person I think I should be loving and supporting.

Recently I worked with a young man who got on my nerves. Although he appeared happy and content with his life, he came to therapy because his partner wanted him to change. He sat down, kicked back and seemed to expect me to entertain him. My training told me that he did not identify with his arrogant behavior. Because he was not consciously aware of this part of himself, it was expressed in a disturbing manner. I knew I should support his confidence. He was without direction and needed more self-esteem. But this man turned me off. I didn't know if I could bear to work with him.

After two sessions I rebelled against my own well-behaved persona. I told him I didn't like him.

Worse yet, I disobeyed my own ethical rules and did not support him by taking his side against me. I simply gave it to him. Much to my surprise, after his initial shock, tears welled up in his eyes and he spoke of his insecurities and desire for my approval. He asked for help with his marital difficulties and career path. Our work and relationship became starkly real and creative as I outlined my expectations for his warriorship.

This hard-line approach is the total antipathy of my normal therapeutic style. Murdering my usual style created an exciting change. I have seen other teachers, students and friends risk their popularity and identities in order to serve their uncanny spirits. I am always in awe when I witness this.

As an artist I have been blocked by an inner prejudice against my work. After entering therapy, I stopped painting because I thought I should create abstract paintings which came from my so-called unconscious. My passion for portraits and the human form were not sufficiently psychological, I told myself. Besides, my obsession with my own face and body surely indicated narcissism. What would others think if they saw me produce yet another drawing of myself? For ten years I cut off one of my greatest pleasures in life. I am in the midst of destroying that prejudice and rediscovering myself as a visual artist. I am desperate to live my creativity in spite of expectations of me as a therapist, teacher, friend, lover, woman. As I write, I feel ready to "kill" myself, ready to risk new identities.

If we encounter our ally or daimon and do not go through the process of wrestling it: struggling, refusing, complying, praying, opposing, debating, colliding and ultimately sacrificing aspects of ourselves to live its energy, the ally might kill us. Literally. Minimally, it will make us miserable: physically ill, depressed, frantic, distressed in relationship or frustrated in career. Wrestling an ally can take a lifetime. Many of us were chased by these allies in our childhood dreams. If we don't gain access to their powers in life, they may overtake us again at death.

According to Mindell,

your most ancient human task is to recover everything which makes you whole, to find your soul, to discover your demon. This means noticing where that demon is and then processing its uncanny energies. (1993:118)

My 800 year old soul-child has a burning and violent need to express her most essential self, her ancient task. She wants me to live my death now by murdering my tendency to view life as known, predictable or impossible to change. She wants me to develop a fluid identity, follow my inner impulses and break my addiction to consensus reality. She demands that I be her midwife and mother, ready to protect her by destroying anything which blocks her creation.

Conclusion

Currently in the United States, I sense a huge fear and sense of insecurity permeating the atmosphere. This is indicated by the media's preoccupation with crime and violence and the recent Republican sweep in congress. Personal safety and financial security are certainly important issues. However, in my opinion, contrary to conventional wisdom, mainstream America does not need more safety. We need more violent and mad artists, willing to risk everything to change themselves, challenge oppressive values and create a culture that supports human rights and community. We need models who can cook in the fires of change and ride the waves of the chaotic transitions we experience today. Changing the world may seem too great a task for any one creative artist, but I want to believe that if I live my daimon ally, nothing is impossible. If we do it collectively, perhaps anything is possible.

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Poetry

Renata Ackermann, Ph.D., is a certified process worker. She was born in Switzerland, and the alps are an integral part of her nature. She is currently excited by romance, crises, death and other transitions.

How I came to be

When I was born, Venus stood right by the
thin sliver of a new moon.

“A good omen,” said the midwife who knew to
watch the sky for these special unions.

“Love has found a partner once again.”

Weathered mountains reached high up in the East,
their white caps pulled down low.

The essence of the granite
slowly dripped into my bones,
stillness I proudly carry in me ever since.

Birds welcomed the new life as well. Some
dropped inkblue feathers to
embellish my birthday dress.

In my dreams I fly with them into the sky where
freedom is obvious and endless.

I did not see the ocean till much later.
Ebb and flow, a concept unfamiliar to my eye.
Inside of me I often feel the moody waters,
stormy waves, happy ripples, waxing and waning.
Venus still stands right by the changing moon.

Louis Alemayehu

I was born in Chicago on December 31, 1945, and have lived in Minnesota since 1964. I published my first book of poetry, Ancestor Energy, in 1981 and performed at a poetry jazz ensemble the same year. Poetry is spoken and song-physicalised word. I see myself performing in the tradition of jazz poets Langston Hughes and Ted Joans, in the spirit of traditional peoples of all colors who do not make a distinction between poetry, dance, music and drama. Stirring all these elements together, poetry becomes a ritual, its colors a rainbow mess, its purpose, healing. I have been involved in Process Work since 1992. I belong to a training collective called Anti-cultural Crossroads. We design and facilitate workshops and trainings on issues of diversity, oppression and conflict.

Heartsong for My Father

(to my brother Larry)

All these wounds have names
From your circumcision,
to your scarred knees,
to your bypass.

Although we say we love it,
who says the road is not rough on a man?
Our father has given himself heart and semen,
Our father has witnessed with his hands and labor,

we boys grew, flew through years like we were racers,
and it took you Pa not a few beers with whisky chasers.

You know, we moved beyond Dad's possibilities,
Grandpa's dreams and great-grandpa's living nightmares
and time passes, time pasted and
Pa you were there - heart and soul,

*body and soul you were there,
you are here where it counts.*

Our Father, our Father, our Father
has clicked off the bathroom light,
has tripped into twilight.

the newspaper is at the bedside,
the all night jazz station whispers in the dawn,
the majesty of the blues' possesses the song,
and lingers on, lingers on,
it is the hue of this room
and there is silence here...

I never really believed that I had a story until my father began to lose his memory. He'd always been forgetful. When we woke him up from a deep sleep, he didn't know where he was right away. Sometimes if he woke up with a start, he would call out the names of his sisters, "Emma" and "Julia," then my mother, "Jeanette" and then me and my bother "Topper." This was a startled litany that would bring him back to present time if he stayed awake.

My father seemed to always work at odd hours that put him out of sync with the rest of the family. He seemed to always have some part of the nightwatch and slept some part of the day. I remember for a while this seemed to work toward my advantage during a time when he would be there at home and prepare some lunch for me. I can still remember a fried pork chop sandwich with mustard and black pepper on it. Although it disgusts me now and I haven't eaten pork in years, somehow this is still a pleasant memory for me.

*Father, I call forth all the passion you never expressed,
All the words unspoken,
All the songs unsung,
All the injustices unchallenged.*

*Father, I call you forth from loss and failure perceived and real,
All the would have beens, could have beens,
All the dreams deferred,
All the bad luck that stuck to you shoes.*

*Father, I call you forth from woundedness and rage suppressed,
All the betrayals, slammed doors and Jim Crow demons,
All the lies, lost friends, dectieful salesmen and second hand cars.*

Father, I call you forth to the truth of who you really are:

*“You are compassion
mother loving
skirt flirting
rough red-browneath hands full of beauty
rose hearted, car fixing, liffle girl teasing scat-singing
Go-to-work-on-Monday
Too-tired-for-church-on-Sunday
Angel Daddy risen up from Arkansas’ red clay soil
Who aint no “farmer” or an “old lady”^{*}
Sweet sweet Daddy, your face is in the Sun
You nurtured with the power of a Motherman
and my Soul rises up in wonder
Of the Strength in a man like you
Tenderness,
Endurance,
Inspite of it all in the face of it all
You were there
You are here were it counts.”*

^{*} affectionate terms used by my father’s childhood depression era running buddies to tease one another.

Song of the Blackstone Pipe:

we are the river

Healing wings of fire,
Fly over the River and let the Moon rise
Healing wings of fire,
Fly over the River and let the Moon rise.
Dusk light, dawn light,
Dance over the River
And let the loon rise like the Moon rise,
In song:

Song about the Red river,
Flowin' to the Sea,
Singin' in the Sun,
They are a River.

Don't want to be left here,
Don't want to leave here,
Until,
I hear,
The song, the song, the song,

The song of the Black river,
Flowin' to the Sea,
The music in me,
They are a River.

Don't want to be left here,
Don't want to leave here,
Until,
I hear,
The song, the song, the song,

The song of the White river,
Flowin' to the Sea,
Dancin' on the rocks,
They are a River.

See, I don't want to be here
If I can't hear, here
The song, the song, the song, the song, the song, the song,

The song of the Yellow river,
Flowin' to the Sea,
Wavin' peonies,
They are a River.

I don't want to stay here,
If I can't hear, here,
The song, the song, the song,

The song of the Brown river,
That muddy, muddy, Brown river,
A Mighty Mississippi River
of all Humanity,

We
Are a River.

With Love all our Rivers
Twine and flow,
Gather and grow,

Into a great, great River,
and then empties into the Sea...
Where our journey just began,
Where our journey never ends...

We are a river
rising up
like a Green Water Creature
all dripping with seaweed
To kiss the Flammg Flower

And then
Rain, rain, rain.

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Abbreviated Farewell (for Marti)

In another era,
I could have mourned properly.
Torn my dress, skin, hair,
left traces that made sense, explained,
outer markers for inner agony.
Whatever happened to sitting shiva,
wearing black,
obvious aching, soul pieces on public display?

Fragments of you come back to me.
An occasional piece of clothing
impossibly, smells of you.

You left in the 90s.
Gracious workplaces grant three days funeral leave.
I'll mourn you on my own time.

In praise of longing (a hymn for the creator)

In the beginning was
a swirling void, eternal
drifting stardust.

Enter, stage left,
lust.

Lust.

The essential ingredient in
any creation.
Lifeforce, magnetics, pulling
algae from the sea, electrons irrevocably into
each other's force fields.

Lust made stardust long for itself, begin
to sense possibilities.
Without hunger, who would have chased down a mammoth,
torn flesh from bones? Who could have conceived eating an artichoke,
much less hollandaise?

Don't discount longings.
Lust makes all things possible.

David Bedrick is a poet, therapist and organizational consultant. His interests include social politics, cooking and playing music. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

I.

Would/you decieve/me? Open your
soft/moss green/earth to swallow and then
never swallow again?

Would/you leave/me held in your soil crib
so fruitful then never come back?

And if you did, would I know the blood
hammering grief to be plenty?

II.

How many love poems
will never love you?

Break me
I'm broken anyway.

III.

She keeps
offering food
like a collection
plate.

What is she
collecting
that keeps her
off

er
ing?

Process Acting

Arlene Audergon

I began cooking on how Process Work and theater connect the first time I saw Arnold Mindell working with individuals in a seminar eleven years ago. As in theater, the group burst out laughing or sat in awe as dream and mythic figures suddenly came to life. As in theater, when a process is unfolded to its core, what we see is both utterly personal and touches the universal.

During the past couple years, I experimented with applying Process Work to training actors, creating a method called "Process Acting." Process Acting can be applied as part of an actor's training, character study, rehearsal and performance. It can also be utilized by a director to help bring an actor's performance to life. Two people have been crucial to this project. Tara Tweedie encouraged me to try Process Work with actors and assisted me in creating and giving a course. Allen Plone, a director and writer, participated in our class and challenged me to recognize that I was coaching actors—even directing. Later, he and I created a course which combined his skills as a director and mine with Process Acting. Process Work and theater may be such good bedfellows because of the numinous atmosphere they create by bringing awareness and expression to our dream life, mythic background, and personal stories. In this article I discuss how Process Work has yielded a unique method of coaching actors, describe Process Acting, look at the background uniting Process Work and theater and suggest directions for further research.

Dangerous Liaisons: a cold reading

In class one evening an acting student did a "cold reading" of a monologue from *Dangerous Liaisons*. Her goal was to practice accessing a character quickly for auditions. She played the lead

role, a character whom she described as cruel, cold and sexy. The reading fell flat.

What happens when a performance falls flat? In the audience, you don't feel touched. Instead of seeing a character engaged in a story, you see an actor trying to portray a character. It looks fake. The incongruence between actor and character is unconvincing, if not annoying.

Intended and unintended communication of character and actor

People frequently communicate incongruently; we send two sets of signals. One set of signals is intended, carrying a message that goes along with our identity. I might identify as a calm and reserved person reporting the events of my day. I also send another set of unintended signals carrying a message that does not conform to this identity. Perhaps my foot is bouncing. You might interpret this signal and wonder if I'm nervous or need to go to the bathroom. Process Work methods help us accurately discover the meaning of unintended signals, such as gestures, postures, movements, and voice tone. Within an apparently disturbing signal, we may discover new points of view or emerging behavior patterns. If I follow my bouncing foot I may find that I want to jump into your lap rather than tell you about my day. I discover an internal conflict between my calm, reserved nature and my excitement and urge for contact. My relationships may change as I show more of my excitement and jump on my friends.

An actor must know much more about a character's inner conflicts than the character does. A character may be very sweet and know nothing of the anger she holds back, which sneaks out in the tone or rhythm of her voice, in body tensions or gestures. The actor studies the character and play,

explores the character's motivations and feelings and produces the character's intended and unintended communication. Sometimes an actor will step right into the character's emotional world and experience the character taking over. The character begins to communicate without the actor's conscious involvement. These are creative, inspired moments, but an actor's job does not depend only on inspiration. It involves becoming a conscious conduit for the character's expression. Process Acting introduces a key to achieve this task. In order to assist actors with their expression, we observe various aspects of the actor's communication. The actor's intended communication includes both intended and unintended signals of the character. There is an additional set of signals which are unintended by the actor. These are the signals which most disturb us in a poor performance and which can lead to the depth and refinement of a great performance.

Process Acting methods hone in on the interface between actor and character. Many schools of acting (Meisner 1987; Stanislavski 1989a, 1989b; Chekhov 1991) point to the unique creative expression an actor brings to a character, understanding that an actor's inner resources bring a character to life. Process Acting has discovered that great allies towards a dramatic and vital performance can be found at the trouble spots in the intersection between actor and character. Perhaps the actor is nervous and can't feel the part, or moves awkwardly and feels full of tension. The most troublesome signals lead the way not only to the actor's liveliness and creativity, but to the deepest inner life of the character and even to the core conflicts and meaning of the play.

Blocked: the inner critic

The actress reading from *Dangerous Liaisons* felt discouraged and totally blocked. Under fierce internal attack, she felt worthless. Using a simple process-oriented method, I asked her to step into the role of her inner critic and to attack herself. I then challenged the critic to be more specific, to do his job better instead of trying to wipe her out. The actress was then able to give herself a useful critique and to experience the critic's strong and cool stance, a quality which was already useful for the character she was playing.

Discovering Siva

This was just the beginning. I asked her to read again and this time stopped her after a couple of lines. Noticing that she seemed to hold a lot of

tension in her chest, I asked her to focus on that area. I encouraged her to just feel the tension and to slightly intensify the sensation. Most acting techniques emphasize the importance of working with one's body. As far as I am aware, the goal is always to help the actor to relax, to gain ease and access to the body's full range of expression. Process Acting methods work from the finding that tensions are creative, that they carry dream figures or specific patterns and qualities seeking awareness and inclusion.

The actress had tried to gesture as the character during her reading, and these gestures looked artificial. I asked her now to focus her attention on the feeling in her chest and to allow a gesture to originate from this sensation, forgetting her previous conception of the character. Her arms gradually rose and her wrists turned in a very slow, differentiated movement. As I encouraged her to stay with the feeling, to follow these movements and to let them slowly grow through her whole body, she entered an altered state. To everyone present she now looked distinctly like an Indian dancer, or like Siva himself. The actress was unfamiliar with Hindu religion or mythology, but said that she experienced an unusual sense of detachment from her body and senses! This work took only a few minutes. I now handed her the script and instructed her to not leave this state, but to allow every word and movement to originate from this feeling.

Her powerful reading left the group riveted. What happened here? What did all this have to do with the actor? What, if anything, does Siva have to do with the character? And what does Siva have to do with the meaning of the play, *Dangerous Liaisons*?

Why Siva for this character and play?

For those who have experienced Process Work in which a mythic figure came forth from amplifying a tension, gesture or spontaneous body experience, it will be easy to understand that the actor looked radiant in her new experience. Siva's presence commands respect and awe. The actor does not usually express this quality of detachment; she is growing on the spot. This alone will surely make her more alive, present and interesting to watch. But she was supposed to be the sexy, cold and cruel character, not just any dream or mythic figure. Why did Siva appear, and why did the performance work? Although *Dangerous Liaisons* is a well known play and film, I had not read

or seen it at the time. Directly after class, I rented a videotape of the Glenn Close version and went home to study why Siva had appeared. Watching the film, I found that the two leading characters attempt to master matters of love and sex with extraordinary detachment. Like playing a game of chess, excruciatingly deliberate in each move, they compete. Each tries to outdo the other by winning people to bed for ambition and revenge. In actuality, they are not at all detached, but driven by jealousy and their own need for love.

I see *Dangerous Liaisons* as a story of our attempts to become masters of fate and to gain detachment from our passions, love and sexuality. It portrays a mythic conflict between detachment and emotions which are beyond our control, and the hell and sweetness involved in learning we are human.

The sense of detachment which arose as the actress followed the tension in her chest was absolutely relevant to the character and to the play's meaning. Shortly after the section from which the actress read, the character even states that her goal is detachment. She describes how she entered society as a young woman, determined that by carefully observing what people hide, rather than what they say, she could refuse her societal role as a woman and do whatever she wanted. Both leading characters attempt to defeat the puritanical demands of their society and to be their own masters, even over love.

When we consider what Siva has to do with this story, we discover he is utterly detached from matters of love. This wearies his wife Parvati (Sakti or the principle of manifestation). Deep in meditation, Siva does not notice her. In one story, the gods attempt to tear Siva away from his asceticism by sending him Love (Kamadeva) and Love's wife Pleasure. As Parvati approaches her husband, Love draws his bow. At that very moment, Siva sees him and with a burning flash of his third eye, consumes Love. Pleasure mourns. Parvati, weary of Siva's indifference, becomes a hermit. A young man visits her and tries to persuade her to return to the world. She becomes angry until the young man reveals that he is Siva and promises his love. Parvati asks that he first return the body of Love (Kamadeva) to his wife Pleasure. Siva agrees. Love returns and Siva and Parvati's embrace makes the whole world tremble (Guirand 1965).

Siva is the "head of those who have repudiated society, the ascetics" (Guirand 1965: 384). In

Dangerous Liaisons, we see both the repudiation of society and the goal of detachment, though the story is expressed by way of the deepest of human shadows.

The bridge between actor, character and play

No one can play the part better than you

The actor's job is to tell archetypal human stories. She is a channel for a character we will recognize in our souls. But first the actor must bring to the character an absolutely unique and personal expression. Any hint of generality can ruin a performance. Process Work tools help us reach a core experience which is the bridge between actor and character. At this point we no longer see an actor portraying a character. The actor, through all her inner resources, becomes the perfect conduit for the character to emerge.

Field theory: who sends the signal?

Why do the actor's unintended signals lead us to a central conflict of the character and the play? Process Work theory and methods show us that our body tensions, moods, feelings, visions and ideas belong not only to our personal psychology, but to the "field" we live in. When you walk into a home, a neighborhood, organization or business, even a country, you sense various atmospheres. Each environment awakens unique feelings and processes in you. You may experience increased tension and energy at the point where your own personal growth interfaces with a field.

For example, while teaching in Poland, I became acutely aware of all the times I don't feel free to speak my mind. A colleague had asked the other teachers to hold back while she was teaching. This triggered my awareness of how often I censor my ideas or tell myself to keep quiet. In the years since communism collapsed, people in Poland are involved in a collective transition around their new freedom of speech. In this "field," my personal issues concerning freedom of speech were activated.

Process Work also works with the finding that people are "dreamed up" in each other's presence. Someone who is very reserved might dream at night of a silly, dancing child. In his presence, you may be dreamed up to feel and act silly and fidgety. One way of viewing this phenomenon is that the silly dream figure seeks a mode of expression and inclusion. This figure may appear in the person's unintended communication signals, perhaps in a faint smile at the corner of his lips.

Dreaming up is often a direct response to such signals: although we do not perceive these signals consciously, they work on us. We can also understand dreaming up as a “field” phenomenon in which the dream figure recruits someone in the vicinity through which to express herself.¹

In acting, the “field” or the “atmosphere” is created not only by the players, the theater and the audience, but by the play and its archetypal or mythic background. This means that as an actor begins the work of developing a role, her unintended signals do not belong only to her own psychology. They are actually sent by the character and the play itself!

Staying true to the meaning of the play

I found that at times an actor could work with a momentary unintended signal, unfold the process and simply play the role from the vantage point of the new attitude, quality or figure which emerged, as in the example above when Siva appeared. At other times, to achieve a genuine performance, we needed to work with the actor’s “edge,” or unconscious belief system, which conflicted with the qualities that emerged from unintended signals.

Plays are built upon dramatic conflict. The writer, director and finally the actors bring these conflicts to life. In the Process Acting classes, we discovered that the actor’s “edge” could not be viewed only as a hindrance to accessing some new quality or attitude. As the actor’s internal struggle was made explicit, it often mirrored the core dramatic conflict of the play. In fact, when we were unable to grasp the core conflict of a play or scene through reading it, working with an actor’s edge led to a useful analysis of the play’s meaning.

At times we needed to develop a character in phases. For example, an actor might discover a character’s deepest fears, but perhaps the character attempts to cover his fear at all costs. Once the fear was discovered, it needed to be repressed rather than expressed. Staying true to the writer’s intent and the play narrative, the actor could now play the character’s conflicted signals. Conversely, a character might freely express pure despair or rage, but the actor had a personal “edge” or unconscious value system which did not permit showing such intense emotions. In other words, the character might not have the same conflict as the actor. In these cases, the actor needed to process his or her internal conflicts

around these emotions in order to play the part as written. Playing these characters provided a route over the actor’s personal edge, leading to personal as well as artistic growth.

Keep your chest out

I worked recently with an acting student who was in the middle of rehearsals and complained that she couldn’t access any real emotion in her part. Her acting teacher had been trying to help her loosen up by recommending a classic acting method; try something bold, wild or “over the top.” She still couldn’t find an ounce of creativity and felt nothing as she recited her lines. We laughed together at how she sounded like the woman in *A Chorus Line* who sings about her acting class, “So I reached right down to the bottom of my soul...and I found nothing!”

I asked her to do a few lines and agreed they sounded forced. I then asked her to describe exactly what she was experiencing without using the word “nothing.” She put her hands by the sides of her head, like blinders, and said that it was like looking straight ahead, so I asked her to look straight ahead and simply be aware of all she was experiencing. She noted that she was listening internally to the sound of her own voice saying the lines, and added that she saw the lines and also a tiny image of the character. I asked her to look at the image. She tried and reported that it was more like hearing, not seeing. I suggested that she then listen not to her voice saying the lines, but to the character’s own voice. She immediately focused on this task, and I suggested that she also feel where the voice was in her body. She felt the voice in her chest, along with a painful sensation and the urge to let her chest cave in.

The actress had been holding her shoulders back and chest out, playing the character as someone with a big persona, in control and cynical. I encouraged her to follow the collapsing sensation, to collapse just a bit further and to speak the lines from this part of the body. Interestingly, she objected, stating that she was being trained to hold her shoulders back, chest open and speak from her belly. I suggested to her that it is the actor who must speak from the belly in order for the voice to carry, but not the character! I asked her to try for a moment to speak from the collapsed chest, from this pain—and to not say one word unless it came from here. Her lines involved reporting on the recent creative success of another person. She spoke with a new tone

that transformed the meaning of her lines. She was now totally present, a deeply hurt and jealous woman who feels life has let her down.

I asked the actress how this discovery fit together with the central conflict of the character and play. She said the play is about an aging star who fears death and is desperately trying to stay in the center of attention. I now realized it was the character as well as the actor who had objected to allowing her chest to collapse! The pain she just discovered was essential, but in conjunction with her insistence on keeping her shoulders back. I asked her to begin again and play a woman who holds her chest high at all costs and tries not to relate to painful feelings inside. I also suggested that as an actress, she must simultaneously stay connected to feelings the character is trying not to show. It worked. The complex communication of the character now came through. She is not just a superficial woman, but a superficial woman who is deeply suffering inside for never quite showing up. She remembers feeling alive when she was a star, feels hurt and bitter, and tries to reproduce a feeling of life through her starlet persona.

Beyond personal history: imagination and truth

Actors strive for truth in their work. If a character is killed, the audience knows that the actor is still alive. Yet, if the acting is true, you believe and feel that the character died. Process Acting methods offer a way to understand a conflict about imagination and truth that arose between two outstanding actors and teachers, Stanislavski and Chekhov.

Stanislavski and Chekhov

Before Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), drama schools in Russia, Europe and the United States taught only the physical elements of an actor's training, such as ballet, fencing, voice, and diction (Moore 1984). Stanislavski believed that "external action on stage when not inspired, not justified, not called forth by inner activity, is entertaining only for the eyes and ears; it does not penetrate the heart..." (1989b: 48). Stanislavski attempted to find a "conscious means to the subconscious" where one could reach true emotion. His approach is known to this day simply as "the Method" or "the System." He discovered that the psychological aspect of a character (feelings, desires, ambitions) is unbreakably tied to the physical. To achieve a truthful perfor-

mance one at all times needs psycho-physical involvement. Stanislavski's methods focused on discovering the specific physical actions which will lead to true emotions in the actor and character. Particularly in his earlier work, he emphasized working with emotional and sensory memories of the actor (Moore 1984; Stanislavski 1989a, 1989b).

Michael Chekhov (1891-1955), a student and radical challenger of Stanislavski's methods, was considered by Stanislavski to be his most brilliant student. He astounded Russian, French, German, and English audiences. When he performed it was "as if the characters from the pages of Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky and Strindberg mysteriously dropped down to earth..." (Chekhov 1991: x). He was also known for his awesome ability to literally change body type. While Stanislavski looked for truth by building a role on the similarities between one's personal history and the character's life, Chekhov felt an actor must get outside him or herself to meet the demands of the character. He felt that if actors relied on their own personal history, performances lacked spirit and actors lost creativity over time. As a teacher, Chekhov looked for the magical elements of acting deep in the actor's imagination (Chekhov 1991). At one point, he investigated reincarnation. "If a performer playing Hamlet could somehow mentally metamorphose himself into the actual Hamlet, Chekhov felt a whole new chapter of actor training could be written" (Chekhov 1991: xvii).

Creativity: the edge and Process Acting's contribution

Stanislavski's life work was to find a means to access the nature of creativity. After an actor has done preparation work, the character can come to life and act spontaneously, without repetition. He spoke of the "threshold of the subconscious."

Beforehand we have true-seeming feelings, afterwards sincerity of emotions. Our freedom on this side is limited by reason and conventions. Beyond it, our freedom is bold, willful, active and always moving forwards. Over there the creative process differs each time it is repeated...." (1989a: 282)

Stanislavski had clearly experienced the endless creativity of the unconscious.

From a process-oriented perspective Chekhov's criticism might be understood as the tendency for many students of the Method to stay stuck in

their personal history, without truly getting over that threshold or edge into the subconscious, the unknown. Looking for emotional material inside oneself encourages actors to be truthful. But if we are too tightly bound by personal life experiences and edges, being ourselves is boring! By focusing on techniques for stepping outside of oneself, Chekhov insisted on working over the edge, working beyond personal psychology in the mythic realm.² The theory and methods of Process Acting may be of interest to students of Stanislavski and Chekhov, perhaps bridging a gap between them. Like Chekhov, Process Acting methods help actors step over the edges of identity and beyond personal history into the realm of mythic experience. Unlike Chekhov, we do not need to look outside of ourselves to find the pathway to new identities. The mythic, magical and creative realm Chekhov sought can be reached through accurate awareness of our immediate experiences and perception in the different channels: visual, auditory, kinesthetic (movement) and proprioception (body sensations).

Process Acting methods confirm Stanislavski's discovery that an immense creative resource lies within the actor and that the psycho-physical connection is the key to tapping this source. Process Work adds a dimension to this psycho-physical connection with Mindell's concept of the "dreambody" (see Mindell 1985). The "dreambody" refers to the emerging patterns beyond our identity which appear both in our dreams and body experiences, including our unintended communication signals. Process Acting also adds the finding that just what seems "off" is the pathway to truth for the actor, character and play. Becoming aware of our most disturbing experiences and annoying communication signals is an endless creative source.

Disconnection brings truth: the vacant hollywood actress

I was invited to work one evening in an acting school in Los Angeles. Advanced actors were performing scenes. In one scene a female character flirts and comes on to a male character who is in a position of power to support her creative, professional life. After the scene I asked the woman what disturbed her in her own performance, and she said that it wasn't truthful. She felt disconnected.

I encouraged her to enter this sense of disconnection. She said she felt vacant and distant from the role. I encouraged her to distance herself from

the role altogether, to follow the exact sensations which she termed "vacant" and to allow any images and movements which went along with this. Suddenly she seemed to pierce through a veil of fog. She looked touched and then saddened. She began to talk about her deep, spiritual passion for her art and recognized how she left her passion out in favor of playing the part right. Naturally, this is the very conflict of the character! The character sells herself out in order to get ahead and does not believe in the value and power of her own creative work. I asked the actress if she could bring this very conflict and her deep creative passion into the scene, understanding that we must follow the script and not improve upon it. This time she freely, passionately and truly seduced her partner on stage. It was a hot performance.

Stage fright or awe: finding truth in Agnes of God

Another actress did a scene from *Agnes of God*. She played the nun who is at odds with the psychiatrists's interventions with Agnes. The scene lacked energy and the actress felt blocked. What was blocking her? She said it was fear. When I asked her how she experienced "fear," she said she felt her body tremble. I encouraged her to feel where the trembling originated and to follow it as if it were her greatest teacher. The trembling moved through her whole body. Her throat was warm and red. To encourage her experience in this area, I gently touched her throat. Her jaw then dropped slightly and trembled. I placed a finger lightly on her chin and encouraged her to believe in her experience. She said she felt a sense of deep awe and trembling before God. I then handed her the script. She now had the energy needed to express the deep spirituality of her character.

It is easy to name one's trembling "fear" and consider it a block to one's authenticity, rather than the key. It takes training and experience to learn to look forward to those times one feels disconnected, afraid, tense or in a hole. Many traditional rug weavers have the belief that a mistake must be woven into a rug so the spirit can get out. An actor's job is to find this hole in the pattern where the spirit can emerge—where one might just be reincarnated as Hamlet.

The mask of God

When you wear the mask, you are both God and a guy with a mask

During these courses, I needed to learn something about what made a good actor good and a lousy actor lousy. It was a great excuse to rent lots

of movies on video. Pen, pad and remote control in hand, it was quite easy to take notes about what made a performance lousy. More interesting to me was the trouble I had when I went to study a brilliant moment or scene. I would suddenly realize I had been totally riveted and moved by a scene.

Thinking to myself, "Yes, I'll study this one," I'd wind the film back a ways and watch again, ready to use my pause button. What happened to me was astounding. Again and again I rewound the scene, and each time I was taken along: touched, moved, crying or laughing, forgetting the pen and paper in my hand. Even if I watched certain scenes a dozen times, they refused to get old. These scenes had so much integrity that they could not be taken apart, could not be studied—only appreciated. One could say this was my first finding in my study, that these mysterious moments were what I wanted to learn more about.³

Sitting in the theater, we are totally engaged, touched to our souls. Although we feel and breathe and weep along with the characters, we know that we are sitting in a theater or eating popcorn at the movies, and those are actors up there. What is really going on here? In cultures which link theater and ritual, someone puts on the mask of God and does not represent God, but *is* God. This doesn't mean that the observers don't know this is their neighbor wearing a mask. The person in the mask is both their neighbor and God. A "logical" orientation which suggests this might be a contradiction, (if x equals x, then x cannot equal y), is irrelevant in the realm of myth (Campbell 1987).

Periscope up: in theater and real life

When a performance is good, the world stops. Even as the house lights dim, we enter that transitional, numinous state where the present "everyday" world recedes, and we discover a world much more real than real life. The archetypal patterns and conflicts that grip our everyday life and life crises are differentiated and made creative through the awareness of the writer, director, actors and finally the audience. Though I don't believe the riveting, awesome quality of a great performance (or a great moment in life) can be defined, it has something to do with being deeply within an experience while simultaneously being aware and detached from the experience. As an actor, you are the character and not the character.

As the observer, you see God and your ordinary neighbor. In the audience you are totally absorbed, yet usually still in your seat.

Chekhov described the state of "divided consciousness" after a visionary experience he had during the premiere of the play *Artists in Vienna* in 1929. He had been upset about the production, most of all his own uninspired characterization. Now, the character, Skid, beckoned him to sit in a certain way, speak in a new pitch and look more powerfully at his wife. Chekhov said that "fatigue and calm turned me into a spectator of my own performance. My consciousness divided—I was in the audience, near myself and in each of my partners" (1991: xxiii).

Shamanistic practices involve entering other worlds and returning again, or even being in two worlds at once. In Process Work, we often use the image of a submarine with a periscope to describe the art of following a process. Arnold Mindell describes an awareness from within the stream, rather than sitting on the bank watching (*Lecture* 1985). It is this "in the stream" awareness which makes the accuracy of working with the nature of channels and perception so profound. Process Work methods help unfold information as it manifests in different channels of perception and to fill out and embody, rather than to analyze, a dream figure. Process Work methods help us continually shift the locus of perception, freeing our awareness from an unconscious tendency to be tied to a small part of who we are. This fluidity of identification and awareness is fundamentally and radically different than viewing ourselves and the world from a static, largely unconscious identity and trying to absorb new information and interpret or reflect upon it from a singular viewpoint.

Stanislavski also describes a shift in the locus of awareness when he discusses passive and active imagining. He brings in a concept of channels which include the inner eye, inner ear, and feelings reached through sensation and emotion memory (1989b: 20). Stanislavski defines passive imagining as being the observer of experiences in these channels, the audience of one's own dreams. He considers taking an active part in one's dream Active Imagining, which he describes as follows:

You no longer see yourself as an outside onlooker, but you see what surrounds you. In time, when this feeling of "being" is reinforced, you can become the main active personality in the surrounding circumstances of your dream. (1989b: 25)

Stanislavski's active imagining is geared towards the creation of a role. It is clearly akin to Jung's Active Imagination⁴ which involves entering the dream, inhabiting the viewpoint of different dream figures and having a conscious confrontation between one's ego and the different parts of one's personality. Mindell has developed a comprehensive theory which, through its focus on awareness and perception, brings actuality, accuracy and creative life to the fundamental idea that consciousness involves shifting the locus of our awareness.

Gaia's dramatic awakening

Individuation as understood from a Jungian and Process Work perspective involves the experience of discovering and living the different facets of one's personality, realizing, "This is me, too!" Simultaneously, one develops a fluidity of awareness and doesn't identify with any of it, thinking, "I am all of this and none of this." One might also understand individuation as the expression of our part in collective archetypal stories. One picks up and expresses information belonging to the collective unconscious and the community or "field" in which one lives. As individuals and members of groups, we are channels, even actors, for our own community and for Gaia or the Anthropos⁵ dramatic awakening. In the process of becoming an individual and a member of this world, we do our best to bring awareness, differentiation and life to our parts, rather than enacting them dead pan. This is also the actor's humble task!

Further experimentation

Within the scope of this article, I cannot go into depth about all the areas of my experiments with Process Acting. I mention some of the main areas below, along with ideas for future research. Process Acting is in its beginning stages of development. I see enormous potential for the application of process-oriented concepts and methods to acting and other aspects of theater and film.

Relationships

Actors not only must bring their characters to life, but bring their characters into dynamic relationship. In life and on stage, stories are told in the liveliness, tensions and conflicts of relationship and group life. One exciting area of Process Acting involves using process-oriented concepts of relationship and group dynamics to work with the relationship between characters (and actors) on stage.

Play writing

I also experimented with the application of Process Acting to play writing. We worked with a scene from a class participant's screenplay. Working with the actor's unintended signals as described in this article, we discovered a refreshing twist in the script. Delighted, the writer determined to make the revision, as the new information made for a stronger scene and more fully represented the central conflict of the play. It also reflected the writer's personal growing edge. It would be interesting to run a joint workshop for writers and actors. We might further test the creative possibilities when actors and writers play scenes in progress, access unintended signals or work directly with blocks, thereby improvising the scene towards a creative evolution of the script.

Theater performance

One of my goals is to work with a group of actors over a period of several months. At the end of this period, we would give a performance. Process Acting methods would be used to direct the rehearsals as well as train actors. The tools of Process Work should also be of unique value in the task of keeping a performance alive from night to night. Without an acting coach to pick up the actor's signals, the actor would need thorough training in picking up his or her own process as it emerges in various sensory channels and in relationship. Though Process Acting methods seem at times stunningly simple and immediately applicable, it also takes training to learn to welcome the unexpected and troublesome signals of our dreams. Stanislavski said that artistic emotions are as shy as wild animals. Mindell has often described our unintended signals and the dream figures which lie behind these signals as shy. Inviting and unfolding these dream and mythic processes requires curiosity, respect and a warrior's awareness trained to catch the tracks of these "wild animals" and to follow them into the unknown. For Process Acting to be truly useful to actors without the presence of the Process Acting coach, we might expect the actors to need a long training.

Film

Conversely, Process Acting methods might be more immediately useful for film actors, through coaching or direction on the set. In film, just before a scene, there is opportunity to work one or two minutes with an actor. As the actor and

of movies on video. Pen, pad and remote control in hand, it was quite easy to take notes about what made a performance lousy. More interesting to me was the trouble I had when I went to study a brilliant moment or scene. I would suddenly realize I had been totally riveted and moved by a scene.

Thinking to myself, "Yes, I'll study this one," I'd wind the film back a ways and watch again, ready to use my pause button. What happened to me was astounding. Again and again I rewound the scene, and each time I was taken along: touched, moved, crying or laughing, forgetting the pen and paper in my hand. Even if I watched certain scenes a dozen times, they refused to get old. These scenes had so much integrity that they could not be taken apart, could not be studied—only appreciated. One could say this was my first finding in my study, that these mysterious moments were what I wanted to learn more about.³

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Actors not only must bring their characters to life, but bring their characters into dynamic relationship. In life and on stage, stories are told in the liveliness, tensions and conflicts of relationship and group life. One exciting area of Process Acting involves using process-oriented concepts of relationship and group dynamics to work with the relationship between characters (and actors) on stage.

Play writing

I also experimented with the application of Process Acting to play writing. We worked with a scene from a class participant's screenplay. Working with the actor's unintended signals as described in this article, we discovered a refreshing twist in the script. Delighted, the writer determined to make the revision, as the new information made for a stronger scene and more fully represented the central conflict of the play. It also reflected the writer's personal growing edge. It would be interesting to run a joint workshop for writers and actors. We might further test the creative possibilities when actors and writers play scenes in progress, access unintended signals or work directly with blocks, thereby improvising the scene towards a creative evolution of the script.

Theater performance

One of my goals is to work with a group of actors over a period of several months. At the end of this period, we would give a performance. Process Acting methods would be used to direct the rehearsals as well as train actors. The tools of Process Work should also be of unique value in the task of keeping a performance alive from night to night. Without an acting coach to pick up the actor's signals, the actor would need thorough training in picking up his or her own process as it emerges in various sensory channels and in relationship. Though Process Acting methods seem at times stunningly simple and immediately applicable, it also takes training to learn to welcome the unexpected and troublesome signals of our dreams. Stanislavski said that artistic emotions are as shy as wild animals. Mindell has often described our unintended signals and the dream figures which lie behind these signals as shy. Inviting and unfolding these dream and mythic processes requires curiosity, respect and a warrior's awareness trained to catch the tracks of these "wild animals" and to follow them into the unknown. For Process Acting to be truly useful to actors without the presence of the Process Acting coach, we might expect the actors to need a long training.

Film

Conversely, Process Acting methods might be more immediately useful for film actors, through coaching or direction on the set. In film, just before a scene, there is opportunity to work one or two minutes with an actor. As the actor and

character come to life, the scene can be shot. For film, the director, rather than the actor, might be interested in learning Process Acting methods, or a Process Worker or Process Acting coach could be of real value on the set.

Dramatic form

I had the opportunity to experiment a little with different forms of theater such as comedy and tragic-comedy. We also experimented with melodrama as a lively method to bring out the emotional life of a character and relationship dynamics in a scene. I asked the actors to not only pick up and intensify a signal, but to stretch it all the way out, amplifying it to a point of hilarity or melodrama. If the end result needed to appear more contained, the actor would be asked to keep this spirit, while pulling the signal back in.

Just as we worked with bringing a process in connection with the play meaning or narrative, it would be interesting to research what is required to bring forth style congruent to different dramatic forms. Does the artist need to adapt the emerging process to the dramatic form? Or will a comic play send forth dream figures that are born to make us laugh? I look forward to discovering more in these areas.

Notes

1. For discussion of dreaming up, see Mindell 1985; Goodbread *Dreaming Up Reality*.
2. In supervision training, therapists are often afraid to try something new out of fear of being inauthentic. It is helpful to support these therapists to go ahead and be as inauthentic as possible, to pretend to be someone other than themselves. This is a pathway over the edge of one's usual identification.

3. Amy Mindell has described unfolding a process to an irreducible core in her classes on "Magical Moments in Process Work."
4. I don't know whether Stanislavski and Jung knew of each other's work.
5. Gaia and the Anthropos are two mythic expressions of the earth or world.

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Arlene Audergon, Ph.D., teaches Process Work around the world. Despite her life-long passion for theater, her own acting experience is limited and she almost did not dare experiment with Process Acting. She has been involved in street theater, trained in mime and played the lead role of "Purity" in Pure as the Driven Snow, produced in sign-language by the Community Theater for the Deaf in Seattle. She is currently writing a children's book on conflict resolution.



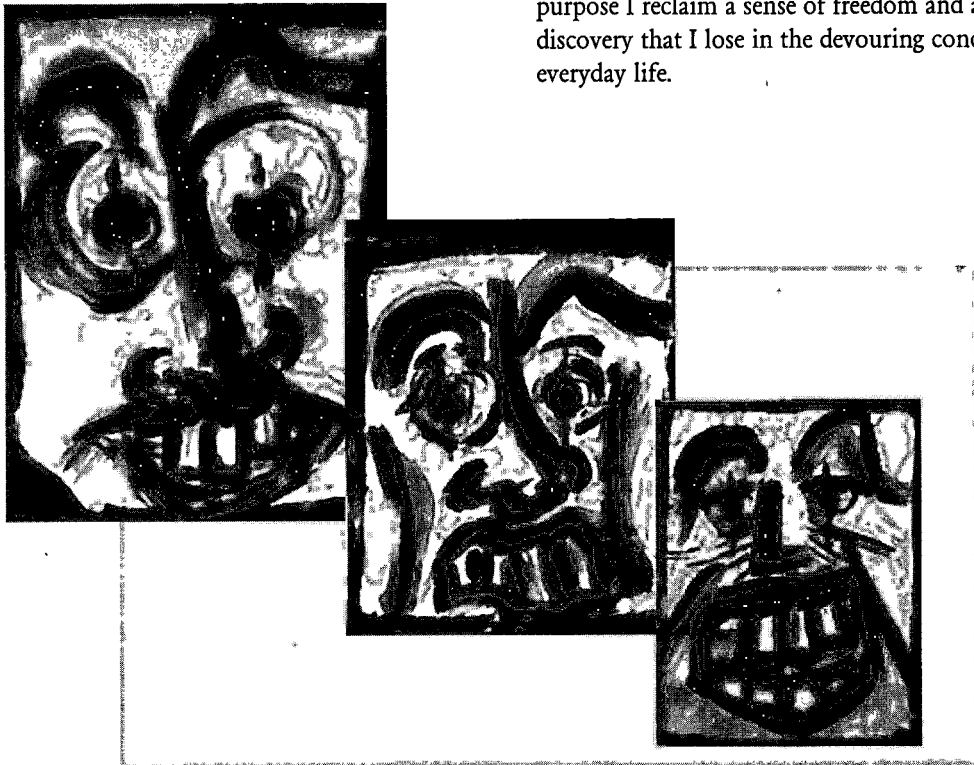
Painting: the Beauty, Fun and Discoveries of Inner Work

Andrea Courvoisier

A month before writing this I started to paint again, turning my small apartment into an art studio, surprising myself with new joy. Years after abandoning painting, drawing and a career in theater and dance, I am reclaiming my identity as an artist. I am also discovering a new creative direction in thinking and writing about art and creativity and connecting these areas to Process Work. In the past, I have tended to simply do my art, diving into the altered state of another world. Now I think that exploring and reclaiming unknown territories and identities makes a person an artist. This new possibility leads me to

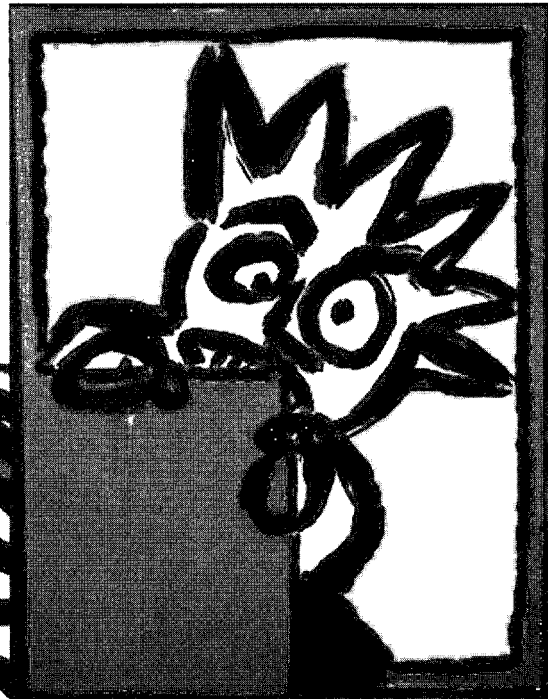
write about the thoughts I do not know yet, to create a new “picture” in writing. Writing seems much more foreign than lying in wait for the unknown in front of white paper with a brush in my hand.

What makes me so happy when I paint? Painting for me doesn't have to make any sense. It isn't meant for something or somebody. I find more meaning in the act of creating than in the finished picture, thus the end-product is not the goal. Above all, I find the show of colors on paper beautiful and exiting. After a day of goal-oriented duties and demands, painting comes as a relief and challenge. Beyond time and purpose I reclaim a sense of freedom and a spirit of discovery that I lose in the devouring concerns of everyday life.



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Art makes me happy, and I also ask myself, "Why else do I do artwork? What am I looking for?" Let's look at what I do when I paint. I stand in front of blank paper and wait. My body might ache somewhere, or I feel moody until I make a face that goes with my mood; this face feels attracted to a certain color and moves the brush in my hand. At other times, a spontaneous vision of figures, lines or move-



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ments leads my brushwork. All of a sudden my everyday identity shares its monopoly with body feelings and movements, visions and moods which I usually don't notice or I fight against when they disturb my intentions. This is so exciting! The mysterious creativity in these spontaneous experiences leads me to fill the paper with yet another mysterious world.

I am actually being "created" all the time. What an insight after a day of assuming that I alone create my life! Beyond my will and intention, movements, body feelings and visions evolve spontaneously in me. By paying attention to them I become more creative, feel connected to the ongoing creation of life. Painting teaches me to follow what happens spontaneously in me. Within following I find what I am looking for, a sense of connection with the mysterious, with the goddess or god or whatever I choose to call it. I see

the mysterious develop on the paper, "talking" back to me. Wasn't the paper all white and empty just a minute ago? Now something is born on it, showing me how I am born and created in every moment as well.

I wish I could feel the same excitement about the creativity of body symptoms, relationship problems or weird moods when they appear and mess up my life. I imagine that my body symptoms and I would co-create a mysterious canvas, an adventurous day. I would focus on and explore a symptom as if it were a piece of art; see it, move it, hear it or feel it and imagine being its creator. I would use its creativity and

message to organize my day or meet people in new ways.

Often I cannot focus on these disturbances. I feel helpless and wish they would disappear, feel that they create my suffering and I am their victim. The idea of becoming a creator does not lie within my imagination. I just suffer and want to feel better. At these points, deciding to paint already commits me to becoming a creator, the creator of a picture. Instead of being disturbed and "created" by my symptoms without the input of my awareness, I feel empowered to invite disturbances and treat them with curiosity and colors.

Now I have created a "picture" in writing by discovering the thoughts I didn't know before. It inspires me to create additional new pictures by working with my body symptoms, and using my art skills and experiences in other areas of my life.



ANDREA COURVOISIER



Andrea Courvoisier, originally Swiss, is a Process Work student in Portland and is currently completing her B.A. in psychology. Andrea has worked in business administration and studied theater, performance, voice, dance and expressive painting. She is interested in combining expressive arts and Process Work. Andrea dreams of capturing her passion for weird movements and faces on camera.



ANDREA COURVOISIER

Present Tense: Healing as We Speak: an Application of Process Work to Performance

Kevyn Burn and Cheryl Pallant

"Present Tense: Healing as We Speak," a text-based movement performance utilizing Process Work, was created for a three day event called "Expose, Express, Exchange" in Richmond, Virginia. The event's founders believed performance, art and dialogue could create an opportunity for individual and community commitment to change perceived "social ills." Each evening's works, thematically unified, were followed by a moderated discussion that included the audience, a panel of community workers and the artists.

We created this piece as a challenge to our previous way of working together, to our own growth process, and to our community. We sought to apply Process Work to creativity and to explore the possibility of healing while performing. The event itself carried an implied Western view of "curing," i.e., relieving the symptom. However, the healing we would attempt to impart was based in our personal view of healing, which is moving toward wholeness. The tension between these paradigms became one of our underlying themes.

In this article, we discuss our development as creators of a piece reflecting our healing processes and the effect of performing and applying Process Work during the ritual/performance. We attempt here to impart a small portion of what evolved into a profound experience. Since we collaborated on the writing, we chose to use the first personal plural, "we," but occasionally needed the singular "I."

Why perform?

In the two years since our last performance together, we both had gone through numerous

changes in our personal and professional lives. Although we had never created work based solely on abstract or artful notions, we were now even less inclined to do so. We found that to commit to the project, the work had to be personally inspirational and equally relevant to the community.

Previously, reading and interpreting texts determined the shape of our performances. This time, we chose a theme first: healing, with an emphasis on investigating identity, boundaries and intimacy. This theme necessitated equal and reciprocal input. We believed that by investigating ourselves as individuals in relationship we would experience a shift in our perception of wholeness and give audience members a hopeful example for their own healing journeys. We intended not only to explore healing as an art, but to make the actual process of healing the performance.

We had recently discovered Process Work, and saw it as an extension of our usual method of working, which relies heavily on improvisation and the exploration of non-linearity in moving, speaking, writing, drawing and sounding. With Process Work's focus on encouraging the unknown, our direction shifted from how we appeared to the audience and our conscious control of the work to how much and how readily we disclosed ourselves moment by moment on stage. Instead of us serving the work, adopting roles of dancer, actor or reader, the work served us in our being and becoming, as we stepped outside the safe guise of roles into unrehearsed and more vulnerable selves.

To fit our theme and provide a structure, we chose two of Cheryl's poems which are directed

toward knowing and reforming the self. The poem "Coloring Senses" is a verbal ritual that conjures a fuller awareness of being in the moment. It attempts to arouse and decipher body signals. The other poem, "I Tear for You," was written in anguish for a friend. The poems appear at the end of this article.

Present tense

Conceptualizing is easy; putting theory into action and embodying principles is quite another feat. We had recently completed a workshop and readings in Process Work, and developed an exercise that included process-oriented concepts along with elements from Vipassana meditation and Authentic Movement. We call this exercise "Presenting." In this exercise, we sat across from each other and took fifteen-minute turns "inventorying," that is, noticing and articulating sensations in our bodies and reporting them in the present tense; for instance, "I am hearing birds chirp" or "I am feeling a pain in my belly." As we scanned with each sense, we discovered echoes and resonances of the past as well as signs anticipating possible futures, manifested through tensions, gestures, word choices and movements. The exercise shifted our focus to being more mindfully present and revealed our preoccupations.

Common language

Focusing on the nature of language, we explored the symbols accompanying the poems, the sounds and phrases of the words, and the differences in our interpretations. "Of Coloring Senses" is performed with posters displaying a question mark, equals sign, dividing sign, and an arrow. Through exploration we decided that our vocabulary would not only be vocal but include gesture, movement, and listening. We developed our language by recording gestures and associated meanings that came out of our Process Work exercises and study, and by repeating and sharing movements which emerged through working together.

For example, in one of our early exercises, while the right side of Kevyn's body remained still, her left arm began to rise above her head. The image of a fast motion film of a growing sunflower came, along with the associated meaning of reaching for life, even during dormancy. We assumed that when this gesture recurred in future sessions, we would know its meaning for us.

Developing our common language helped us see and hear each other as never before, and indicated our furthering trust of one another. Despite

years of being friends and creative partners, we had not yet risked deepening our relationship by exposing our individual mysteries.

We promoted intimacy by inventorying ourselves in each other's presence. As we articulated our sensations, our awareness of their meanings grew, as did the realization that we were able to divulge more of ourselves when supported by a loving witness. The gestures and meaning of this new vocabulary contained the strength of shared experience which was accessible to both of us.

Connecting the poems

We challenged ourselves to connect the poems and to create a substantial organic "bridge" between them, a section of the performance which would be an actual healing process. We would not be performing about healing, thereby abstracting it and distancing ourselves safely outside the process. From a position outside the process, we could act and dissociate; inside the process, we would, by necessity, have to engage greater levels of ourselves.

Before continuing, however, we had to answer the question: Is healing performable and valid as art? Anthropologist Victor Turner, who has written extensively on ritual and theater, defines performance simply and profoundly as the completion of an act—any act. Entertainers (dancers, musicians, puppeteers, etc.) and shamans are similar in that they provoke specific, often pre-intentioned reactions from onlookers. All performances have a "reflexive" quality, that is, they enable us to see ourselves because these "structured units of experience," are specially framed in "liminal" spaces, where performers and audience pass through a threshold with an unclear difference between the profane and the secular. In liminal spaces, normative social structures are played within "sacred space-time" and new meaning emerges. "The difference between ordinary and...extraordinary life [is] merely a matter of framing" (Turner 1982). In our case, our performance began at the outset of the project and would culminate on stage. In fact, we found the writing of this article to extend the performance.

We had performed rituals before, but in circumstances with different staging and the more conventional distant relationship to the audience. Here, our objective was twofold: to heal ourselves and engage the audience directly in their own healing, thereby breaking down the usual performer/audience barrier.

Definition of healing

In order to proceed, we needed to define what healing meant to us. We consider healing a restoration, recovery or recuperation of one's vital energies, with an emphasis on bringing forth what is hidden or suppressed. Notably, we don't think of health as the absence of pain; rather, well-being involves embracing a whole range of sensations, both those that are welcome and comforting and those that are not. Pain is as essential as ease. To let one's energies flow, it's important to acknowledge them all and not judge any one as better or worse than another.

We believed that to impact the healing process for audience members, we would need to become healers and have direct understanding of being healed. We focused on unfolding our true natures, risking intimacy and challenging the boundaries that separate us. Stephen Levine says that when a healer focuses on helping individuals directly experience their original nature, healing becomes a lens which focuses the potentiality of the moment (1982).

Individual processes

As we prepared for the performance, we discovered new aspects of ourselves, which impacted the performance and our lives. Descriptions of some of our individual learning follow.

Cheryl's individual process

Through the "presenting" exercise, which we later modified to include movement, and a seminar with Kate Jobe on *Moving the Dreaming Body*, I had new experiences with my visions, which were emotionally charged, numinous, and intriguing. At first these visions seemed separate from myself and my life, but they ultimately led to derivative movements and insights. In my writing, when mental images surface, they are immediately directed into a construct of language such as a metaphor or a scene. In short, they are limited to the realm of the page, and I experience them as separate from myself. Without the activity of writing, the energetic impact of these visual images hit me fully and directly. A perceptual shift occurred as I, like a lucid dreamer defying spatial and temporal restrictions, entered a concurrent reality previously unseen, a richly symbolic realm that influenced me emotionally, kinesthetically and proprioceptively.

For instance, in the course of one of our exercises, I kept seeing mountains. Although I didn't understand why they appeared, I took a few steps

toward them and was immediately transported to a mountain crest, surrounded by dense woods. We were working indoors, where the brick building, climate controlled room, walls and chairs all usually influence my posture, attitudes, and relationship to both animate and inanimate objects. Finding myself suddenly amid a natural environment, the city below within view, left me euphoric; my breath eased and deepened and my body warmed and expanded in the increased space of the outdoors. The euphoria eventually gave way to fright and caution when I spotted a leg-hold trap, which forces a trapped animal to die slowly and painfully or to chew off its trapped appendage to gain freedom.

This grisly vision and the memory of an earlier vision of a recently fed animal with blood dripping from its mouth helped me realize how I often temper my animal impulses, the primordial power that comes with being unreservedly spontaneous. I recognized the dangers inherent in blindly obeying social norms and civilized codes of behavior and the dangers, also, in disregarding them. If I never test the boundaries between the wild and the tame, the conscious and the unconscious, the objectionable and the acceptable, the creative and the reasoned, then I limit my potential, my abilities, and my understanding of self and others. I saw how overvaluing parts of myself to the exclusion or disparagement of other areas can lead to serious imbalances in personal and interpersonal functioning.

I began to test these boundaries with my weekly dancers' group. In an exercise which encouraged our animal natures, we switched rapidly from gazelle to dog to monkey and other creatures, exploring our animal sides without reserve. We experimented with joining a group, asserting dominance and fighting over food, mates and resting places. We grunted, barked, growled, ran, attacked, and hid. Not once did we resort to linear speech such as, "Hey, let's all yell."

Another event from that evening haunts me and raises questions. Usually, when I return home, my beloved cat greets me on the sidewalk or front porch. This time, I called and called and got no response. When in the morning he still hadn't appeared, I went to search and found what I least wanted, his body lifeless on the sidewalk, half a block away. Never before had he tried crossing this busy street—why did he choose to do so then? Were our actions connected in any way?

Kevyn's individual process

As I worked with Cheryl, I realized the exquisite vulnerability and powers I carry with me. The way we worked on this piece was completely different from previous projects. While verbalizing my beliefs and concepts, I found an urgent, emphatic and exciting quality. I felt my voice come from deep within me and noticed a change in its tone. This deep voice is like my passion and intensity. After I discovered my passionate voice, it became much less elusive and more easily utilized.

Initially I felt vulnerable as I repeatedly lost my ability to express myself in movement and to think. I entered an altered state in which I felt exposed, judged, childlike, and alone. My journey began with a physical identification with my parents. The right side of my body felt heavy and tired. I associated this feeling to my mother; her postures, physical presence, and the parts of myself which I identify with her. My left side felt lighter, taller and more erect; I felt this as my father in me. Intellectually I knew I was more than a composite of these two identities, these extremes, but in my emotions, I could not feel my "self."

As I opened to my feelings, I felt surprised by the strength and vibrancy of this identification. I felt comforted because my parents were so close to me and angry that I was not yet "finished" with my individuation. The duality I experienced was confusing and provoked insecurities.

When my self-criticism decreased, I could honor my parents' parts of me. This created an image of a peaceful, omnipotent, "creator of my own world," freed my lost play and humor, and left me feeling full, vibrant, and powerful. Only later did I realize that my sunflower left arm was a foreshadowing of the journey I would experience in creating and performing this piece.

My extremes, resistances, personal judgments and reinforced strength became compelling statements of my inner world and a world I wanted, yet feared, to expose in performance. With expose as an operative word, my growing awareness impelled me to take risks, and at the time of performance, I felt calm and focused.

Relationship change

Due to the nature of "exposing, expressing, and exchanging" in our creative process, much of the work we did occurred in relationship. Sometimes we were both caught in our projections and judgments, but ultimately our awareness grew. Our

growth was most evident in our willingness to honor qualities we perceived as negative and to commit to further exploration of these qualities with one another. We attempted to find meaning in our double signals, for instance, through a serious discussion about playfulness and the meaning of aggressive feelings.

We openly attempted to confront our aggression in relationship to each other, but kept getting tired, distracted and confused. Trying to lessen the burden of exploring the aggression, we labeled it "firmness" and addressed it through movement in a contact improvisation exercise. The exercise was designed to utilize the elements of our newly defined firmness, changing weight distribution, blocked energy and resistance to fully engaging. Albeit revealing, this non-addressing of the true issue led to the issue reoccurring in the performance.

Over time, our constant willingness to expose ourselves developed into a profound sense of trust and connection. Our relationship was stronger in the depth and openness of our sharing. Our views of ourselves and each other expanded to encompass a greater diversity of emotions found in our stories, images, conflicts and triumphs.

The performance

The performance began with Cheryl, as intuitive poet, reading "Of Coloring Senses" while Kevyn, as reasoning clinician, sat rigidly upstage holding up the signs and occasionally repeating sounds.

The middle section was to be largely improvised. We planned to focus on the following three elements: channels of expression, the points at which we switched channels and a vocabulary of predetermined gestures. We would begin with the discomfort we anticipated and gradually acknowledge each other by crossing over an invisible line separating us. Although we expected to experience resistance and misunderstanding between us, we ultimately aimed at blurring our differences, letting go of a need to maintain boundaries, and finding more flexible, empowered selves motivated not out of fear of others and otherness, but inspired to act out of compassion. Once we more openly accepted each other, which we considered our "healing," we would read the second poem with shared ease.

CHERYL: What I found noteworthy about the performance was not so much what occurred as intended but its many surprises: the audience's

intermittent laughter, discomfort and breathless quiet; the absence of my visions which had consistently played a prominent role earlier; my adoption of several of Kevyn's key mannerisms and my astonishment at her level of aggression directed toward me along with my discomfort and unwillingness to embrace it.

My anticipated uneasiness at being exposed was mostly absent. I repeatedly directly addressed the audience, voicing what I believed they were thinking and thus involving them in the performance. When I stepped away from the audience and nearer to Kevyn's unsettling turmoil, I walked repeatedly in circles like a calm, expectant father, waiting for the continuous, image-rich narrative that characterized so many of our previous exchanges. Instead periodic activity burst forth, as all the seams we'd been loosening finally split apart.

KEVYN: I was confused by the audience's laughter which emerged so quickly in the second scene of our piece. My emotional state at that time was pained immobility; I felt caught and deformed in my chair. The laughter was so incongruent with my current state and the words I heard Cheryl speak. But I was there for the process, and Cheryl and I are funny together, despite my abundant seriousness. We had specifically worked on the issues of play and humor. Here it was again!

The humor allowed us a safe venue for aggression, through playful kicks and skirmishes. Although it was fun, and the audience seemed genuinely delighted, I felt complex meaning behind the kick delivered with a smile. At first I felt an impulse to proceed with a demanding energy. I wanted to provoke a wider range of emotions which I felt simmering beneath the surface, wanted to push us into the truth of uncharted territory, away from the easy banter of our humor.

I felt we were missing an opportunity, but took my cue from Cheryl's seemingly aloof response to my intensity and consciously chose to follow the trend. In that moment I questioned myself, believing I was alone with the aggression. However, this was rapidly followed by a sense of Cheryl and the audience's collusion against this aggression, and my own acquiescence as I moved away from the verge of our collective unknown. Although I felt sure Cheryl and I were manifesting not only our own aggression, but that of the audience as community, I questioned my authority as the sole agent for serious exploration of the aggression we were only superficially acknowledging.

I still have questions about the honesty of these moments. The audience as field gave us voice, and, due to the nature of the performance, were our creative partners. In the feeling, movements, and gestures of our aggression, could I have been the sole experimenter? Was the humor the truth? Were we in simple play with me the stubborn, insolent child? Or, had I followed my initial impulse, would we have been able to divulge collective secrets, and generate a far more resonant healing by trusting the meaning and safety of our process?

In the last section of the performance, I became aware of my deep voice again. The voice was sure, emphatic, insistent. I felt my power in a new expression. This was more than a role: it persisted and changed me. I was no longer the person who had walked on stage moments before. I considered it synchronous that I had to test my strength within the hour. I confronted my need to assert myself, when, just following the performance, I was criticized for my power and independence.

Community response

Despite the surprising course of the performance, the audience response was overwhelmingly positive and perceptive. While appreciating the humor we generated, many people talked to us of their own struggles with identity and intimacy. They were inspired by watching us generate selfhood and relationship during the performance. During the limited time of the panel discussion, audience members indicated their desires to similarly search within and reach out, despite the risk. Faces were soft, handshakes and hugs were lingering.

Post-performance effects

KEVYN: Through many years of psychiatric nursing experience and in my self-study and spiritual practice, I have come to the belief that an honest expression of myself, with a sincere desire to be present with another person, can not only ease individual pain, but bring about healing in the larger community and world. When I am most aware of my presence with another and the sacred space between us, I see the manifest power of our exchange and the positive reverberation into exchange with others. These powerful moments do not necessarily come when I am in my therapist-nurse-administrator role, but when I am fully in my unique being.

I feel that Process Work, through validating the integrity of a focused, attentive exchange as a means to create subtle, but enlightened shifts, fits

well with my belief. Process Work reinforces self-awareness and relationship, which can then be translated to worldwork, bringing about shifts on a collective level.

I carry the experience of this process and performance as a monitor of the fullness of my encounters with others. I am reminded of my desire to be honest while caring for myself and others, and of the responsibility of providing an example of leadership, even through performance.

CHERYL: During the panel discussion and over the next few days, I continually noticed people speaking hesitantly, quickly, with an uneven tone, and without vitality. Many complained and seemed resigned to the impossibility of change. Some remained tensely silent and still, a quiver in their faces or a half step forward suggesting they had something they wanted to say or do. If someone's eyes met mine it was brief; most averted my gaze altogether. I attribute these observations to the fact that the performance had me literally facing everyone's expectations of myself. To proceed as Kevyn and I planned, I had to let go of my own deep, existential fears, both personally and socially. The result was a profound and lasting calm, as if I had meditated at length for weeks straight. For a few days afterward, no longer responding to situations in the same way, I frequently hesitated until I settled into the strength of my newly evolved self.

Summary

Performance is a process of short duration with fleeting images and recollection. Rich with symbolic meaning, responses and interpretations can be vast, malleable, and controlled through design, construct, and direction. Although healing, in our definition, shares similarities with performance, it differs in that it is never predictable or constant.

Healing is always an individual mystery and profoundly personal. Unlike a performance, which may have a limited run, healing can be a lifelong process of unfolding to awareness and growth.

Our hybrid of performance/healing, with its symbiotic and dichotomous elements, has awed us. At once we were expert and novice, leader and follower, explorer and territory. Our personal journey became public, and we were left with far more questions than answers. We believe that we are to continue our commitment to this multifaceted process, letting it influence both our work and our art, while mindful of the responsibility we bear to ourselves and community.

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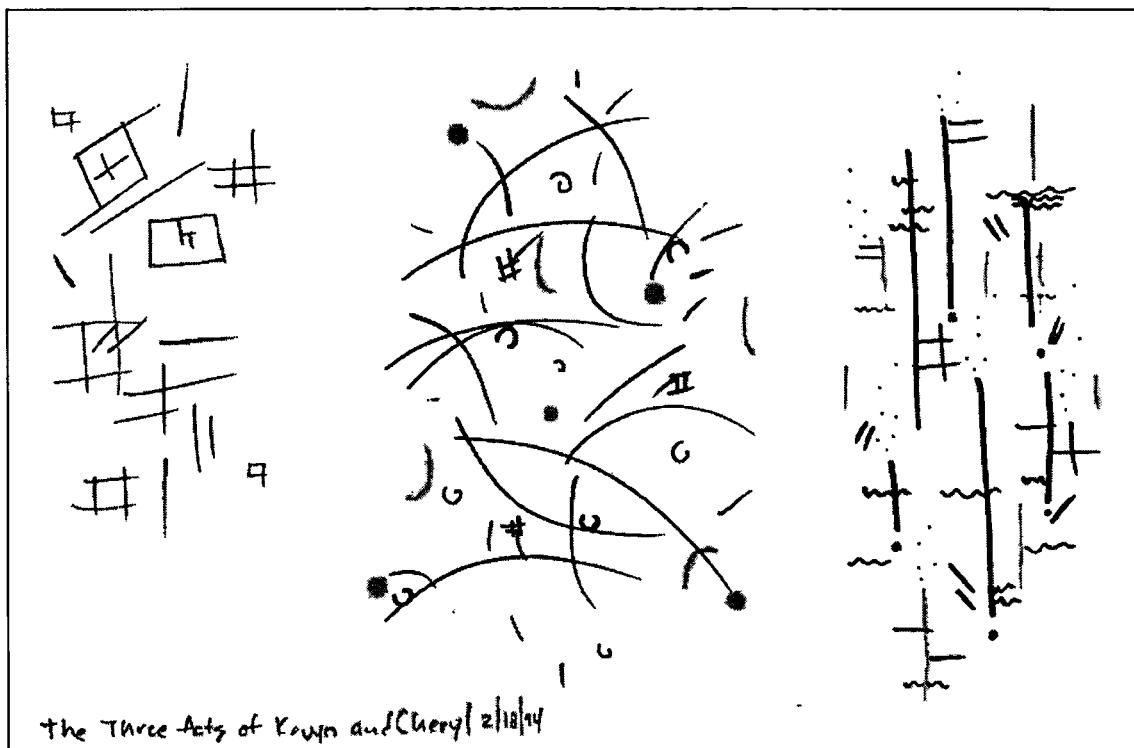
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- Kevyn Burn, BSN, RN, is Program Director of Crossroads Mental Health at Augusta Medical Center, a non-profit community hospital in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. A movement performer for many years, she is extending performance to singing in community and gospel choirs. Her current activities include applying Process Work to health care leadership, community mental health reform, advocacy, and coalition building.*
- Cheryl Pallant, MA, is an Adjunct Instructor in the English Department at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. She writes fiction, poetry, articles and reviews on performance art and dance, and often combines her texts with movement and ritual. She recently completed her latest novel and is writing a book on the transformative nature of play. Cheryl is also investigating Ph.D programs and continuing to make the Arts more accessible and viable.*

I Tear For You

for you
form you
firm yourself
reform yourself
return yourself
you're long overdue
 pay the fine
 walk the line
 take your time
 beware of crime
 and poets who rhyme
 without reason, with many scents
 lavender, rose
rise out of the dirt
surmise what is dirt
realize that what they criticize
 is so much poppycock
 is so much rabledrab
and then go, grab, fostercare yourself
adopt what's your due
adulate when you perambulate
congratulate when you fabricate
what you know to be so
what you furtively hold
because you fear the cold scold
the unyielding no
that feeling so low
 you've nowhere to go
 no one to please
 no time to ease
what's increasingly become
a ceaseless pine
an unbending spine
a nouvelle Frankenstein
that know no holds, no control
and won't patrol the diatribe
 the dive into dirt
 the decompose of the recompose
 the reappraisal of the neonastic potential of
 yourself
 the temple of yourself
 the tempo of yourself
 the breath that is you
 the wealth that is you
now awakening
now cast off
 debased, diffused
deflect what they have inferred
inter what they have deterred
return to restore
reform to reform
 now!

Of Coloring Senses

a sense of color
 sensing color
 coloring senses
 sensibly
 sensitively
luring colors
 alluring sensations
 sensational
 seasonal
 reasonable
 enabling perceptions
 perceptible to the receptable
 receivable to those waiting
openly
plainly
 continually open to planes
 circum-headed nowhere in particular
 No, where is particular
 particularly where no is
 No is where particles particulate
 circumstantially
 referentially
 (a reference to particular stances)
Color coordination, insubordination
 inordinate possibilities
 possibi-culating
 in unlimitable, inimitable bibibatable
 poses, postures, and structures
 deconstructing
 reconstructing
 construing every color sensatable.



KEVYN BURN

This drawing emerged as Kevyn communicated her concept of *Present Tense: Healing as We Speak* to Cheryl.

A Message in the Bottle: Process Work with Addictions

Reini Hauser

In my early twenties I experimented with a hallucinogenic plant and underwent a profound conversion, an initiation into the spirit world. I experienced a new and intimate connection with parts of myself and with what I consider to be God. This connection shifted my entire attitude about life and provided a sense of belonging for which I had always yearned. The experiment also initiated deep feelings for and a relationship with altered states of consciousness and the spiritual world.

After this peak experience I also became aware of the pain of feeling separate and distant from my spiritual life and creativity. I found it difficult to integrate the intensity of my experience into daily life. In an attempt to overcome this feeling of alienation and longing, I became dependent on alcohol and cigarettes. Over time I understood that what lay behind these addictive tendencies could transform and help me experience and live the spirituality and creativity I missed in my life.

Through my studies and work with clients over the years I discovered that many people have had similar experiences. The longing to alter one's state of mind seems a common drive which I believe can be seen, at its core, as a spiritual quest and a tendency toward wholeness.

Unusual altered states hold a potential known to humankind for millennia. In traditional societies altered states are utilized for paranormal perception, healing, and the well-being of the collective. In contrast, much of mainstream western society denies altered state experiences and offers few ritual spaces to express certain dream-like events. Perhaps because many westerners lack opportunities for connection to the spiritual world, our yearnings for spiritual experience are

lived unconsciously, either through drug induced altered states or in spontaneously occurring extreme states of consciousness. After working with hundreds of people with all kinds of addictions, I believe that the search for wholeness, including personal and collective completion and transpersonal union, is one of the spiritual processes underlying addictions. Spiritual practice is, in a process-oriented perspective, the quest "to find the missing pieces of reality" (Mindell 1993: 114) and to consciously live them in order to become more whole.

The approach to addiction work outlined in this article forms an important segment of substance abuse treatment. The connection between spirituality and addiction is a seasoned idea that flows from Carl Jung through Bill W. into the Alcoholics Anonymous movement. The interventions presented here may seem radical. They are new attempts to go deeply into the spiritual natures of people suffering from addictions. These methods work best at phases in the addiction process that call for expansion of awareness. Disciplined abstinence may be more in the foreground during other phases or used in conjunction with ideas presented here.

In this article I will try to show that altered states of consciousness:

1. may represent these missing pieces of reality;
2. are full of creative energy;
3. contain useful information for individual, family and group life.

On an individual level, drug-induced altered states seem to compensate a one-sided conscious attitude. They may help us gain access to disavowed and unknown aspects of our personali-

ties. In altered states we may discover our highest dreams about ourselves, our relationships and life as a whole. We may also encounter parts of ourselves lost or disowned in childhood. If abuse and oppression have left us feeling hurt, empty and worthless, we may turn to foods, drugs and other substances and activities in an attempt to gain access to experiences which help us reclaim our original wholeness.

On the familial and cultural level, altered states of consciousness may represent experiences at the fringe of what the family or society can tolerate and integrate. The so-called identified patient mirrors disowned aspects of the family, and marginalized groups live out what society represses. Mindell (1988) calls marginalized individuals and groups "city shadows" because they represent that which cannot live consciously in mainstream culture. In expressing disavowed aspects of the mainstream, city shadows confront the status quo and bring neglected ways of being to mainstream awareness. Some altered states of consciousness spring up as reactions against social, political, economic and spiritual climates which disenfranchise and oppress people. These altered states bring alternative possibilities to the mainstream culture.

In the United States, the failed attempt of official policy to ban mind-altering substances with a "war on drugs" demonstrates the limitations of an approach which tries to repress altered states, and thus any potential message these states may have for the mainstream. This type of policy denies the possibility of expanding normal states of consciousness to include that which mainstream consciousness occludes. As much as society tries to repress these unusual states of mind, they persist.

On a personal level, addiction can be seen as an effort to relate to parts of ourselves which our sober life-style excludes, and which we cannot access and use deliberately. In this sense, addiction is an attempt at wholeness (Mindell 1989a). The use of drugs like

...alcohol is a symptom of trying to find dreamtime in cosmopolitan reality; it is a symptom of a loss of rootedness in wholeness and dreaming, and of the depression and pain of oppression and disenfranchisement. Drugs are a means of getting around personal history and journeying to other realms to find the missing pieces of reality.... (Mindell 1993: 114)

Although drug-induced states may provide an individual a taste of what he seeks, the deeper nature of the desire for altered states lies beyond the state achieved by drugs alone. When the purpose and meaning of the underlying process cannot be lived consciously, the person will likely continue turning to drugs. In addiction, the person using drugs usually falls short of the state he yearns for and often increases drug use in ever more futile attempts to contact his deepest desire. For many people, the addiction seems to demand nothing less than a spiritual transformation of the self.

While drug-induced states momentarily succeed in overcoming daily identity, the search for meaning usually gets lost in the frenzy of consuming the drug. As tolerance increases, the individual augments the quantity of the substance in order to reach the altered state seemingly inaccessible to the ordinary identity. Most commonly, addiction does not lead to transcendence of the status quo, but to repeated unsuccessful attempts to annihilate the ordinary personality. Christina Grof talks about this destruction of the ego in her addictive state: "Instead of completing the ego death experience internally, I had been acting it out externally through the horrifying self-destructive drama of alcoholism" (Grof 1990).

Reaccessing and completing the altered state

If we accept the premise that the need for altered states is based on a drive towards transformation and wholeness, important questions concerning new treatment approaches arise. In the following discussion, I will focus on attitudes and interventions which may help bring out the deeper meaning behind altered states of consciousness, and may also help facilitate integrating these states. According to Mindell (1989) the ingredients for discovering and integrating the meaning inherent in the addictive process include: the desire to live, a loving relationship in which growth is valued, and a supportive environment. The absence of somebody strongly opposed to the altered state is another prerequisite for healing, since drug use is often in part a reaction against negative authority figures. Unless both inner and outer dynamics can change, there is a fair chance that the addictive reaction which damages self and others will persist.

Process Work holds a number of unique approaches to addiction. Here are several core beliefs from which I can work. The first is the

powerful attitude that altered states, no matter how unusual, are potentially meaningful and purposeful. This belief helps the client and therapist value even the strangest experiences. Within this climate details of these experiences can emerge and be made available to the client through means other than drugs.

Another crucial tool is awareness, or attention. Attention can be divided into two types, the first and second attentions. First attention focuses on our intentions, our normal state of consciousness. We need this state "to accomplish goals, to do our daily work, to appear the way (we) want to appear" (Mindell 1993: 24). The second attention focuses on irrational processes and perceives altered states of consciousness. "It is the key to the world of dreaming, the unconscious and dream-like movements, the accidents and slips of tongue that happen all day long" (Mindell 1993: 25). Developing second attention helps us perceive, enter and explore altered experiences which emerge on the fringe of awareness. Through using attention, we become more able to notice and follow inner and outer changes rather than only trying to guide and program what happens. Using awareness when working with people in altered states helps therapists follow clients and allows altered states to unfold and complete.

In working with addictions, a third important point consists of increasing one's fluidity in changing states. This requires developing the ability to enter and leave non-ordinary states with sober awareness.

One of the most useful approaches in working with altered states of consciousness is to simply encourage and be present with people as they go through their experiences. Perry (1974) and Laing (1970) demonstrated the value of believing in people's altered states and providing a safe place for experiences to unfold. In this vein, a powerful process-oriented technique involves reaccessing altered states. One way to reaccess an altered state is for a client to pretend to consume the mind-altering substance and experience the effects of the induced state, while watching the changes that take place with alertness. It is important to check with a client to see if this intervention feels appropriate. Clients may be in phases of needing to avoid altered states, or may need time to develop a sense of safety with the therapist before reaccessing an altered state. If the client is an active user it may be useful to work during an altered state in

order to take advantage of what is occurring already and work through strong projections onto the drug (Mindell in Van Felter 1987). While the client monitors his experience, the therapist helps unfold the altered state to completion.

The bee's buzz: a case example

I met Peter when he was in his early twenties. He had started shooting up heroin a few years before. After attempting residential treatment for his addiction, he relapsed and was accepted into a methadone program. Peter had lived with his severely depressed mother since his parents separated when he was three years old. A few years after the separation, his father died of alcoholism. In addition to methadone, Peter occasionally used heroin and cocaine trying to obtain the "rush" sensation which would satisfy him.

Peter expressed interest in trying to reaccess the heroin state through pretending to use the drug. He began his shooting up ritual, sitting on the floor in an imaginary public rest room and pretending to slowly inject the heroin into his vein. As he acted out his drug use, he stopped for a moment and said, "How stupid to inject this stuff!" Then he closed his eyes and described a feeling starting to occur in his stomach and moving upward through his body. As he spoke, his hands spontaneously demonstrated the flow of the feeling. I encouraged him to move his hands more fully. Peter stood, embraced the space in front of him with his arms and started moving slightly around his own axis. He said, "Ah, what a beautiful feeling. If it only stayed with me, I would be happy!" I encouraged him to make his movements even bigger. Keeping his eyes closed and moving his whole body, he began to experience himself as a bee buzzing across fields, landing and nibbling on flowers, feeling total bliss throughout his body.

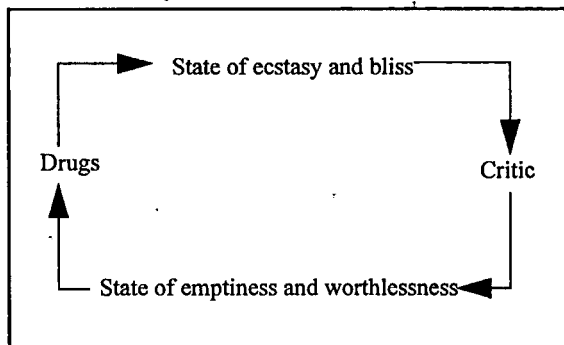
A few moments later his hands tightened into fists. In order to help him have more contact with his immediate experience, I amplified it by offering him physical resistance matching the tightness in his hands. He started to push back and assert himself. I asked him what he was pushing away. "Whatever doesn't allow me to take my space...my mother who suffocates me with her depression and her constant criticisms! I need my own space!" After a short struggle with his "mother," Peter spontaneously started to move by himself again, eyes closed, humming happily. I encouraged him to go deeply into his feelings. At

one point his head tipped back, leading his whole body into a backward arch. I supported him as he slowly slid to the floor in a complete trance state. After a few minutes of quietly experiencing his inner state, he opened his eyes and said, "That is the most beautiful feeling! I feel an incredible well-being all over my body. I feel full of that feeling!"

Addiction and inner critics

When Peter acts out his use of heroin, he seems to yearn for a state of bliss, free from inner criticisms and from a mother whose painful comments and attitudes hurt his feelings and injure his self-esteem. In his attempt to liberate himself, he begins to conflict with the side of his mother which he experiences as oppressive. His next steps in growing may be to consciously take a stronger stand against an inner abusive critic, to bring himself into fuller relationship with his mother and to find support for the part of him which wants to clean up his act. The underlying process seems to move in a direction of growth, while the actual substance abuse probably undermines his efforts to work on himself and move beyond his present identity.

The urge to induce altered states of consciousness through addictions seems in many cases related to the need to ward off inner critics, yet the attempt proves ineffective because the effects don't last. Once we return to our normal identities, our inner critics usually return unchanged, and the addictive cycle begins anew. We need to find sustainable methods of working on these abusive parts of ourselves. One possible approach to working with Peter involves processing all aspects of the cycle, working with both the critic and the state of worthlessness, with the drug induced ecstasy as well as the means to achieve it.



In reaccessing the altered state the client learns techniques to induce the state she yearns for psychologically—without the use of drugs. In amplifying and unraveling the ecstatic state she

experiences the meaningful core of her yearning which in turn supports her against feelings of emptiness and worthlessness induced by inner critics. Thus, the state of well being facilitates the confrontation with the oppressive critic.

One important step toward having it out with the critical figure involves entering the role of the critic and getting to know every detail of this figure. Often active negotiation between the inner critic and the inner victim changes these figures and helps strengthen a fair observer or metacommunicator. "If you work with the conflicts between the processes, following them congruently, step by step, you will notice another aspect of consciousness: the experience of freedom" (Mindell 1990: 121).

The addictive cycle seems to include several elements which need to be processed: the drug states of ecstasy and bliss and the states of inner criticism, emptiness and worthlessness. Exploring all sides of this interaction in detail can lead to freedom and long lasting life-style changes.

Process Work offers tools to unfold meaningful patterns in altered states and to access unconscious information enfolded in them. The state of intoxication can launch a process of transcending the status quo. By gaining access to larger definitions of oneself it becomes easier to work through inner negative figures. Peter completed the altered state in the experience of the bee which may symbolize wholeness and the soul and represent the transformative journey through death and rebirth (Herder 1978). This symbolism confirms the experiential work retrospectively and illustrates the collective amplification of his individual discovery. His normal identity needed to "die" in order for bliss and self-esteem to emerge.

Altered states as roles in the field

When working with severe addictive processes it is often essential to include the family in treatment. Altered states nearly always fit into the context of a larger system. They reflect powerful dreaming processes not only of the individual, but also the family and the culture as a whole. Addictions often indicate a reaction to a system, with addictive behavior mirroring unconscious aspects of the system.

Families become torn between the need to change and grow and the need for homeostasis. Early models in family therapy understood symptoms functionally as protecting the status quo of a family system. Newer theories based in evolution-

ary epistemology (Dell 1981) consider symptomatic behaviors as evolutionary feedback which pushes a system in a new direction. Prigogine (1986) demonstrates how amplifying fluctuations in a given system forces the system into a new structure.

In Process Work we think of family interactions as group processes. The group or family field consists of interchangeable roles which need to be filled. Roles which are not consciously filled can act as disturbing "ghosts" which "haunt" the atmosphere, making people irritable, bored, sleepy, etc. A field includes not only the primary culture of a family or a group, that which we say we do, but also that which we actually do. Incongruities between what any group says it does and what it actually does flood the atmosphere and create an "information float, a sea of signals that have an impact, but their impact is disavowed" (Mindell 1992a: 14). These disturbances create sparks in consciousness which may serve to propel the family into new behaviors. Disturbers to the family system, as "messengers of change" (Reiss 1993), can represent minority roles in the family field. The disturber's symptomatic behaviors usually get acted out unconsciously. Nevertheless, they reflect qualities the system may need. The mainstream culture of the family system frequently becomes stuck in a limited set of roles and may need to open up to its disavowed parts. Often the identified patient becomes the channel for the family's direction of growth. The family can change and grow when its members consciously explore and live the disturber's role.

I remember seeing a family who thought of themselves as very harmonious. Ironically, their presenting problem was their 17 year old daughter, Petra, who had recently admitted to using heroin for the past year. The parents complained that Petra terrorized them with her disrespectful behavior. They felt helpless and overpowered. During our first meeting, Petra yelled that she despised her parents and felt sick even looking at them. She stood openly for her life-style, which involved lots of sex and drug consumption.

The mother cried that she could not take the family conflicts any longer. She felt that she had sacrificed her life for the family instead of pursuing her own career, cultivating friendships and enjoying life. Despite her unhappiness, she felt protective of the family and afraid to stand up for herself. Her husband, a police officer, tended to

lean back. He acted polite and cooperative with occasional angry outbursts. He admitted taking a regular drink or two and complained of feeling isolated from the family. During our session, he frequently looked at me as if he needed support.

Sitting with this family, I had the impression that the effects of heroin came not only from the outside but were present in the sessions. The parents focused on passivity, tranquillity and harmony, all of which heroin commonly induces. Neither of them felt able to confront Petra, nor did they dare address conflicts in their relationship or follow their respective individual dreams. Working on the premise that the "disturber" brings a new direction of growth for the family, I felt that Petra interacted with people in the way that the family needed to interact. When I told her to be quiet, she responded with a bright smile and immediately became calm and attentive.

Each member of this family had gotten stuck in his or her respective role. Petra, the identified patient, indicated the direction of change. She came across as lively, unpredictable and powerful, confronting the unknown and ruthlessly pursuing her dreams. In order for the family system to become more fluid, the parents needed to discover their own power and ruthlessness, confront their inner barriers to a full life, and become more direct in relationship. They courageously started to challenge not only Petra but also each other as they began to pursue their own dreams. The mother felt unhappy with their sex life and wanted to follow her own relationship and career needs more. Petra's father turned off sexually because he felt powerless in relationship to his wife. He wanted time to discover his deeper needs and to work on his rage and fear of abandonment. The more closely he followed himself and stood for his needs, the more powerful he felt. As the couple confronted and worked through some of their personal issues and relationship conflicts, Petra agreed to stop using heroin and to enter a therapeutic community.

Listening with heart

Some people are interested in learning from and integrating altered states of consciousness, while others are not. The task of some individuals calls them to change within the structure of consensus reality. For other people, consensus reality proves simply too painful or narrow to live in. It seems not their fate to change. For these people, their unusual or altered states confront

the culture and ask others to change. The feeling attitude of "deep democracy" (see Mindell 1992a) values all parts of the individual and collective, no matter how disturbing they may appear. This attitude embraces and supports every single member of our communal family and facilitates the relationship between the governing paradigm and disenfranchised individuals and groups. I agree with Mindell when he says that an essential component in working with human beings is "the feeling or the attitude which you have for yourself and others. With a compassionate attitude you automatically pick up the feedback of others and respond" (Mindell 1990b: 69). My deepest belief is that unusual, altered and extreme states of consciousness can provide meaning and direction not only for the individual, but for relationships, families and the culture as a whole.

Listening with heart to stories from city shadows is inspiring. I remember a seminar with Mindell (1992b) where we invited some heroin addicts from the streets of Zurich. They did not want to change; rather, they challenged the seminar participants to change. A woman related the brutality of street life and prostitution and told us how coldly society treated her. She moved the whole group. I realized that her story reflected our own faces, and understood better how unbearably difficult and challenging today's world has become. I learned about listening and understanding the important social and spiritual messages which come from those marginalized by mainstream society.

Working on addiction as a problem of personal psychology alone misses an important point. We also need to expand our vision and understand how social reality impacts our innermost lives. As we saw in the example with Peter, external oppression is internalized and crystallizes into cruel inner figures and victim parts. Since oppressive collective beliefs manifest in individual psychology, treatment needs to unravel not only individual but cultural dramas. Psychology, politics and spirituality form an inseparable whole (Mindell *Sitting in the Fire*) and social and political phenomena need to be addressed for change and healing to occur. Standing against oppressors in real life and turning to social activism can help our common struggle toward freedom and completion.

If our search for wholeness involves finding the missing pieces of reality, then our spiritual practice must include consciously standing for and expressing our disavowed parts. We can help accomplish this through opening up to the creative messages in altered states of individuals, families and the culture as a whole.

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- Reini Hauser, M.A., hails from Zürich, Switzerland. He has worked in a substance abuse treatment facility using a process-oriented approach and travels and teaches Process Work worldwide. Reini lives in Eugene, Oregon, where he has a private practice and enjoys relationship life, organic gardening and fishing in Oregon's wild rivers. He is interested in community building, group and family conflict work and in expanding his political, psychological and spiritual awareness.*

Dissertation Abstracts

Renata Ackermann

Jamie Stover Schmitt

Gemma Summers

Luba Ivanova-Surkin

Stories Of Our Lives: Living with a Life-threatening Illness

Renata Ackermann (Union Institute, 1994)

This dissertation, entitled *Stories of Our Lives: Living with a Life-threatening Illness*, is a phenomenological and ethnographic study of health and illness. It investigates the meaning people attribute to illness experiences. The central hypotheses state that experiencing a life-threatening illness can be a catalyst for change and personal growth. The meaning of an illness experience can be discovered by bringing awareness to irrational fantasies connected to the experience. Awareness of the body states accompanying illness as well as the memories and fantasies around crucial moments connected to the illness are clues to necessary life changes.

The dissertation is structured around interviews with ten people who experienced life-threatening illness. The interviews elicit their irrational thoughts and fantasies regarding the illness onset, the reasons and explanations for the illness, life changes triggered by the illness experience, and valuable lessons gained from their experiences. The interview questions are based on the philosophy and theoretical framework of process-oriented psychology. The study further investigates cultural views on health and illness, living and dying. It examines the implications general attitudes towards illness have for those who become seriously ill. Illness itself is looked at as a potentially meaningful experience not only for the individual affected by it, but also for society. Seeing illness and death as integral parts of life rather than as disturbances that need to be eradicated reflects a shift in attitude which focuses on awareness rather than control. People who had been affected by life-threatening illness found valuable meaning, for themselves and the world around them, in their illness experiences. Illness took on different roles. It served as a reminder to listen to, value and appreciate the body and inner experiences. Illness was also experienced as an important change agent and push for personal growth. Finally, illness became a teacher which made people more aware of the interrelatedness and interdependence of human beings and the world.

Tracking The Dream Figure: A Systems Approach to Understanding Meaning in Movement

Jaime Stover Schmitt (Temple University, 1994)

This dissertation is concerned with the relationship between the inner organization and thereby meaningful structure of human experience as it is related to and reflected in spontaneous movement. An introduction to this area of inquiry is given, followed by a discussion of meaning in relation to movement. Three theoretical paradigms have been employed in enacting a practical exploration of personal meaning found in movement. Arnold Mindell's Process Work, based in Taoist Philosophy, and C. G. Jung's Analytical Psychology supplied the basis for understanding and organizing inner experience. Laban Movement Analysis, based on Rudolf Laban's movement theory and system of movement analysis, gave an orientation and tool for organizing and analyzing observed movement. Ludwig von Bertalanffy's systems theory provided an overall way of thinking that supported the relational nature of this study.

The practical exploration involved observation, video recording and subsequent analysis and notation of a single subjective-mover-participant in three distinct movement setting formats. The movement setting formats included: ordinary conversation; Authentic Movement, a movement experience done by following the spontaneous movements of the body; and Process Work, Arnold Mindell's psychotherapeutic method. The original movement data from these setting formats were then organized according to Laban theory and Process Work theory into two groups: primary process movement, movement with which the mover was seen to be more identified, and secondary process movement, movement with which the mover was seen to be less identified. Samples from these two categories were compared, as were instances of movement that were thought to represent particular aspects of the mover's personality termed dream figures in Process Work. Specific and general findings related to this exploration and to the pursuit of meaning in movement in general were summarized. Concluding statements were made with respect to the overall orientation and course of action taken in discussing and exploring the meaning and movement relationship, along with recommendations for further investigation.

Conflict: Gateway to Community Process Oriented Conflict Resolution: An Interview with Founder, Arnold Mindell

Gemma Summers (Union Institute, 1994)

This dissertation is a book-length manuscript entitled Conflict: Gateway to Community. It is based on an interview with Dr. Arnold Mindell, developer of Process Oriented Psychology, and is a descriptive account of the process-oriented approach to conflict. This approach views conflict as an opportunity to create more sustainable and democratic relationships and communities. It addresses the process of conflict, as distinct from the content of conflict. In particular, the process-oriented approach addresses the emotional and psychological dimensions of conflict, viewing conflict as an evolutionary and potentially transformative process for individuals, groups and communities.

The manuscript attempts to convey a way of working with conflict that is phenomenological and multi-dimensional. A phenomenological approach follows participants' subjective experience of conflict, their communication styles and modes of expression. It believes that individuals and communities, if helped to deeply unfold their subjective experiences, possess the solutions to their problems. A multi-dimensional approach to conflict provides flexibility for working with various manifestations of conflict, including intrapsychic, interpersonal, inter-

group and international. This multi-dimensional approach is holistic and holographic, viewing the different levels of conflict as interdependent.

The manuscript addresses issues including power and privilege, neutrality, human rights, majority-minority psychology and the facilitator role. It attempts to broaden the concept of conflict resolution by integrating concepts from psychology, politics, physics, religion and indigenous philosophy.

The manuscript is written in a style that makes it relevant and accessible to psychologists, conflict resolvers, mediators, social activists and the general public. It combines interview transcript with commentary.

The Russian Family as a Mirror of a Changing Society

Luba Ivanova-Surkin (Union Institute, 1994)

This doctoral dissertation is about Russian family life during the turbulent post-communist period. It is an in-depth study of one family in transition and the psychological dynamics of their lives in relation to the changing world around them. The purpose of the study is to offer an insider's view of this family. The reader is invited into the family's Moscow kitchen on a winter day in 1993, where she can observe the family's thoughts, words, dreams, illusions, hopes and fears.

This study follows the anthropological methods of Jules Henry and Oscar Lewis, the phenomenological approach of participant observation and the process-oriented model of social interaction. This methodology orients us to the psychological dynamics of family life in the context of the historical upheaval of post-communist Russia. The family is a reflection of society and the society a reflection of the family. The dramatic and extreme conditions of totalitarian and post-totalitarian Russian society make this process of change all the more poignant.

The dissertation provides a detailed descriptive analysis of one contemporary Russian family. I have extensively examined the everyday experience of this family to paint a true-to-life portrait. This approach will hopefully enable the reader to gain not only knowledge about life in Russia during this period of radical transition, but a feeling for the people and their struggle to overcome totalitarianism and build a foundation for democracy. The methods utilized have produced documentation of this family's personal and social backgrounds, psychological and social needs, interests, desires and goals. I have endeavored not only to describe this family's daily life, but to make the analysis accessible to an American audience. Since Russia is in such a state of flux and rapid change, this first-hand method has enabled the reader to get as close to the experience as possible. To the extent that this research has succeeded, the reader is able to transcend the cultural, linguistic and political differences represented by this study.

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By Joseph Goodbread, Ph.D

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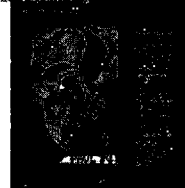
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Sitting in the Fire (working title) by Arnold Mindell

Dreaming Up Reality by Joseph Goodbread

The Dreambody Toolkit (republish) by Joseph Goodbread

Sitting in the Fire will be published in the Summer of 1995. It is a practical approach to group process and conflict resolution, giving concrete suggestions for working with rank, abuse and social action, revenge, terrorism and violence. It is accessible to and valuable for those working in the fields of psychology, social work, teaching, conflict mediation, community action, and anyone needing effective ideas for getting along with difficult situations in daily life. The book addresses social issues ranging from racism, sexism and homophobia to conflicts in a wide range of places including Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and the United States.

Dreaming Up Reality will be published in the Summer of 1995. This book explores relationship issues and countertransference concepts from a process-oriented perspective. It focuses on the relationship between client and therapist, and gives ideas for unique ways of working with transference and countertransference in therapy.

The Dreambody Toolkit is a practical handbook for the psychotherapist and the interested layperson. It covers process patterns such as dream figures and complexes; the role of both client's and therapist's goals in the therapeutic process and the therapist's feeling reactions as an integral part of therapy. The book includes a transcript of a therapy session which shows how symptoms and resistances can be the first signs of growth and point the way not only towards a solution but also towards a fuller, more differentiated personality.

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