

THE APPLE AND THE TALKING SNAKE:  
FEMINIST DREAM READINGS  
AND THE SUBJUNCTIVE CURRICULUM

by

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## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I develop a theoretical framework for the practice of dream reading as a form of literary engagement worthy of attention from educators. Dream reading is a form of research in which the researcher takes responsibility for self-reflection and potential transformation of self through the construction of knowledge based on “reading” literary fictive images *as if* they arose from night dreams. This study develops dream reading theory through an exploration of Carol Shields’ novel, *Unless, as if* it were a dream. It examines women’s silence and the disposition of fear of knowing from multiple perspectives. The study uses my personal dream journals together with a variety of theoretical works in feminist, consciousness and dream theories to inform interpretations of Norah, Reta, Lois, and Danielle. For as Donald (2001) says, “when stories and ideas are juxtaposed, so that their meanings collide, they can shift our focus to new semantic spaces [to] clarify the experienced world” (p. 294). This work is a limit case that investigates women’s silence and fear of knowing as they emerge from my personal experience of resistance to the chaos and uncertainty of disintegrating and rebuilding through midlife into crone.

The study shows how dream reading a literary text might gather together and rearrange lived experience and encourage the creation and re-creation of life stories from different perspectives. Dream reading contributes to the study of the details of the phenomenology of inside/outside cognitive worlds. Exploring literary fiction and personal dreams suggests that literary fiction read as if it were a dream can contribute to the identification of shifting self-knowledge and the creation of new myths subversive to the patriarchal Symbolic Order. Narrating and re-creating reader-response experience

provides insight into self and the struggle for the transformation of the principles of linear rational thought.

Finally, it is suggested that by accepting that lived reality matters and by beginning to imagine exceeding the demands of patriarchal consciousness for conformity, acquiescence and certainty, one can explore, perceive and imagine teaching and learning in different ways, and thereby create opportunities for critical reflection and insight in the teacher education curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> Hillman, 1975b, p. 90

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## DEDICATION

To the memory of my husband, William Arthur Gregor, whose love and support lifted me up through many difficult years and without whom I may never have continued the search.

To the memory of my parents, Anthony Joseph Kramps and Caroline Hélène Miller, who taught me endurance, love, faith, and that miracles do happen.

To my adult children Jason Gregor, Colin and Elise Gregor, Eric Stang and Rachel Gregor-Stang who give me the joy of their constant love and support and who know that night dreams offer fullness of life.

To my grandchildren Liam, Noah and Ava Gregor  
and Ethan, Ian and Owen Stang  
who just really want to know what grade Grandmother is in now.

For the first time in history, enormous numbers of women are traveling through the gate of menopause and looking forward to a life span of some 30 more years. And we women have a certain hard-won wisdom, gleaned through consciously processing the experiences of our long and fruitful lives. What are we going to do with this wisdom? Play golf? Get our hair done? We begin to glimpse the opportunity, and the responsibility.

Ann Kreilkamp, Founder of *Crone Chronicles*



# 1.

## **The Subjunctive Curriculum and Subjective Knowledge**

Hear the wind  
Feel the moisture  
Shriveled bleeding soul.  
Smell life return to the rivers and  
pastures turn green.  
Touch the wild marigold that  
blooms brilliant yellow  
Waters of the storm, flooding, filling, destroying, building.

I need a wild garden  
Not clipped and even hedges  
with sharp angles and symmetry  
manufactured by shears  
A wild garden where nature shows her  
wild destructive face and grins her  
laughing wrinkled smile in chaotic peace.  
Personal Journal 1993

\*\* \*

Thus towards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write.

Virginia Woolf

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### **I begin with fear. Stories. Promises.**

This dissertation is crone-written. Through multiple lenses of personal experience, I write about feminist and consciousness theory. I look at dreams and dream work as a layperson, through Jungian analytical and archetypal psychology. As a reader, I look at how I encounter and interpret text and how these responses and imaginary identifications influence consciousness and ordinary life interactions with others. In this study, I explore the potential of literary engagement for the transformation of fear into personal and

professional action. I expand the definition of literary engagement to include a theory of dream reading. I write about how literary expression provokes deeper understanding of personal and professional identity. Finally I articulate the potential relevance of dream interpretation processes to the field of curriculum studies and pre-service teacher education.

This study centers on the narration of a feminist understanding of women's silence and fear of knowing. I argue that feminist work is far from complete; the surface calm is not indicative of peaceful fulfillment but, rather, deep despair. Women's knowing is constrained, muted and silenced by the identifications of her birthright within patriarchal structures and discourses. I believe we must create a map out of the mostly hidden but well learned territory of silence. Grumet (1988) joins Virginia Woolf and Kafka to ask teachers to "make a place for themselves where they can find the silence that will permit them to draw their experience and understanding into expression" (p. 88). This dissertation is one such place and one such silence.

I believe that this is significant work for education. First, Donald (2001) suggests there is an ongoing need in the social sciences to move beyond the beginnings of a phenomenology of consciousness to a new field of study, a fresh science of consciousness that details the phenomenology of inner cognitive worlds (p. 329). Second, Lodge states succinctly that "The novel is arguably man's most successful effort to describe the experience of individual human beings moving through space and time" (Lodge, 2002, p. 10). The novelist provides vivid, detailed descriptions of imaginary subjective experiences. In "real" life, we do not have access to the detailed thoughts and emotions of those around us. "(L)iterature is a record of human consciousness, the richest and most comprehensive we have" (Lodge, 2002, p. 10). We can deepen our understanding of human experience

through a dream reading of consciousness in the novel. Third, classroom educators and researchers are interested in the relationships between literary experiences and consciousness (Lodge, 2002; Kerby, 1991; Donald, 2001; Luce-Kapler, 2004; and Sumara, Luce-Kapler & Iftody, 2008). Finally, radical feminists (Christ & Plaskow, 1979; Daly, 1973, 1978) are concerned with eradicating the root causes of the patriarchal system in Western society. I cannot state too strongly that I consider the interpretive act of dream reading a critical feminist project of re-mediating, re-situating, re-naming and re-membering women's experiences, history and identity.

This study is one woman's narrative. It writes my life world out of obscurity. It confronts patriarchy. It brings my experience to bear on the patriarchal descriptions that constitute our understanding of what it means to learn and to teach. It puts one more woman into the theories that are constructed to deconstruct the institutions of education and its principles. Further, in order to understand how the educational institutions work on children and teachers, I must come to understand how it works on my self. What is the impact of education on human subjectivity and agency? How is it that what one learns is what one becomes? This study points to the value of questioning received versions of truth. I submit that the question is the most powerful technology we have available. The truth, says Grumet (1988) "is tricky business." For these reasons, this study of consciousness through reader-response to a feminist poststructural novel read *as if* it were a dream is a significant site of research.

One data archive for this study are my written responses to multiple readings of Carol Shields' novel, *Unless*. The main character in the novel is Reta Winters, mother, "wife," and writer. She is the translator for French feminist writer Danielle Westerman, and

is “forty-three, forty-four in September” (Shields, 2002, p. 2). Reta doesn’t write her autobiography, but we read it through her interior monologues and dialogues with her editor Springer. Reta’s eldest daughter, Norah, was “a good, docile baby and then she became a good, obedient little girl.” *Unless* evolves as Reta writes the sequel to *My Thyme Is Up* and, with her partner Tom, searches for possible reasons, possible explanations, as to Norah’s abrupt departure from family, friends and university to take up a vigil on a Toronto street corner with sign that says, **GOODNESS**.

*Unless* is a deeply understated conflict about a seemingly safe, calm, ordered, measured, normal life in a comfortable house with a comfortable husband, children and mother-in-law. Reta’s life includes grocery shopping, trips to the library and lunch with girlfriends. Why does Norah take up residence on Bloor Street by day and Promise House by night? Friends offer conflicting but superficial reasons and advice. Tom concludes that Norah suffers from post-traumatic stress but can’t discover the trigger incident. Reta adopts a deeply private theory of female exclusion and alienation. Usually militantly cheerful, refusing all displays of anger, Reta begins to move beyond civility into anger and even rage as she teeters between the quotidian of her normal comfortable life and the tragedy of her daughter’s withdrawal. By the time we know the “reason” for Norah’s action and she is safe in hospital, Reta has finally brought her rage into view. She struggles with the public unacceptability of woman rage and fears being labeled hysterical and emotional. But, rage can’t easily be stored away again. “How can [Norah] go on living her life knowing what she knows, that women are excluded from greatness, and most of the bloody time they choose to be excluded?” (Shields, 2002, p. 131).

Dreams and novels are important sources of cultural knowledge. The novel is an excellent depiction of human consciousness and how it works. I learned from Reta's consciousness in *Unless*. Sometime during my first reading, I realized I was reading the novel through the lens of my dreams and through Jungian dream theory. There are notes in the book margins beside words like library, attic, bathroom, egg, tomato, trilobite, scarf, baby shower, veil and clean my house that say dream symbol. I began to realize that I can gain more insight into Reta's consciousness when I read the novel *as if* each literary image, each person, place or thing were an image in my night dreams. By studying the novel as a cultural form we are engaging in a study of how subjectivity is constructed. Carol Shields was able to depict female conscious subjectivity by writing novels. As a reader, I can gather insight into female conscious subjectivity by reading the microscopic details of *Unless*, which by revealing the ordinary, discloses something more than the ordinary about female subjectivity. Reading the novel *as if* it were a dream provides me with multiple learning opportunities. Dream reading *Unless* helped me to unpack the deeply buried subtleties of the patriarchal code. Dream reading helped me to understand and change my subjectivity, that is, my relation to others and to the world.

This dissertation uses autobiographical research methods to study the ways patriarchal discourses and practices function to create silence and fear of knowing. Literary anthropological research methods are used to support the autobiographical investigation into one woman's journey of understanding.

As every page became a reminder of my own biography, I found that my "consciousness is living through a synthesizing evocation from [*Unless*] which involves many—one is tempted to say all—levels of the organism" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 173).

*Unless* holds personal meaning for me because of its similarities with my own journey; thus, it became an archive of data appropriate for Pinar's (1975) autobiographical method of *currere* which makes it possible to learn from the integration of academic knowledge and life history (Miller, 2005, p. 47). Reading the story of Norah, Lois and Danielle through the consciousness of midlife narrator, Reta Winters, evoked multiple images and identifications.

Another data archive is my written representations and responses to dreams I have recorded since 1988. In order to represent the complexity of women's silence and fear of knowing, I "shift [my] privatized experiences into the public sphere" and risk becoming a spectacle (Sumara, Davis, Filax, & Walsh, 2006, p.3). The study of one biography, then, becomes a "limit case" from which social systems can be understood (Salvio, 2007). Freeman (2003) states that "*the narrated life is the examined life*" (p. 127). Through close readings of fiction and dream reading as interpretive practices, women can discover their history, notice their gender blindness, see their connection to the past, to all human endeavors, and then, inevitably, dramatically transform consciousness. The normalizing effects of patriarchy are difficult to discern. Their effects are most often considered to be personal weaknesses of women. Dream reading the novel provides a way to examine my life through a fuller and broader range of theory as well as feeling, thought, experience and emotion than I might normally have available.

In the process of juxtaposing documented dreams, literary text and theory, I began to understand that within the nexus of multiple fecund ideas was the energy needed to "engage in the needed boundary crossing that creates possibilities for the revision of ... personal narratives" (Sumara, 2002a, p.58). This textual nexus forces a space for

negotiation of possible new interpretations of old ideas and old personal narratives.

According to Grumet (1988), this intertextual process provides for openness of meaning but not collapse. Interpretation becomes tentative, vital, trembling and transformative of “the text, the world, and their interpreters as well” (p. 146). When working with this multiplicity of text, I am able to range far and wide seeking the recovery of the mystery of creation. In this juxtaposition of multiple texts, I find no Coles Notes of Truth.

This autobiographical study documents and analyzes the journey of one woman in-with-through-out of fears both implicit and explicit. This work has been 60 years in the birthing. Sixty years. But most specifically the healing years between 1988 and 2004 and the embracing years from 2004 to now. How can I embrace my fears of knowing? How can I formulate a conceptual understanding of the question of fear of knowing as a potential site of transformation in person and in practice? I can begin with personal experience. I can say, with Magda Lewis (1993), in her writing of silence:

As a pedagogical ‘problem,’ women’s silence has most often been articulated and framed within an ideology of deficiency—as a consciousness drugged into stupor by the opium of male power. Hence, the interventions envisioned are most often directed toward compensating for this presumed lack ... From my own experience I know that not all of what appears to be women’s silence is the absence of discourse. Infused with the context of my own lived realities, the text ... gives integrity and political meaning to my own silences grown, as I know they are, not out of inadequacy and deficiency, but of a deeply felt rage at those who live their unexamined privilege as entitlement (p. 3).

“(W)hen the culture conspires to ignore one’s presence, one loses one’s self (Doll, 2000, p. 33). Telling stories and writing are ways to return my self to my self.

As I write outside on the verandah this morning, I become aware of an emerging image of my life seasons. The image of the Mugo pine appears like a watermark—ever greening, its Demeter-graced abundant green springtime candles becoming brown seed

cones, which now in late July begin to fall to earth in preparation for fall and winter. I have lived here in this place for 35 years. The tree has grown from a small shrub to a 20-foot tree. Emerging from its roots are a dozen or more large trunks with dozens of branches reminiscent of multiple identifications. Like the tree, I have multiple branches.

I am a white, middle class educator, daughter, sister, widow, mother, grandmother, aunt and great aunt. I am the only daughter/sister among four living and two deceased brothers. This place is one of both privilege and problem. I grew up in rural, homestead Alberta identified as “the only daughter” and “the only sister.” Like Norah in *Unless*, I was a good, nice, docile, quiet baby, child, and teenager. There seemed not a shred of rebellion anywhere in me. Dad completed grade eight in Portland, Oregon leaving at 14 for Rivière Qui Barré, Alberta and then for Crooked Creek, Alberta arriving in 1929 at the beginning of the Great Depression. We grew up with Dad’s many quiet stories of early life as trapper, hunter, trucker, and musician. Mom arrived in Crooked Creek from Champion, Alberta in 1933 at 17. Her family lost their farm due to the Depression. Mom wanted to become a teacher; circumstances prevented that but it didn’t prevent her life-long advocacy for education. Trapping, hunting and farming grew to include trucking when I was born in 1945 and branched further to the oilfield in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

Always our family life included Sunday Mass, church weddings, birthdays, baptisms, and family celebrations. My parents and maternal grandparents were instrumental in building the local Holy Rosary Catholic Church. The statue of the Blessed Mother, which stands on a side altar, was a gift to the Church in memory of my maternal grandparents. Dad and one of his seven brothers worked to build the first school in the community. As rural, pioneer, farm children, we learned early the value of hard work and



cooperation to enhance the prospects of thriving. Our parents are dead now, but we remain a large, close-knit family unit which today numbers about 75.

There is a strong correlation between my background and the theoretical positions that influence what I attend to in *Unless*, to what ideas I select and the degree of attention focused on autobiographical detail. The story I tell today was a different story a minute ago and will be a different story tomorrow. For every personal story and every idea selected from *Unless*, there are those that are left out. How can I know what's real? Edelman (2004) explains that for generalizations to arise across various signal complexes to yield the properties that the signals have in common, "the brain must map its own activities, as represented by several global mappings, to create a concept—that is, to make maps of its perceptual maps" (p. 50). Memory is the capability to replicate or suppress a particular mental or physical act. Each event of memory is dynamic and context-sensitive, yielding a recurrence that is similar but not identical to preceding acts. The recurrence of memory does not duplicate an original experience even though there is often the false impression that one precisely remembers an event. How accurate, how real are my recollected experiences? How accurate are my dream reports? How deeply do I understand theoretical concepts gathered over 19 years? Kerby (1991) says that we must avoid the notion that "recollections are images that somehow duplicate original experiences. ... [T]his is the empiricist's storehouse of past and faced perceptions" (p. 23).

Problems of gender derive from the patriarchal positions embedded and often unconscious within a culture. Lewis (1993) believes that the answer to changing our phallogentric culture lies in the feminist call for a practice which aims to "transform the very ground of its existence" (p. 143). I believe that sustainable change in women's

experience can only emerge together with change to the underlying structures of society, that is, changes to the cultural and social system in which gendered identity is constructed. I will explore the political struggle over gendered meaning as I have experienced it as well as my own complicity with patriarchal structures. “Feminist scholarship undertakes the dual task of deconstructing predominantly male cultural paradigms and reconstructing a female perspective and experience in an effort to change the tradition that has silenced and marginalized us” (Greene & Kahn, 1991, p. 1). These authors look at anthropology, history and literature and make the case that as a feminist I must be very aware of my own assumptions and be careful not to recover the ideology I am repudiating. I believe that a small change in the initial condition of my psyche created through imaginative work may be the catalyst for a series of changes leading to transformation.

In this dissertation I develop a theoretical framework for the practice of dream reading as a possible form of literary engagement worth of attention in the lives of educators. Dream reading is a form of research in which the researcher takes responsibility for self-reflection and potential transformation of self through the construction of knowledge based on “reading” the fictive images in the novel *as if* they arose from night dreams. According to Savary, Berne and Williams (1984), night dreams

are a spontaneous symbolic experience lived out in the inner world during sleep. ... (D)reams are composed of a series of images, actions, thoughts, words, and feelings over which we seem to have little or no conscious control. The people, places, and things of our dreams can sometimes be related to remembered life experiences or images that remain in our memory, but often they seem to come from sources to which we have little or no conscious access (p. 4).

In thinking, pretending, acting *as if*, we enter into the world of possibility. This subjunctive mood designates a mood of uncertainty, speculation, doubt, wonderment, openness, and possibilities. For example, Reta Winters says, “I have no idea what will

happen in this book” (Shields, 2002, p. 15) and “I am desperate to know how the story will turn out” (Shields, 2002, p. 16). Luce-Kapler (2004) suggests that it is the subjunctive that “invites others into our writing.” The subjunctive is significant in that the writer and the reader “write and read *as if* the text can describe the reality of an event, an imagining, or a feeling; *as if* language did not remove us a step from it” (p. 88).

Novels are the subjunctive form. Fiction asks readers to participate in a game of “Let’s pretend.” The reader moves into the make believe world and pretends the “truth” of fictional lives. *Unless* provides us with access to the imagined detailed consciousness of a fictional Reta Winters. Through her consciousness, we become privy to the mind of Alicia, the fictional character Reta is creating in her novel, *Thyme in Bloom*. Carol Shields begins each chapter with a subjunctive adverb suggesting throughout the novel what Luce-Kapler (2004) calls the “possibilities of possibilities.”

By common cultural agreement, we read novels *as if* the characters and events were real. We open the way to reinterpreting choices and changing the direction of our lives. I want educators to experience the freedom of learning and knowing that a small fluctuation, a perturbation in the system, can produce a different life pattern. For as Reta Winters said, “If the lung sacs of Norah’s body hadn’t filled with fluids, if a volunteer ... hadn’t reported a night of coughing ... and if ...” (Shields, 2002, p. 314). I want educators to have the opportunity to experience the subjunctive with its myriad possibilities of different subjectivities, different subject positions and identifications. The subjunctive has the power to show us what we believe and point to what it is possible to believe. The subjunctive can help us to see how our beliefs affirm or deny our choices. We can “try out” the roads taken as well as those not taken. Dream reading is a way for

men and women to vicariously experience other possibilities and through the experience to reshape their consciousness. Dream reading helps me to see the unfolding of my life as it has been and as it might become. When educators come to understand the power of the subjunctive, their students also will know that power.

My primary research methodology is literary anthropology (Sumara 2002), a process sufficiently incomplete to enable the space of the possible. It is open to the inclusion of a montage of ways of working—narrative inquiry, archetypal psychology, Jungian psychology, hermeneutics, personal reflection and autobiography. Feminism emphasizes multiple research methods and values inclusivity more than research tradition. I use dreams, myths, stories and imaginations juxtaposed with fictive dream readings of *Unless*, my personal dream journals which date to 1988, and theoretical work from feminist, consciousness and dream theories. For as Donald (2001) says, “when stories and ideas are juxtaposed, so that their meanings collide, they can shift our focus to new semantic spaces [to] clarify the experienced world (p. 294). I pull from a variety of theoretical works to create a theory of dream reading. It is in the intersection of these ideas that I explore what it might mean to women to begin to understand their own fears of knowing in relationship to their complicity in their own oppression. Like the crab apple tree, I am not young anymore. I carry scars from pruning and branches that have withered, almost died but not fallen. There is a good deal of unexplored psychic space. “It is only by imagining the world otherwise that we are inspired to resist oppression and work for the decolonisation of both our own and others social and psychic space” (Oliver, 2004, p. 141). I believe that dreams and dream reading help make decolonization possible. I argue

that dream imagery contains the seeds of possibility to escape from the dominant *logos*, the word.

This morning I write at the picnic table under the canopy of the old ornamental crab apple tree. From its root emerges one trunk becoming four plus a thick branch nearly horizontal for the first few feet before it too rises upward. Like the branches of the tree, in each chapter I integrate the theoretical and autobiographical with fictive dream images. This integrative approach to a literature review supports the feminist notion of cyclical rather than beginning, middle, and end.

As a research methodology, literary anthropology (Sumara 2002), lends itself to the flexibility necessary for touching the spaces through which the conscious feminine may emerge through disrupting patriarchal norms. As an aspect of literary anthropology, dream reading may provide one more way to experience the process of evolving, of seeding the unconscious, and of understanding experiences as opportunities for reflexive practice. Dream reading is also a potential means to expose the underlying patriarchal structures of curriculum embedded beneath the structures of consciousness in our culture. Discovering the patriarchal structures of curriculum provides teachers a possible impetus to change the institutions in which we work by changing our responses to those institutions through the language that we live. Reader-response and dream reading may show me how to perceive differently—to unlearn, so that I might reinterpret and reorganize my experiences. Donald (2001) writes of the “complex web of habits, customs, and beliefs that define human culture ... now unconscious, of course; ... automatization is the other side of advanced consciousness.” Further, he says we tend to disregard our inside and heed our “cultural universe rather than the natural world” (p. 300). Dream reading may help us recognize the

value of “the inside of us” and question more deeply how culture through language, the symbolic order of patriarchy, organizes our thoughts and experience, carries and creates our cultural codes, and organizes meaning according to pre-established categories. It may be a further way into teacher education programs to offer students opportunities to experience literary fictions that challenge normative gender stereotypes. I wish to disrupt the unconscious web.

I believe that dream reading has deep potential for investigating the continuous creation of self-identity. Dreams bypass the ego and its protective gates as well as the superego of the colonizing patriarchal consciousness, thus opening deep and wide spaces for investigation in, with and through our learning to live. There is no endpoint in dream interpretation. Each encounter with the dream contributes a perspective and contributes to the shape of the dream possibility. Every interpretation contributes to changing the dreamer and the dream in an ever-evolving spiral of change leading to transformation. Within this research are issues of gender identifications and subjectivities that derive from the patriarchal positions embedded and often unconscious within a culture.

### **Stories from the river or how I come to be writing this dissertation**

**October 3, 1992**

#### **The Center**

*In my dream a gentle voice repeats. "Come home. Come home." I am in a gentle yet fierce struggle to find the Center. I am with many people. There are many trees, vegetables, corn and squash. It may be a harvest festival. The earth is warm and moist. It is all very misty and hazy. I am unsure of the direction.*

In May 1993, I am an Alberta Education delegate to the weeklong Canadian Educators' Association Conference on Creating a Caring and Equitable Society. I spend all the free hours reflecting, meditating, writing, drawing, walking, and soaking in the hot springs. Massage. Reiki. Spaces open (Appendix I (a) to (e)).

I notice that many women attempt to identify themselves as the “good,” the “nurturer,” the “ecologically onside.” For me, this is based on a false duality that the Goddess is the All Good Non-Violent Creatrix. Watching the river in early spring. Great tonnes of debris, dead animals, twisted tree branches, and silt to be left somewhere creating some great ground of becoming. All that death flowing into life, returning to the earth. A seed pummeled by wind and rain and rushing water buried deep within some crevice only to spring forth as a tree on a distant shore. An elm tree sheds six million leaves every season to build a new earth. I can no longer accept “woman as nurturer” without recognizing the birth, death, re-birth cycle. Nature kills just as surely as human kind. Gender-identified attitudes and attributes. The Goddess Creatrix without any destructive side. This assumes that because I am a woman I have particular innate attributes such that it is “unnatural” for me to think analytically, hierarchically or with linearity. It further assumes that I am more nurturing and caring than a man. Do not limit me through gender. Listening to the story of the river, I can no longer accept the prevailing Adamic myth. I need to re-member, “We are honor bound to look at the dark side, which is as innate in the feminine soul as it is in the masculine, if erstwhile victims are not to become tyrants” (Wolf, 1993, p. 151). Wolf urges against collapsing feminism into “male vice-female virtue” scenarios.

The conference includes a moment in which we are asked to make an action plan and to speak it publicly. Once found, staying upon the path with heart, especially when it requires truth telling, takes courage and I am often a coward. Chambers quotes Eduardo Galeano (1989/1991), a journalist from Uruguay, saying,

Fear dries the mouth, moistens the hands and mutilates. Fear of knowing condemns us to ignorance; fear of doing reduces us to impotence. Military dictatorship, fear of listening, fear of speaking make us deaf and dumb. Now democracy, with its fear of remembering, infects us with amnesia, but you don't have to be Sigmund Freud to know that no carpet can hide the garbage of memory (2004, p. 112).

It is a gross exaggeration to link my small action of speaking publicly to the actions of those who resist the bloody and murderous events of a dictatorship. The imagination fueled by fear runs amok.<sup>2</sup> Rationally I know I am in no physical danger; the fear persists.

I breathe. I stand. I am not a public person. Go to the microphone. "I will do doctoral research in education using dream work, theories of women's spirituality, feminist theory and psychotherapeutic processes to understand my work in education."

During this time, my doubts and questioning lead me to a crisis of spirituality rooted in overthrowing the patriarchal tyrant within, what Oliver (2004) calls the superego of the colonizer, patriarchal consciousness. I begin to notice things like the patriarchal words in the Sunday Mass—rooted as it is in the Father God. Carol Christ, Merlin Stone, Rosemary Ruether, Nel Noddings, Mary Daly. The absence of the feminine in Catholicism creeps into my consciousness; it becomes impossible to ignore. While at a Dream Intensive based on the work of Roberto Assagioli in psychosynthesis at the Maryknoll Center in New York, 1991, I wrote page after page on the theme of becoming my own authority. Then, in 1993 I wrote several imaginary conversations with family (Appendix II). For a while I am

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<sup>2</sup> Random House Webster's College Dictionary says that this is a psychic disturbance characterized by depression followed by a manic urge to murder.



able to console myself with works like Jung's writing about the significance of the Assumption of Mary<sup>3</sup> as the retention of the feminine in Catholicism. At least she was not excluded like she is by those Protestants! Right. I read dozens of books by Catholic feminists such as *Woman: First Among the Faithful* (Durka, 1989) and everything I could find about the mystics like Julian of Norwich, A.D. 1413. Durka (1989) wrote:

Central to the revelations is the idea that God is infinitely more than a single image of God as Father. God is also our Mother who comforts us and in whom we can have absolute trust. Reflect on the image of God our Mother" (p. 25).

The words of Julian of Norwich became my mantra. *All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well* or the shorter version. *Everything is perfect for now.*

A debate in the *Western Catholic Reporter*<sup>4</sup> over the ordination of women threw the facts of the absence of the feminine in my face. I wrote and even mailed a letter to the editor (Appendix III). The next Sunday morning our parish priest leaned over to whisper, "I'm glad you wrote what I have long been thinking. I would have been excommunicated." Apparently, mine is not the only fear. Eventually, the process of unraveling inner beliefs reached personal crisis point. As Schneiders (1990) explains:

But once she has begun to see, begun the critical process of analysis, she will necessarily gradually be overwhelmed by the extent, the depth, and the violence of the institutional church's rejection and oppression of women. This precipitates the inward crisis which the feminist Catholic inevitably faces: a deep, abiding, emotionally draining anger that, depending on her personality, might run the gamut from towering rage to chronic depression. ... [It] should probably be called existential anger. It is not a temporary emotion but a state of being (p. 99).

Overwhelmingly angry that I have been duped? Yes. And yes, it feels like a state of being.

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<sup>3</sup>The dogma that Mary was taken body and soul into heaven. Promulgated November 1, 1950 and celebrated liturgically August 15 (McBrien, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> A weekly newspaper published in Edmonton, Alberta with Canadian Catholic circulation. It reports on political, social, economic and religious issues of interest to Catholics. It provides information and insight into Catholic doctrine and dogma.

I realized that work with dream interpretation was creating within me great doubt. I questioned even more. I hadn't yet read *The Colonization of Psychic Space* in which Oliver (2004) says, "Questioning is a type of revolt against restrictive prohibitions and can reauthorize the subject. ... Questioning is essential to bring the negativity of drive force into signification and transform it into creativity and meaning" (p. 91). I didn't check out the etymology of heresy which I now know in the original Greek meant to "go one's own way." It is doubt that authority fears. I began to question all authority but most particularly that of religion which, whether we are conscious of it or not, grounds our political, social and economic system in what Donald (2001) calls the "cultural distributive network." I began *Leaving My Father's House*<sup>5</sup> (Woodman, 1992). Dreams also brought me to question my pedagogy, the curriculum and the unconscious lies that I taught students as a teacher and teachers as a consultant. Reading cultural anthropologist and feminist Riane Eisler (1987), and using her conception of dominator and partnership models of culture, I created an analytical tool which my provincial social studies consultant colleagues and I used to analyze the Social Studies 30 curriculum. There was little if any disagreement among us—the program taught over 95% dominator concepts. For me, this was yet another revolutionary and shattering discovery—the social studies curriculum I had taught and was now consulting about — is hopelessly patriarchal. I was stunned. Ashamed. Feeling duped and dumb. How is it possible to be so dense? How could it be that I taught and consulted in education for 20 years before I figured out that,

As it stands, curriculum is the discursive representation of the dominant male experience as it is reflected back onto us not only in classroom experience and content, but in ways we encode representations of power and inequality concretely

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<sup>5</sup> In *Leaving My Father's House*, Marion Woodman, Jungian analyst, writes of her dreams and experiences while in the process of losing faith in the patriarchal structures of religion based on God the Father. She does not lose her faith in the Godhead.

in our surrounding architecture, in the ways we establish and maintain family forms, and in the ways we organize work and leisure activities. In this context, telling the stories of women's experience in the academy, speaking the realities we know, we have lived, whether we are students or teachers, requires that we transcend the subtleties of taboo and the limits of discretion (Lewis, 1993, p. 54).

If the curriculum is "untrue," then what else? Becoming aware of the impact of the patriarchal curriculum on students might spur the teacher educator to "come to terms with her own versions of truth and the designations she reserves for those accounts that contradict the current wisdom" (Grumet, 1988, p. 163).

I examined the relationship of hierarchy and patriarchy. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*: hierarchy - *hieros* meaning sacred, holy + *arkhes* meaning ruling, ruler. Hierarchy: division of angels, priestly or ecclesiastical rule. The essence of the rule of man in hierarchical, patriarchal culture then, is rule divinely ordained. Divine right. Ruling in place of the god. Officially, divine right of kings ended centuries ago. Right. What is the relationship of the Adamic myth to mind-set in the Alberta curriculum? What is the power of myth? Noddings (1989) insists that the myth is largely unconscious but still the ruling ethos. She suggests that the Adamic myth of woman as the evil temptress leading men into sin and ultimately into hell should be subject to intense critique by educators since the myth has played a major role in the subjugation of women and yet continues to go largely unnoticed and unremarked. She asks,

Would free and critical discussion of this damaging myth be a violation of our constitutional insistence on the separation of church and state? Consider what an affirmative answer to this question means. If critical discussion of the myth in schools would constitute such a violation, then we must acknowledge that the "myth" is still an accepted religious doctrine. If our answer is no, then clearly we must have other reasons for neglecting the topic ... (Noddings, 1989, p. 52).

How strong is the Adamic myth in Western cultural consciousness? School curricula?

How deeply enculturated are we?

Women have learned, been encultured with, the conceptual system of the patriarchy together with its codes of silence and not feeling (Oliver, 2004). To undermine that system, we need a new approach to learning that includes deep questions and looking at the personal and collective unconscious. Dreams and dream reading may help to undermine the privileged position of the intellect and the upperworld of ego and help us begin to attend to the underworld, the world of soul. I have learned that intention can undermine patriarchal beliefs.

In October 1991, I participated in a weekend workshop with Kate Harling, a Transpersonal Psychologist from San Francisco. On the first evening of the workshop we were asked to write down our intention. In naïveté, I wrote: *I intend to deepen the spiritual journey*. Shortly after the workshop, I had a horrific and terrifying nightmare. Nine months later, I was again wandering the halls of the Sisters of Providence School for Girls in Midnapore, Alberta. At age 16, I attended grade twelve there briefly from September 9 - 28, 1961. I spent the remainder of that year at home; I did not attend school. Thirty-one years later, I felt compelled by the nightmare/dream to return to the convent grounds and the grotto of the Blessed Mother where I had prayed the rosary and experienced the only bit of felt sense of peace during my short stay. The building had been abandoned to homeless men occupying dirty mattresses. I wandered through the grimy halls re-membering—smelling the fear and agony of being in that place. There framed on the wall, on a throne, a man with a long white beard—God the Father—stared out at me. The patriarchy is clearly tied to the hierarchy and the ruling, stern, bearded Father God. Over the next several months I came to understand my conscious denial of the influence of early childhood cultural beliefs about an angry, punishing white male god lodged in my personal

unconscious. I hesitatingly read parts of Mary Daly's book, *Beyond God the Father*. It was not a pleasure. It raised far too many questions about Catholic theology and faith. It touched too deeply on my identity. I buried the book as best I could.

My life has not followed the hero's story. Instead my story weaves. As Doll (2000) found in her work with women and commitment, spontaneity, weaving back and forth, leaving a trail which lacks "marks in stone" is more akin to woman stories. There is no "logical progression toward winning (the military model), perfection (the development model), or health (the medical model)" (Doll, 2000, p. 99). Steeped in patriarchal culture as I am, I have surely attempted to live out each of these models at various times in my life.

\* \* \*

Writing gave me a feeling of control over time and space,  
and a faith that I would recover (Laurel Richardson, 2001).

**November 11, 1993**

**The Feminine**

*In the dream I am in an unknown, misty, far away, place. Someone speaks of Eleusinian mysteries. I reach behind me to lift away three layers of something like cardboard. A banker (?) tells me I cannot lift these layers away, but I do anyway. "You can't stop me," I say. I awaken from the dream speaking to myself: "I am, for the very first time, pleased I am woman." I feel connected, warm, filled with a deep peaceful energy. Somewhere there is a sense of apples. I remember the apples the next morning when I am in Strathcona Christian Academy, in Connie Mycroft's office—there is a ceramic apple sitting on her desk. The dream returns with apples in it.*

Keeping a dream and personal response journal has been shaped by and shapes my waking life and this dissertation. The dreams form a pattern of un-knowing, un-covering and un-learning myself in continuous shape shifting. This dream has shaped my thinking and the life of my daughter who was 14 when the dream came.

I awaken from the dream and write. I look for the word "Eleusinian." Does it exist? I try several spellings and many books. I feel a deep mysterious, numinous, feminine energy in this word and in this dream. Why does the dream come after last night's hand washing ritual in the dream workshop? Together our dream group labored to bring forth

many meanings of the word “darkness.” How is darkness related to cultural beliefs about women? I find a feminist analysis of the myth of Demeter and Persephone as a basis for religious rites celebrated by women—the Eleusinian mysteries. Amazed. The dream is a wonderfully powerful image that stays with me. Eisler (1987) explains that the cultural shift from female to male divinities was accompanied by a serious shift in religious imagery from the life-giving, life-sustaining, and life-regenerating powers of the Goddess to crucifixion, martyrs, visions of hell, judgment, Salome dancing with John the Baptist’s head on a stick, and the justice of an avenging patriarchal God. The mother-daughter bond and the refusal to sacrifice the daughter are powerful stories for women.

Qualls-Corbett (1988), writing in *The Sacred Prostitute* noted that a circle of women celebrating some religious rite is reminiscent of the ancient cults of women who kept alive the mysteries of the feminine. The Eleusinian mysteries were probably the most important religious ceremonies organized by women especially before the time when men began to take them over by means of the cult of Dionysus. I believe that the Eleusinian dream originated in the collective unconscious<sup>6</sup> and is therefore far less patriarchal than material from my personal unconscious.

I continue to be deeply drawn to Jung’s notion of the archetypes in the collective unconscious. Hillman’s notions of pathology and death are rooted in Jung. Although he does not dismiss Freud, he does go far beyond repressed sexuality as the root cause of psychological issues. Freud’s theories are rooted in the personal unconscious and

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<sup>6</sup> Jung’s theory of the unconscious includes both the collective and the personal unconscious. The latter contains both recognizable material, which we have forgotten or repressed, and creative material of which we may not be aware. The collective unconscious has been compared to the common anatomy of the human body in that the content of the human psyche is common to all humankind. Jung called the figures and images emerging from the collective unconscious archetypes. He repeatedly explained that archetypes are not predetermined content. I reference these concepts in the various chapters of this dissertation as they apply to dream readings of Reta, Norah, Lois and Danielle.

emphasize repression of once-conscious material—repressed sexuality, desire and drive.

Freud did not accept Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. Jung's ideas emphasize irrationality, mythology, alchemy and the inner world. Jung (1974) tells us that

We have even forgotten that the psyche is by no means of our design, but is for the most part autonomous and unconscious. Consequently the unconscious induces a panic fear in civilized people, not least on account of the menacing analogy with insanity ... to let the unconscious go its own way and to experience it as a reality is something that exceeds the courage and capacity of the average European (pp. 125-126).

Perhaps it is Jung's notions of the collective unconscious that prevents many educators from accepting his theories. Education seems chained to rational, behaviorist, positivist, institutional thought control. I would like to think that more educators will begin to see the literalism of Freud who, for example, interpreted Oedipus dreams as literal rather than archetypal. Literalism kills the metaphorical and locks us into an anti-psyche, anti-soul space of stunted learning (Berry, 1982; Hillman, 1979). We live in a culture that worships literalism, objectivity and empiricism and has scant time or patience for mythology considering it to be primitive, uncivilized or "just" a story.

My Eleusinian dream is powerfully linked to Jung's theory of archetype. An archetype is a pattern formed in the psyche; it is impersonal and elaborated through the processes of the imagination. Archetypes, as explained by Hillman (1975b, 1979, 2004) govern our perspectives of the world including us as in the world. Archetypes are *not to be found*, as some might want, in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, or the organization of society. An archetypal perspective looks at the soul imaginatively and approaches psychology by means of the archetype. According to Rupprecht (1999), Jung insisted that "archetype named a process, a perspective, and not a content, although this flexibility was lost through the codifying, nominalizing tendencies of his followers" (p. 1).

She also tells us that feminist archetypal theory re-established Jung's emphasis on the fluid, dynamic nature of the archetype and rejected fixed, ahistorical, essentialist, and transcendentalist misinterpretations. Thus archetype could be viewed as the propensity to form and reform images in relation to certain kinds of repeated patterns of experience which may vary in individual cultures, authors and readers (Aguiar, 2001; Noddings, 1989).

The principles of archetypal psychology are invaluable in creating a theory of dream reading as a potential form of literary engagement. Archetypal theory is useful in studying imagination, gender and the construction of language. I am aware of how Jung's writings are sometimes both misogynist and essentialist and of the distinction between myth and archetype. Jung's work includes blatant misogyny in collapsing *anima* into *woman* using his own anima assumptions as evidence; he uses some blatant essentialist language in his writings about Eros and Logos. On balance, however, Rowland (2002) concludes that "Jung's underlying psychology remains coherent if such crude essentialism is discarded" (p. 41). That means I work on the assumptions that (a) gender is a fluid process, not a stable identity; (b) mind can never be a fixed gender; and (c) *Logos* denotes rationality, spirit, intellect; (d) *Eros* denotes connective qualities of feeling and relationship; and, (e) each exists as an archetypal principle of mental functioning "within a person of either bodily sex" (Rowland, 2002, pp. 41-45).

Archetypal theory is important to this interpretive work. Jung used myth to denote the narrative expression of archetypes, "described as patterns of psychic energy originating in the collective unconscious and finding their most common and most normal manifestation in dreams" (Rupprecht, 1997, p. 1). Rupprecht shows that James Hillman



“formulate (d) archetypal theory as a multidisciplinary field,” and located the archetypal firmly “in the processes of the imagination,” and “inextricably involved with *rhetoric*” (1997, p. 2 emphasis in the original). Feminist archetypal theory centres on the active character of the archetype, rejects “the transcendent archetype for the immanent image” (Rowland, 2002, p. 85) and “explores the synthesis of the universal and the particular, seeks to define the parameters of social construction of gender, and attempts to construct theories of language, of the imaginal, and of meaning that take gender into account” (Rupprecht, 1997, p. 6). Feminist archetypal theory insists that the psychic image is impacted by culture. There is no norm for woman, therefore no essential woman thus acknowledging “culturally contingent images” and producing differences of “race, sexuality, culture, history, health, age” (Rowland, 2002, p. 85). No archetype can *ever* be fully known; thus, there are no essential or ideal images.

Archetypes are ineffable and inimitable and carry a bounty of ideas, images and particularities of human kind. Archetypes exist everywhere and are unseeable through the usual five senses dimmed as they are by the loss of instinctive wildness (Estes, 1992). Hillman (1979) and Berry (1982) write about “seeing through” meaning. That is, we need to learn to see through an archetypal idea that is overvalued; we need to recognize that an idea may be overblown and put it into perspective. As Berry (1982) explains,

For if we take one archetypal perspective exclusively, we are caught by it. And the result of being caught by an archetype is that experience shrinks. We cannot see beyond the archetype’s confines, and we begin to interpret more and more of our experience only in its terms. We get single-minded. An archetypal idea per se is an overvalued idea that must be ‘seen through’ and placed in perspective (p. 40).

We know we are in the grip of an overdetermined archetype when we think we have found *the Truth* of the universe.

Julia Kristeva praised Jung's contribution to "feminist discourse on the maternal: recognition that the Catholic church's change of signification in the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary to include her human body represents a major shift in attitude toward female corporality" (Rupprecht, 1999, p. 6).

In the 1990's my fear of knowing and of losing my faith was lessened when I learned of Jung's inclusion of the Assumption in his work on archetypes. Today, while I would agree that the change may represent a shift in attitude toward female corporality and it helps that Catholicism has retained some vestige of female divinity; the fact remains, however, that Mary sits on the side altar. The neurotic focus on virginity, taken with full literality, still prevails. This then is the final say in the complete dedication of female power to the needs of a male divinity and its singularly male hierarchy. I have a deep reverence for the Blessed Mother; I have also come to realize that the literalization of the mythology and symbolism of virginity to physical virginity and purity is deeply problematic (Woodman, 1985). The Virgin Mary is also the Blessed Mother, that is, Virgin/Mother disembodied and desexualized. She is the good woman without the sin of sexuality while Eve and her female descendents remain the literalized evil woman who in wanting to know tempts and leads men to their death through sin and evil.

Why is this work titled, *The Apple and the Talking Snake*? This dissertation is an autobiographical, theoretical, literary anthropological excavation. It is also a personal spiritual exodus. Fundamental to its writing and to my life as a woman is the process of gaining the inner authority to question the bedrock upon which my subjectivity rests. For years I have been trying to excavate the archaic remnants of my understanding of the Adam

and Eve myth. In my dream journal I lay claim to the world of aesthetic experience in a conversation with imaginary female Wisdom figure, Sophia, my Talking Snake who says,

This thought form, this archetype of the Father—well—it near killed me. I have been rattling away in this dark, musty cave for over 35 millennia. Dig deeper, Pearl. I have shed my skin many times. I am transformative. I will help. I want to fully emerge into human consciousness (Personal Journal, Spring, 1998).

I believe that much of the strength of the patriarchal code lies in its endorsement by a god. Authority over woman is vested in man by this god. This “advantage” is difficult to overcome since fear of God inscribed in consciousness from birth will repress the impulse to revolt (Beauvoir, 1953). *The Second Sex* was written when I was eight years old. I read it in my twenties but it wasn’t until midlife that I came to question the authority of the Church. Scripture read from the pulpit and studied in my Baltimore Catechism did not provide for woman as the moral center. Prior to Vatican II in 1962 scriptural interpretation was the province of the clergy and Catholic laity were “instructed” in Bible understanding. Even though our culture believes it is secular, patriarchal consciousness rests on religious beliefs in a God made in man’s own image and woman as fatally flawed. The Judeo-Christian cosmology underlying the Western literary canon and Western civilization sees Eve as responsible for the downfall of mankind—a flawed moral center. Just before she dropped out of University, Norah was reading and discussing Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* who was forced to surrender her place as the moral center of the novel (Shields, 2002, p. 217). Editor Springer tells Reta, “I am talking about Roman being the moral center of this book” (Shields, 2002, p. 285). This is the mythology of Eve in the literary consciousness of the Western canon. I have come to believe that Eve’s “sin” was becoming conscious. The apple is symbolic of knowledge. Eve recognized her knowing. She was expelled from Paradise. Excommunicated priest,

Matthew Fox (1983) proposes that Eve's consciousness of the wonders of creation is the Original Blessing.

Fox (1983), Grumet (1988) and Noddings (1989) point out the birthright of silence imposed on women since that creation myth was literalized as the downfall of *mankind* and the fatal flaw of original sin. Noddings (1989) referring to the work of Mary Daly (1973) asks how many myths, religions and legends capture authentic female experience? How many of women's ancient sacred images have been demoted to the status of evil? Thus woman is in a double bind, "no longer the complete image of any recognized god and powerless as the subject of one who finds her inferior" (Noddings, 1989, p. 64). Boler (1999) is succinct. "The view of emotions as symptoms of the failings and moral evil of women remains a bedrock of Western Protestant cultures" (p. 41). It is little wonder then that I no longer find solace or sustenance through masculine religions. I have been accused of making my own religion. Of picking and choosing from a menu of spirituality. I agree. I am guilty. Further, I intend to continue to choose even though the choices sometimes bring deep fear of the outcomes. I recognize that making these choices is inherently "unfeminine" as defined in classical philosophy. This is the Hobson's choice that is no choice at all. To exercise choice, to be active, to be the causal agent in your own life is culturally conditioned as unfeminine. To think like a woman is to not think at all. This is my dilemma. I am working to become more and more conscious of the garden of Eden and I hear a Talking Snake.

I am always surprised when I see that my dream of November 1993 is 15 years old! Research into dream experiences claims that some numinous dreams, that is, dreams that seem to be archetypal, primordial, universal and eternal, stay clearly etched in our body-

mind for a lifetime (Chetwynd, 1986; Palmer, 1997). It was by groping through the language of my dreams that I came to know and better understand my self and my possible and potential woman place in the world. A beginning understanding of the world of dreams as well as writing and facilitating workshops enabled me to begin to draw on feminine forms of narrative rather than relying fully on the language of the colonizer, the patriarchy, in which I live. For me, the language of dreams is a new symbolic language and I continually learn from many sources. Dreams are revolutionary; they do not portray the accepted symbolic order of the patriarchal ego. Interpreting dreams has helped me to see relationship and meaning-making through symbols. My experiences and interpretation of dream symbols leads me to considering ideas in multiple ways. Language determines our social relationships, how we think, how we understand our identity and identifications. Dream interpretation through symbols shows clearly that meaning is not just in the structure of language, not only in conversation or representation. We know and understand only very limited meaning since much meaning is deferred, sublimated and hidden in the personal and collective unconscious. Dreams emerge from the unconscious arriving uncensored by the super ego that jealously guards the acceptance of social convention. We must avoid censoring the dream in our writing and our working with it since we are not always able to perceive what stories the images may be telling. Dreams call me to seek to understand and make meaning from seemingly disparate and unfamiliar images, words and symbols. Dream work is not quick and easy; it may result in deep insight which

emerges from the hard work of interpreting one's relations with people, to objects people have made (including narratives that describe and explain experience), and to the more-than-human world. Although conditions for the production of insight can be created, deep insight is usually surprising, occurring unexpectedly, emerging from curious places" (Sumara, 2002a, p. 5).

I believe that the women's revolution will be won by the imagination. I argue that the disruption of patriarchy requires no less than the "return of the repressed feminine aspects of language" through the feminist discourses of dream reading, dreams, and "mysticism, magic, poetry and art" (Weedon, 1997, p. 69). I believe dream reading as interpretive practice is supported by Sumara's premise that "it is possible to create conditions for the expansion of imaginative thought. ... literary interpretation practices can transform imaginative occasions into productive insights" (2002a, p. 5). In this dissertation I demonstrate that dream reading is one such "possible condition."

## 2.

### Ceaseless Seeking and Interpretation: Knowing and Unknowing

Ideas spring from a source that is not contained within one man's personal life.

We do not create them; they create us.

C. G. Jung (1933), *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

#### **November 4, 1992**

*Many dreams seemingly unconnected.*

##### **Part I**

*I tell my director at Alberta Education that I have been offered a job trade with a jurisdiction. He comes to see me later asking for details. I become very worried that the jurisdiction really won't offer a certain job and wish I hadn't told him until all the details were arranged.*

##### **Part II**

*I am at a large gathering of people. Everyone is involved in various activities. I go to the baseball diamond to join a group but none of the people I wanted to join are there. I am disappointed and do not join in with the unknown group. I wonder where my friends are.*

##### **Part III**

*I am with some people who are younger than I am, or so it seems. One male person agrees/asks to be changed. I can't quite figure this all out, but we burn him up, and somehow we have a large amount of stuff — like wet clay or mud — in our farmyard wheelbarrow. We wheel it across bare open ground at the front of our farmhouse. There is no grass; it is an open area that we used to rototill in the first years we lived here. We lift the wheelbarrow up by the handles from the back, and the wet mass of clay-like material—the remains of our friend — slides out onto the ground. Someone suggests we need a marker. We build a sort of monument and place it at one end of the mass of material. The marker seems life-like — like a person sitting on a high one-legged stool. The “thing” seemingly adjusts itself and settles onto the stool — one leg firmly on the ground. I can see the muscles in the leg and buttocks firing up — living muscle. I am now beginning to wonder if the cremation is legal. Acceptable? Moral? In accordance with Catholic principles? I wonder how we will explain our friend's cremation to his parents. I am troubled by the dream.*

Each chapter in this dissertation begins with a dream taken directly from my dream journal. I hesitate to provide a dream reading in the belief that the power of the reader's imagination is thwarted through my reading. However, I will say that for me this is a transformative dream representing the goal of this dissertation: to show the power of dream reading in the transformation of consciousness. The dream occurred several weeks after I participated in a workshop on the power of the unconscious.

Cremation was actually forbidden in the Catholic Church in the modern period because of its association with so-called pagan practices (McBrien, 1995). Cremation

may symbolize the alchemical *putrefactio* of my youthful beliefs and perceptions about Catholicism. Notice, I did not say that these beliefs are dead but rather transformed. Since we cremate a male person in the dream, perhaps these beliefs are related to the masculinized rules of the Church. Changes in belief are necessary for personal transformation and new identifications. This dream is like a postcard from the unconscious. Its message is short and to the point. I am unsettled by the dream. I am very afraid that changing my beliefs may result in loss of faith, loss of family and even loss of heaven. I tell no one about the dream. I am silent. I write it down in my private journal. The psyche continues its transformative work. Sixteen years later, the dream still holds deep meaning for me.

In this chapter I present the research design and methodology for this study. How can I as researcher best shift my understanding from the surface to the root of women's silence?<sup>7</sup> What research design will best explore the creation of a consciousness of fear of knowing? When I make a cut through the trunk of a living tree, whether at particular angles or perhaps horizontally, I lay bare the growth rings emanating from the core. I can start to read beneath the bark into the life story of the tree through those rings. A research methodology also must provide ways to see beneath the bark, to uncover the rings of life that reside in the conscious memory as well as in the personal and collective unconscious. It will require a different approach to explore the roots from which the tree emerges. The beautiful labyrinthine foliage of the tree indicates the entanglement of various approaches. The principle research method I chose is literary anthropology, an organic methodology with plenty of flexibility to explore my fear of knowing through a variety of perspectives.

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<sup>7</sup> When I say women, I am very aware that there is no universal, uniform, homogenous, typical woman. I use the plural, women, as a grammatical construction.



Why choose literary anthropology? When I was introduced to the process, I discovered a practice appreciably familiar although I had never heard the term. Having experienced momentous, major changes in my midlife years, and as a lone researcher, I was looking for a research method to explore my experiences within theoretical research and literary engagement. I had been “doing” hermeneutics and informal literary anthropology in my dream journals and texts since 1988. I read quite a lot about hermeneutics while working to understand my midlife experiences with dichotomous interpretations of biblical texts and Sunday morning Catholicism. I became aware of biblical hermeneutics. Often it seemed I was reading a different language, a different scripture than those around me, and yet it was the very same Book. I discovered that in the early Church, not only were there different translations of the Bible, there were also many interpretive decisions made about the acceptance of particular canonical works. Therefore, the relationship between hermeneutics and literary anthropology explained by Sumara (2002) felt right to me. I like the strong links between Jungian concepts, archetypal psychology, dreams, dream interpretation, religion, and mythology. I consider the work of anthropologist Riane Eisler (1987) to have been seminal in my deepening feminist understanding. There is room for the incorporation of autobiography and biography into literary anthropology as well since life events contribute not only to my personal insight and transformation but to the contemporary, social and cultural world as well (Sumara, 2002).

My research was organized using a literary anthropological approach, as outlined in Sumara (2002a) in which he explains the theoretical base of the method arising from the work of Rosenblatt (1938; 1978), Iser (1978), Dewey (1916), and Lewis (2000) among

others. This methodology is based on the premise that knowledge is both interpreted and produced in the nexus of reader and text. According to reader-response theory, these literary engagements are sites of aesthetic pleasure, as well as both creative and critical insight. Reader-response is a series of nested relationships among cultural associations and biological and ecological systems. The reader brings to the text a multiplicity of narrative responses to various situations within which there are potential similarities and differences with past, present and potential future experiences.

In agreement with Daly (1974), Stone (1976), Reis (1995) and many others, Boler suggests the need to understand the force of patriarchal interpretation of myth working against feminism, and to challenge “people’s perceptions of the world through new descriptions of reality” (1999, p. 99). I found that exploring literary fiction and personal dreams is an avenue through which to identify shifting self-knowledge amid the cremation of old beliefs—creating new myths subversive to the Symbolic Order. Narrating and re-creating the experience of reader-response to *Unless* provides insight into my self and the struggle for change and transformation. This research takes a position against resistance that is always changing in order to address the shifting conditions and situations that are its ground (Lather, 1991). Lather’s definition of resistance is totally different from its usual definition as an act of challenge against the dominator. Rather, resistance here is linked to fear—fear of turning our entire world inside out. Silhol (1999) explains *theory as resistance* as placing a wall between my emotions and whatever I am reading. Such a screen enables me to project my own unconscious onto the text thereby avoiding my emotional issues. Thus, Silhol (1999) concludes that if literature is the object of serious research, psychoanalytic theory must form part of the research. Silhol (1999) explains that

text and language both carry and conceal unconscious fantasies. Both language and literature have to rely on an illusion of reality. When we think about it, we know that the word is not the thing. In order to function, language must make us believe that the word is the thing. Silhol (1999) calls this the realistic illusion. “When I read, I am close to a state of hallucination” (p. 4).

Britzman (2000) following William James says, “Ponder your own obstacles to thought.” How do these obstacles structure my teaching and learning? How often do I fail to see my own “external and insensible point of view” (p. 6)? Britzman (2000) also refers to Anna Freud’s admonishment against “a certain blindness toward and defense against exploring the vulnerabilities of interior life” (p. 6). My desire to investigate women’s fear of knowing emerges from personal experience with resistance to the chaos and fear of the abyss of uncertainty, disintegration, sorting, and rebuilding. It is my own relentless drive to understand and to have clarity that propels me to continue this work.

This dissertation is a limit case. Following the description of limit case offered by Salvio (2007), it presents a useful way to raise “subtle questions about education that resist easy classification” (p. 6). A limit case provokes the unspoken and repressed. It tests the limits of the space that religion, mythology, depression, healing, and personal night dreams take up in education. Using the figure of Anne Sexton, addict, suicide, teacher, demon, artist, and mother, Salvio (2007) questions the normative standard of the “good teacher” as well as the “fiction and fantasies that insidiously inform education, neither of which tell the whole story about femininity” (p. 6). Through the use of autobiographical imagery and “intolerable images” such as The Burning Muslim Woman from *Unless*, I try to “redefine the limited tastes that represent ‘rationality’ and emotional reliability in our classrooms”

(Salvio, 2007, p. 49). Hillman (1989) explains that capitalization personifies the image, which offers avenues of emotion and love and the movement from “nominalism to imagination, from head to heart” (p. 46). Britzman (1998) writes of the crisis of continuity and becoming, the need to challenge the problem of thinkability, and “a fear of ideas, and a fear of questioning knowledge” (p. 9). Consider the content of personal dreams. Have they ever included mud, shit, illicit sex, incest, grotesque figures, torturers, monsters, and murderers? I want to move out of the space of dreams structured by educated rationality. I want to make the case for reading fiction as dream.

I first read *Unless* in one sitting for a Consciousness, Curriculum and Literary Experience class with Dr. Dennis Sumara in the fall of 2004. I felt as though Reta Winters were sometimes reading me. While writing a class paper about *Unless*, I engaged in self-dialogue asking, “What’s the real question here?” Playing with a host of words and phrases gleaned from Megan Boler’s (1999) work, the research question emerged first as “What is Reta afraid to know?” and then, “What am I most afraid to know?” The processes of self-writing and self-dialogue enable intuitive ideas to emerge; the key for me is to honor these ideas rather than to dismiss them as nonsense. I attempt to “catch” the ideas by trying to work with these vague, often formless insights which can lead to new connections and thus to new knowledge.

*Unless* started to become a commonplace book, an archive of my responses, jottings, questions, wonderings, and relationships to dreams recorded in my journals over many years. During that first reading I was immediately drawn to Reta and her midlife ponderings entangled with writing *Thyme in Bloom*, her emerging outward feminist resistance, and her daughter Norah’s strange behavior. As I read, I was swamped with

memories of depression and my own deepening feminist emergence. My identifications with the main female characters in *Unless*—Reta, Danielle, Norah and Lois—became what Sumara calls “a potential site for the production of useful knowledge” (2002a, p. 28). I have no clue where the idea came from that I should interpret Reta’s world as if it were a dream. I was required to create and read a five-page paper juxtaposing an idea from *Unless* with Merlin Donald’s writing on consciousness. I wrote, “The space of doubt: A feminist dream reading of Reta Winters.” A theory started to emerge.

In order to deeply engage in the research process, I began to consciously link Reta’s experiences to my own midlife work. Following Sumara (2002), I began to read the theoretical work in consciousness, feminism, teacher education and curriculum, spirituality and more dream theory but now with *Unless* in mind. I returned to *Unless* many times filling the available white space with links to whatever life event or theoretical work that came to mind. I tried to be as open, sensitive, exploratory and reflective as possible in order to allow the images in *Unless* to speak directly to me. As I worked I continually pulled ideas and possibilities back and forth among my dream journals, *Unless*, and theoretical reading. Also, book notes, class assignments, conversations with friends, were all filed into binders for future reference. I made an annotated table of contents for each binder. My journals follow a similar procedure. Each dream is honored with a date and a title and is numbered for tracking purposes. Typical of accepted dream writing practice, I record the dream in first person, present tense. Around each dream is usually some brief context of happenings in my life and ideas from books I am reading. The first dream I recorded is found in Appendix IV.

Over time, like a commonplace book, I add context, new and different interpretations and linked ideas from books, films, movies and conversations. My dream journals have become a place of significant meaning and a living embodiment of becoming, a record of shifting identity. This writing is a healing process. The writing enables me to struggle through the crisis of creating new knowledge. The journals remind me where and who I was, where and who I might be now, and where I think I might be going and becoming. All the dreams are housed electronically and I am able to search for symbols, mythology, and possible links within the documents. I began this electronic tracking process after a strange seemingly auditory experience in which a “voice” told me plainly and when I was hesitant, forcefully, “Write dreams along the way.” No. I am not crazy. That became the title for the subsequent dream workshops I lead, workshops created from within the text of my journals.

Why choose fiction as data? Why do literary anthropology? Perhaps it is to be present to my self. In an interview with Richard van Oort, Iser explains that we know that fiction is fantasy, make-believe; but we do not discard it as we might expect if we follow the Cartesian view (Oort, Fall 1997 / Winter 1998). We *want* to investigate human behavior. We are not satisfied with the experience of not-knowing and therefore we fictionalize traumas including events like birth and death, which we may experience without *knowing* the experience. Iser makes clear that literature, having been around for 2500 years, must surely satisfy some human need. Literature brings experiences beyond the ordinary, outside of our experience, into our lives (Lodge, 2002; Kerby, 1991; Donald, 2001; Luce-Kapler, 2004; and Sumara, Luce-Kapler, & Iftody, 2008). We read *as if* ... meaning that the fictional text overleaps reality and “insists on its *as if* structure or fictional

separation from that reality. In the process it creates something new, that is, it has the structure of an event. Humanity invents/discovered itself when it learns to represent itself” (Oort, Fall 1997 / Winter 1998, p. 9). If we accept that fiction is humanity’s way of inventing and discovering itself, perhaps *Unless* can help me to uncover the creation and experience of fear of knowing.

I have now read *Unless* several times, each time unearthing deeper layers and exposing more growth rings. Subsequent response includes dream reading processes, together with journal response, free drawing, amplification, analogy, word association, meditation, active imagination, guided imagery, and centering prayer, as well as seeking many sources of potential cultural, historical, mythological links to *Unless*. I documented my personal engagement with *Unless*.

Sumara (2002) has identified the emerging relationship between anthropological inquiry and literary studies. Kerby (1991) contends that language is more than a human tool used to discover life, that is, truth, meaning and reality. Language is constitutive of an enduring relationship with the world. More than that, “for poststructuralist theory, the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness is *language*” (Weedon, 1997, p. 21 emphasis in the original). Through language we characterize and resist our actual and alternative forms of institutions and their possible social and political impacts. The self is largely a linguistic construct produced by the language world into which we are born. We give our lives meaning through emplotment, telling or having our stories told, very much like a literary character; therefore, it makes sense to use literary anthropology as a process to understand women’s fear of knowing.

The process of the triangular juxtaposition of insights from theoretical text, *Unless* and autobiography led to new insights about my identity, my personal history and experiences both remembered and imaginary. There are major links between this research and my maiden and mother years. The research questions arise directly out of my own experience of fear even when I didn't recognize the source of that fear. Like Reinhartz (1992), I believe that personal experience is more than an asset to my research; it is a necessity and a source of legitimacy. Reading back through the many journals I kept since one lone diary entry in 1986 and my desperate journaling beginning in 1988, I found my work had a close proximity to literary anthropology. It seemed natural to choose literary anthropology methodology to develop some understanding of the source of silence and fear in women's lives.

Literary anthropology, through personal reader-response, becomes autobiographical, since meaning resides in the experience of the reader of that text. Autobiography enables me to use some of the major concepts of autobiographical theory and practice including *currere*, portraits of self and experience, myth, dreams, and the imagination, as well as the middle passage (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2004, pp 515 – 566). Feminist autobiography enables women to reclaim the self, to repudiate our deeply patriarchal culture and hopefully to support the transformation of the root structures of patriarchy. Pinar et al (2004) provide a history, rationale, theory, and practice of feminist autobiography emerging from the work of researchers such as Mary Aswell Doll (1995; 2000) (dreams, myth and imagination), Madeleine Grumet (1988) (autobiography and feminism), and Debra Britzman (2003) (autobiography and teacher education). These



researchers speak to the significance of understanding curriculum as autobiographical and biographical text.

According to Sumara (2002), the interpretative practices associated with reader/text relations, named “literary anthropology” by Wolfgang Iser (1993), influence the reader’s identity. Using *Unless* as research data, I find my identification with the ordinariness of Reta is a critique of patriarchal principles of distancing, neutrality and objectivity. Buried in my conversations with Reta are women’s fears of knowing. There are drawbacks to this identification. Even as I wrote in early dream journals, I struggled with the inclusion of personal data even though that inclusion is my own choice. I am aware of an audience, a specter editor censoring wherever and whenever I allow him that right. If I allow myself to conjure a critical audience, I temper the textual, textile, textured to more controlled, rational, acceptable text. Fears of being thought opportunistic or exhibitionist, fear of revealing too much of my own private personal struggle, fear of ridicule, scorn. Just fear. Fear has often kept me silent. Human consciousness seemingly has “screens” in place which prevent a total collapse of the individual through merging with the whole. The problem is that we create exhaustively elaborate screens through enculturation in our efforts to protect ourselves. Often I deliberately set certain people aside where they can’t “hear me” if they come into consciousness as I write. I am working on killing Woolf’s *Angel in the House*. There is a vast amount of feminist literature such as Richardson (2001), Atwell-Vasey (1998), Belenky (1986), Boler (1999), and Salvio (1999, 2007) that supports my decision to include personal experiences as a valuable asset to research. As Atwell-Vasey (1998) argues, impersonality, objectivity, separation, the control of

emotion, of body, and of subjectivity is the hallmark of masculine identity and the exile of the maternal. I want to be part of the return of the feminine.

The ideas emerging from the process of literary anthropology intertwine like vines from many directions. The actual concrete process I used includes extensive reading and note taking, annotations, re-reading, re-marking, and responding to the text as artifact thus creating *Unless* as commonplace book. Further, I juxtaposed these ideas with memories and dreams recorded in my dream journals and notes from non-fiction works related to the specific research concern (Sumara, 2002). The world we find in the commonplace book is the world we create through what Grumet (1988) called *Bodyreading*. According to Grumet, the etymology of read, *reid*, links both the cow stomach and the human stomach. She uses the four stomachs of the cud-chewing, ruminating cow, and the occult reading of entrails as metaphors for reading. In reading, we bring forth a world from within—a world which emerges from our experiences, mediated through our six senses including gut reactions (Capra, 1996). The text points to myriad possibilities, while the reader brings “intentions, assumptions, and positions” and witnesses—friends, enemies, parents, and teachers (Grumet, 1988).

I rely heavily on the work of Sumara (2001; 2000; 2002a), following the work of W. Iser (1978; 1989; 1993). Sumara’s work is inspired by feminist studies, specifically poststructural feminist theory, which includes the analysis of how we internalize patriarchal ideologies (architecture/archaeology) and how we can see aspects of resistance to subjectification (genealogy) (Boler, 1999). I examine women’s fear of knowing with the understanding that the emotion of fear is not individual, nor biological, nor privately experienced. Fear is an aspect of consciousness and “reflect[s] linguistically-embedded

cultural values and rules, and is, thus, a site of power and resistance” (Boler, 1999, p. 6). In order to begin to grasp an understanding of women’s fear of knowing, I read extensively in several theoretical areas.

Much of the writing about consciousness and literary interpretation focuses on how engagement with cultural forms in their many iterations—novel, poetry, drama, art—serves to expand and deepen our conscious awareness and “broaden the contours of our experience” (Richardson, 2001, p. 19). Stories, say Donald (2001), Lodge (2002) and Kerby (1991), dominate our understanding of acceptable emotion, as well as ways of thinking, acting and feeling. According to Bolton, our myths show us how to classify and order our society. These authors also tell us that language is created with each re-telling, and the myth presents ways of coping with “the complexity of human relationships, and strong and often scary psychological worlds” (Bolton, 2006, p. 205). In addition, Donald (2001) argues that myth influences every aspect of societal life and that our myths continue to define us. C. G. Jung devoted much of his life and practice to the study of myth and alchemy. Hillman (2004) describes how reliance on mythic language “locates psychology in the cultural imagination,” and archetypal psychology opens us to the “questions of life,” where we may “see our ordinary lives embedded in and ennobled by the dramatic and world-creative life of mythical figures” (p. 31). Much of classical mythology has been unearthed and written about through a patriarchal lens. However, feminist writers, anthropologists and archeologists have been studying, revisioning, and reinterpreting archival data, historical digs, myths, stories and dreams that tell a different story of the demise of the Goddess-based religions (Aguiar, 2001; Anderson & Zinsser, 1988a; Bolen,

1984; Daly, 1973; Downing, 1992; Estes, 1992; Gimbuas, 1982). It is this mythology to which I turn in dream work wherever possible.

I believe that dream work may provide the ultimate literary engagement as a life fiction. The disorderly and apparently random narrative of dreams offers insight into our life's pre-story, that is, before we have created the story as a sequence of events. Kerby suggests that disorderly, random narrative "offers a semblance of the texture of women's ordinary lives rather than heroic struggles of winners against man, himself or nature" (1991, p. 35). The sensory image-based nature of dreams may provide a considerably wider possibility than written discourse for the expression and construction of knowledge. Literary engagement enables the creation of "new subjects and new subjectivities," and "other research in literary engagement has shown that readers are not able to separate neatly their identifications with literary characters from their other remembered and lived experiences" (Sumara, Davis, & Iftody, 2006a, p.60). Lodge (2002), for example, shows that the reader experiences the experiences of the character in the novel, thus opening the possibility for changes in consciousness if the opportunity for deep learning is available. Sumara et al (2006) conclude that literary experiences can occasion cultural transformation if purposeful attention is focused on opportunities to represent and analyze literary fiction in an atmosphere of trust and intellectual safety.

Many philosophers have argued that we can know the world only as a construction of our consciousness (Donald, 2001; Lodge, 1991; Edelman 2004). We could assume that dreams "offer something like a complementary definition of the world, one (among other things) that rescues the 'real' world from certain limitations of linear and spatial probability" (States, 1993, p. 46). According to Jung, dreams and inner sensations bring

material up from the unconscious to move us to individuation. Dream images belong to the “normal contents of the psyche and may be regarded as a resultant of unconscious processes obtruding on consciousness” (Campbell, 1971, p. 29). Jung focused on the personal and collective unconscious. He studied dreams, alchemy and mysticism and worked with images through active imagination and amplification. According to Hillman (1979), Jungian dream interpretation most often relates to the needs of the ego as Jung’s theories are developed around the notion of individuation and constant growth toward wholeness. Hillman acknowledges that his work is rooted in Jung but disagrees that the goal of dreams is individuation. Hillman prefers aesthetics and imagination with a focus on letting the dream interpret us, thus giving imagination priority over egoic understandings and applications which may tend to lean toward literalism. As others like Mary Aswell Doll (1995) have argued, perhaps dreams, fictive dream images, imagination, and myth can provide an alternative to the constant push to rational literalization.

It seems that myth is always present even though it never literally happened. Hermeneutic inquiry is connected to the mythical Greek god, Hermes, the bringer of dreams to mortals. It is well known that Hermes is the translator and messenger from the gods to humans. He is an interpreter who bridges the boundaries with strangers and provides us with the art of interpreting hidden meaning. Another aspect of Hermes is trickery and thievery, reminding me as researcher that individual response to text is impossible to separate from the interpersonal, intertextual experience of reading, and thus I try to engage in processes that enable deep space for investigation into the emerging ideas. I seek to remember that the easy and comfortable interpretation is no interpretation at all but may rather be the trickery employed by my own superego to resist knowing. I try to be

mindful of any screens of theory I might be placing between my emotions and my reading of *Unless*. I sought to recognize how much of myself is flowing into the text and at the same time is concealed by my unconscious desire to remain unaware (Silhol, 1999). Hermeneutics is the practice of drawing meaning from text through our bodies, thus bringing us home to our experiences (Grumet, 1988; Smith, 1991; Sumara, 2002). I recognize that sometimes my writing falls into abstractions much akin to silencing. I must then reflect on my fear of knowing. What is it that I am refusing to think or to say? I believe that through continual interpretation the abstract will give way to lived experience.

Beginning with a close reading of *Unless* and using what I have chosen to call dream reading, I try to notice the links between individual dream experiences and how the novel as a literary form, together with my imaginary identifications with the characters, produces experiences of personal identity. Dream reading is most surely subjective, and dream interpretation has been resisted as lacking in objectivity. Paradoxically, it is this resistance that lures me toward using dream interpretation theory as a poststructuralist reading of personal and fictive characters' experiences and stories in learning about and transforming women's fear of knowing.

In the first iteration of a University paper in 1998, *The Apple and the Talking Snake*, I chose the appellation Crone. Now, I find that radical feminism attempts to redeem femaleness by subversion. That is, conventional language and rationality are turned upside down to "produce new meanings and new subject positions" (Weedon, 1997, p. 128). Both Weedon (1997) and Ratcliffe (1996) outline the many ways in which Mary Daly (1973, 1978) subversively reinvests images of femaleness in patriarchal culture. One of these ways is to reinvent abusive patriarchal language such as crone, hag, and spinster in positive

ways. I feel the privilege of using the title Crone (the third aspect of the ancient Triple Goddess: Maiden/Mother/Crone) and in choosing dream reading as methodology. What I mean by this is that I no longer feel the irresistible compulsion to conform to the patriarchal culture's valuation of female subjectivity. I consciously refuse to accept the devaluation of aging women. I recognize that for too many years I answered the call to objectivity, reason, and validity. I no longer seek to perform. I seek rather to disrupt. I seek to honor rather than disparage the disruptive aspect of myself. For Britzman (2003) the narratives we ascribe to configure our reflections and practices. Therefore, I am taking up the narrative of the Crone.

It is important to remember that in dream reading we are looking for possibilities, cracks, a way in and under the everyday ego. Dream reading is deconstruction in the Derridaen sense:

The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things—texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and sort you need—do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. What is really going on in things, what is really happening, is always to come. Every time you try to stabilize the meaning of a thing, to fix it in its missionary position, the thing itself, if there is anything at all to it, slips away (Wood & Bernasconi 1988, p. 31).

Dream reading asks questions: How is the image *coupled to* and *uncoupled from* the cultural, political, social, historical and archaic? What are the connotations, inflections, emotional and affective values attached, lurking behind or underneath the dream images? What were the conditions that gave rise to the word, image, or the dream itself? Dream reading is hermeneutic interpretation and I work to adhere to hermeneutic principles as outlined by Bulkeley (1994, pp. 111 - 118). He elucidates these principles as dream interpretation being like the experience of art, like play, like interpretation in human

sciences, and like dialogue. The ultimate purpose of dream reading is to open new understandings, new questions, and deeper awareness. Dream reading is a cognitive process through which a dream reader continually brings forth new worlds, not *the* world. Through interpretive processes, the dream reader may become aware of new phenomena and notice that perceptions are mostly habituated by the cultural context in which we are socialized. As well, emotions play a major role in dream work. It is important to record the emotional tone in a dream. I try to notice how I feel upon awakening from a dream. Am I angry, fearful, joyful or sad in the dream? What does the dream emotion tell me about the dream message? Emotions are a significant part of the dream just as “emotions are an integral part of [the cognitive] domain. In fact, recent research strongly indicates that there is an emotional coloring to every cognitive act” (Capra, 1996, p. 270). He concludes, as do dream researchers, that, “Human decisions are never completely rational but are always colored by emotions, and human thought is always embedded in the bodily sensations and processes that contribute to the full spectrum of cognition” (Capra, 1996, p. 275). Dream reading knows and understands

that peptides are the biochemical manifestation of emotions. ... the limbic system turns out to be highly enriched with peptides ... the entire intestine is lined with peptide receptors. This is why we have “gut feelings.” We literally feel our emotions in our gut (Capra, 1996, p. 284).

Dream reading enables interpretive knowing, *phronesis*. It could assist in understanding the linguistic hegemony enforcing core patriarchal values. Personal dream work has led me to know the existence of deep structures inside me—beliefs, experiences and feelings that shape and have shaped my subjectivities. Like Grumet (1988), I am not practicing psychoanalysis but rather using some psychoanalytic concepts including, for example, the relations of knowledge, power, identity, gender, language, and patriarchy in



this work. In subsequent chapters of this dissertation, I “read” *Unless* as a dream to generate complex conversation to evoke the unconscious. This reading also narrates the problem of uncertainty in women’s experience. I believe the dream readings are sufficiently open, contain sufficient gaps and indeterminacies through which the reader may “become more explicitly involved in an interpretive collaboration with the author” (Sumara, 2002a, p. 101).

This narrative of *Unless* is not a book review nor an examination. Rather it is a narrative of interpretation; it shows the novelist as artist. Shields has “escaped over the wall to the borderlands and made it to where it is legitimate to reveal the ordinary as strange and in need of some explanation” (Grumet, 1988, pp. 77 – 86). *Unless* is not the repressed, the useful, the practical or the functional which serves agendas of patriarchal order and control. *Unless* is the product of an aesthetic practice which takes readers to a different place, a different room and a different identity. *Unless* shows the “complex and complicit ways language functions to both produce and interrupt normative conceptions of female subjectivity.... [and] raises difficult and important questions for educators: Where is ‘home’ for women, and what is a ‘safe’ space? ... What is female subjectivity” (Sumara & Upitis, 2004 Spring, p. ix)?

*Unless* requires “readers to engage in readerly identifications which, as Roland Barthes (1977) has suggested, requires a kind of cultural writing: Who does the text ask the reader to be?” Shields asks the reader to “bear witness” and to “engage in the ethical practice of interpreting what this knowing might mean to one’s thinking and acting” (Sumara and Upitis, Spring 2004, p. ix). A dream reading of *Unless* opens other spaces of doubt. The process of literary engagement must be self-questioning, tentative in all its

possibilities, open to the possibilities of other perspectives, and relentless in its understanding of incompleteness, that is, endless interpretation, or dialectical reflexivity.

The writer of a reflexive text, ... acknowledges her/his role as the subjective presenter of a *plural* text, which is frankly constituted as a still non-unified assemblage of disparate realities. 'The author' is not so much 'dead' (cf. Barthes, 1977) as 're-born' in the more modest role of master of ceremonies, presiding uncertainly over a plurality of perspectives (Winter, 2002, p. 151 emphasis in the original).

Literary anthropological research provides a multiplicity of narrative response to various situations within which the reader may see potential similarities with other past and present situations. For example, feminist research, by definition, must question patriarchal norms and the invisible assumptions fixed in the bedrock of our culture. Feminist research must produce new, vaguely familiar yet unknown forms interrupting the accepted methods of textual production. Through the process of literary anthropology I search for vestiges of feminine consciousness hidden within the personal and collective unconscious and erupting as I read and re-read *Unless*. I attempt to tap into the historical and mythological vestiges of archaic myths. According to Donald (2001), as a result of the long evolutionary history of humankind, the mind is loaded with "footprints,"—*vestigium*, vestiges of the past—and these narratives and deep images act as seed for the unconscious.

Everything I write is "organized by unconscious desire" which cannot be observed. "What we have learned from Freud and a few others is that the search for truth must first be divested of its own armor: I think I want to know while in fact all I desire is not to know" (Silhol, 1999, p. 4). The good news is that this unconscious subject leaves traces when it speaks or writes and it is these traces that may lead me to new knowledge. Donald (2001) speaks of vestigial traces. The desire for unawareness sets the trap for me to be misled into thinking that I *know* the meaning of a passage in a novel or a dream. Sumara (2002)

reports research in the science of perception that shows that “in order for humans to be able to perceive, processes of discarding must be learned” (p. 138). It’s like my stone serpent, Sophia, in my sunroom. Some people see her; others don’t. I have theorized that those who see and ask about her, and then listen to my explanations, are open to new ideas. Those who don’t see may be those who have concretised fundamentalist thought positions. We see what we expect to see. Apparently, we learn to see and also not to see. If we “saw” everything in our environment, our sensory preceptors would be overwhelmed. Learning requires that we interrupt, that we notice the strange, the unfamiliar, the weird, and the bizarre. I must seriously consider what the role of perception and the role of desire for unawareness or fear of knowing play in my interpretations.

Hillman speaks to the notion of an active response to the dream images rather than an interpretation of the image (1989, pp. 74 - 76). He claims that the image “affords a place to watch your soul, precisely what it is doing” (1989, p. 75). Hillman says that the psyche is conscious; it is the reader/observer who is unconscious. Therefore, in response, we look to ask “Where am I in the image? Where’s my imagination?”

This narrative inquiry into women’s fear of knowing is witness only to the fact of my responses. Those responses will arise together with my particular assumptions. As I write I try to identify my assumptions and also to show clearly the ground on which I stand. That being said, interpretative response is a messy, unpredictable and ceaseless pondering. It is in the gaps and spaces that there is potential for deep engagement with the possibilities opened up by the text. My reader-response can never fully be reproduced nor represented; it always exceeds its representation. “Most of what we know, it seems, can’t be explained, isn’t even available to perception. And, even when what is experienced finds its way to

consciousness; it can't always be represented, much less translated" (Sumara & Uptis, 2004 Spring, p. x). We do not enter into a predetermined world but rather the enactment of a world. Our mind is not preformed but created through the actions of the world, the language of the world, in which we participate. Poststructuralist theories present language as a growing system that is never able to fully represent either the reader or the writer's experience. I struggle to understand this when I try to write with accuracy, clarity, and precision about a reading, a memory, an event, a dream, a conversation. I fight to appreciate the difficulty of excavating and analyzing underlying expectations and assumptions as I work with interpretive response to my research questions. As Maxine Greene suggests, "... I am never able to answer the questions. They remain ... ceaseless interpretation. The *as if* that is my interpretive vision, launched me then—and continues to launch me—on quests I hope will never cease" (Greene, 1995, p. 92). My hope is to search beneath the bark to find the stories that will produce a labyrinthine feminist text integrating new and old ideas in a way that adds something to understanding the complexity of internalized socially constructed roles and identities. As I write I try to see my own fear of knowing and thus living in the liminal spaces and through the sometime traumatic result of changing beliefs as both knower and creator of knowledge.

In this chapter, I have provided a brief overview of the methodology used in the research together with an understanding of why I chose this method to further explore shifting identities and transformation. Literary anthropology methodology informed by feminist, consciousness and Jungian analytic theory allows for living in the text. Like the interpretation of night dreams, reading literary dream images from fiction is ambiguous, uncertain, vague and confusing. I have written a text which provides space for

hermeneutic production, that is, the reader's interpretation. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 provide more details of the research process as it unfolds in concert with interpretations of the literary dream images of four women characters in *Unless*. Chapter 7 links the dream reading process to curriculum studies and teacher education. Chapter 8 is a summary of the themes and principles I have learned through the process of this dissertation.

In chapter 3 using concepts from Jungian theory and archetypal psychology, I provide an exploratory dream reading of the richly organic image of Norah, The Daughter Who Sits in the Street.

### 3.

#### Blackened by Melancholic Frustration<sup>8</sup>—A Theory of Norah

If I should pass the tomb of Jonah  
I would stop there and sit for a while;  
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark  
And came out alive after all.  
Carl Sandburg, Losers

**August 5, 1990**

##### **The Statue**

*In my dream, a statue of the Blessed Mother fell forward face first from a pedestal on a church altar. I was there in the sanctuary with two people but I cannot remember their faces. We picked up the statue and lay it on the altar. It shattered in the middle. From within the statue arose a young, very beautiful child of two or three years. Three times I was told to do something but I cannot remember what. Three times, V. appears and then walks away angrily declaring her annoyance and disbelief, "God does not deliver on His promises."*

I come in from working in my Alberta-in-July garden. I have been distracted from the flowers while considering multiple ways to create this chapter. How can I narrate some aspects of women's fear of knowing through a theory of Norah while arguing that dream reading could become a focal practice of literary engagement creating the possibility for deeper understanding and meaning-making in teaching?

I begin with a dream from my journal which occurred almost two years after the initiatory transformation dream in December, 1988. This dream continues the theme of the major changes that were occurring in my deeply hidden belief system together with my burning anger at the betrayal of trust that I feel. In my journal I have written,

I am enraged with anger that all the rules, regulations, rituals, commandments, beliefs that I followed rigidly as a child did not protect me. Even with years of praying, attending Mass, going to doctors, and doing all the socially acceptable "right" things, I still hurt. All those years I really believed. Damn. Damn. Damn. Damn. The statue represents hardened, rock encased beliefs blocking my inner

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<sup>8</sup> When the soul is stuck in its literal perspectives and identified with materiality, alchemical processes such as pathologizing are required. Inner soul-making processes may occur such as burning, breaking down, skinning, flaying, dismembering, or cannibalizing thus freeing the psyche from the imprisonment of naturalism and transmuting the natural into the imaginal viewpoint (Hillman, 1975b, p. 90 – 91).

child, the possibilities within me. The pedestal may represent the height at which I have placed the intellect (Personal Journal, August 15, 1990).

Dreams often use the language of puns. Perhaps deeply held rational beliefs have fallen off the pedestal where I had put them. As Grumet (1988) points out, institution comes from the Latin verb *instituere* meaning “to set up.” Institution, statue and state share the root word—*stare* meaning “to stand.” In the dream, my institutional, rational, upright beliefs have fallen off the pedestal. The child stands for touch, newness, earth, sensuality, and woman’s work. Throughout the years I lived at home as a child and teenager, our family prayed the rosary together nearly every evening. Today, I continue to have a deep reverence and respect for Mother Mary. Partly to honor the dream, Bill and I built a grotto where I grow Mary flowers (marigold) and a statue of the Blessed Mother sits together with a cow skull to represent the goddess. I work to separate institutional belief from sacred myth.

It has taken many years to create my garden. Some of the creation was accidental. Some plants have been gifts from friends now deceased. Others are memorials. There’s my husband Bill’s larch tree, Grandma Gregor’s weeping birch, and my mother’s rose planted by the grotto of the Blessed Mother. There are heritage flowers tended by the previous owners as early as 1946—the Maltese cross, the purple bellflower, peonies, bleeding heart, and trollius buttercup still flourishing after 50 years. These gardens must be tended, fertilized, pruned and loved. So it is with dream reading.

In this chapter I intend to dream read Reta through a theory of Norah, The Daughter Who Sits in the Street. I will develop a dream reading of a fictive dream image from *Unless*, The Burning Muslim Woman, a fire metaphor of transmutation, transformation and destruction which shapes the entire novel. I consider Norah through both a Jungian lens, as

the younger self, the maiden aspect of Reta and through the lens of Hillman's archetypal psychology, the psychopathology of soul. All the elements of *Unless* become descriptions of the aspects of Reta Winters' psyche. The unexpected encounter with the self-immolating veiled Muslim woman begets a traumatic unease and denotes a creative disquiet with the status quo. Reta's consciousness is very much aware that things are not as they might be. Perhaps the veil is a "mobile site of resistance" changing shape with shifting power relations as Reta renegotiates both her physical and psychic space (Oliver, 2004).

As interpretive practice, dream reading is supported by Sumara's premise that "it is possible to create conditions for the expansion of imaginative thought. ... (L)iterary interpretation practices can transform imaginative occasions into productive insights" (Sumara, 2002a, p. 98). A number of researchers including Greene (1995), Hillman (1975a) and Luce-Kapler (2005) agree that the use of the subjunctive can create conditions for the "production of deep insight [which] is usually surprising, occurring unexpectedly, emerging from curious places" (Sumara, 2002, p. 5).

In my dream work and in dream workshops, every interpretation necessarily remains an *as if*. I often begin by asking one person to share a dream they are comfortable sharing by speaking it aloud in the present tense. Others are asked to consider the dream and share their ideas beginning with "*If* this were my dream ..." This provides an opportunity to create links among group members, the collective mind, through spinning memories, and both the present and possible futures. Imaginative questioning, according to Keats, quoted in Avens, is "a questioning that involves the questioner in the matter of thought so deeply that he becomes, in a sense, one with it" (1984, p. 2) meaning that being and knowing are no longer separate.



The *as if* is strongly supported by Jung's work where the *as if* is in constant struggle against concretizing attitudes. Patricia Berry (1982) explains Freud's naming of a concretizing tendency as the Philistine, both a "psychological entity" and an "archetypal mode of perception" which often justifies things "in terms of their being 'only natural,' nothing-but, bread-and-butter, down-to-earth, factual, practical. The perceptible, the material, would be for this viewpoint the 'real facts' of life" (p. 166). Jung objected to this mechanistic reductivism where one was totally unaware of using the concrete mode or its concretistic attitude through which "the animal, the body, the dark, the sensual, the feminine lost psychic significance" (Berry, 1982, p. 168). According to Berry (1982), Jung was determined that archetypes be seen as psychic possibilities, the *as if*, the subtle way of the metaphor. Dream reading *as if* has the potential for metaphoric and imaginative thought.

In writing about dreams, both Jung and Hillman speak strongly to the potency of the imagination. Dream reading has the potential to free the imagination, that is, to see the world as a source of never ending possibility; an imagination that has both the ability and the freedom to think the unthinkable thus challenging the status quo. Ò Murchú, following Marcuse, claims "that for an institution to be successful, it must make unthinkable the possibility of alternatives" (Murchu, 1998, p. 112). I want to make thinkable possible alternatives to the patriarchal education system which has been wildly successful in making alternatives unthinkable. Learning requires that I find ways to think thought experiments. As a feminist, I desire more than a remedy for exclusion which simply centres masculinity as the norm. This is the ethical obligation, the pedagogical project. Dream reading may contain possibilities to "give expression to that which our culture has deemed unspeakable

or ungrievable—to engage that which we have cast beyond the pale of the curriculum so that it can be properly remembered” (Salvio, 2007, p. 13).

To create thought alternatives, we must undergo a process of change and perhaps trauma. One of the more curious or strange places from which disruption of institutional thought may be produced is a dream. Each night we encounter strange figures and weird symbols together with fear, aggression, grief, rage, confusion, guilt and failure, doubt, anxiety, and chaos. These are not the usual places where we might look for insight but it is quite possible that looking there yields changing knowledge.

The reflectivity of the practice of literary anthropology broadened to include dream reading may lead to a more deeply questioning inquiry into the realm and nature of psyche, to the appearance of ideas and to their significance as psychic events (Hillman, 1975b). Ideas give us eyes to see and know. The word idea comes from both “... Latin *videre* (to see) and the German *wissen* (to know). Ideas enable our knowing, our envisioning, by means of seeing and by ‘insighting.’ Without ideas ... we cannot see ... even what we sense with the eyes in our heads, for our perceptions are shaped according to particular ideas” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 121).

Dream reading is a potential way to consider the richness of the inner cognitive world. In particular, dream reading through a feminist writing of mythology, where it is available, may enable women to gain fresh perspectives about the realities we accept as real or truth in a patriarchal culture. Reis (1995) speaks of patriarchal imagination as “pornographic mind,” meaning the mind which dominates our culture through philosophy, literature, religious doctrine and art, film, advertisement, gestures, habits, history, and random acts of violence. Patriarchal imagination, its myth making, fantasy and interpretive

aspects, supports only patriarchal social structures and has created and interpreted most of our existing mythologies. I need a feminist imagination to create a dream reading of Norah.

### **A Theory of Norah**

I use the word theory to mean an open-ended expression of conjecture, opinion or speculation. The word comes from Latin *theoria* and Greek meaning contemplation, speculation and spectator. *Thea* can mean “a view” plus *horan* could mean “to see.” Theory could literally mean “looking at a show” (*Random House Webster's college dictionary*, 2001). This etymology is particularly appropriate given my theory that Norah makes a spectacle of her self as she becomes The Daughter Who Sits in the Street. Is this Norah's response to the cultural imposition of silence? Reta, Tom and their community of friends posit many theories about Norah's self-imposed exile to the street. Perhaps she was weighed down by her mother's midlife fears and anxieties; perhaps she suffered post-traumatic shock from witnessing The Burning Muslim Woman. Maybe she needed to register her existence on the planet. Maybe she was a rebellious teenager. Perhaps it is just a “developmental problem.” Reta says

My own theory—before we knew of the horrifying event—was that Norah had become aware of an accretion of discouragement, that she had awakened in her twentieth year to her solitary state of non-belonging, understanding at last how little she would be allowed to say (Shields, 2002, p. 309).

Using literary anthropology, I have re-read *Unless* many times finding new insights into possible worlds. Its pages are now a commonplace, a collection of ripening ideas which I merged with my book notes and personal journals to develop a dream reading theory of Norah. I have attempted to resist the obvious meaning structures that have come to restrict the nature and ground of a phenomenon. I encourage the reader to participate in this dream reading activity that has no conclusion.

Thinking about seeing the novel through its dream reading possibilities leads to thinking about all the characters as connected within-the-one. For the purposes of this hermeneutic, she who calls herself Reta Summers Winters, is the dreamer, and she has entitled her dream series, *Unless*. For though we are told that there are individual separate characters in the novel, perhaps we would better understand the world and our place in it through recognizing that Reta, mother and author; Norah, daughter in crisis; Lois, invisibly becoming Crone; Danielle, French feminist Crone; Tom, partner; Roman, character in development; Alicia, character in development; Scribano, editor and benevolent then dead patriarch; Springer, the despotic but learning patriarchal editor, and friends—all are connected. All may be considered the multiple identifications of Reta Winters (Appendix IV). For is it not so that all our realities are shaped by the consciousness within which we participate? Reta just might re-title her dream series *Woman in a Patriarchal Thyme* if she realized that her dreams are archetypal, mythological and about a midlife mother's relationship with her self in a time of crisis as she is discovering the depth of the patriarchy embedded in her life and contemplating how to both resist her colonization and cope with the resultant anxiety and fear of knowing about that colonization. Reta's dreams could help her come to know her many selves.

Jung believed that the purpose of dreams is individuation, that is, to promote the “developmental process of bringing consciousness and the unconscious into wholeness” (Bulkeley, 1994). This process includes deep changes at midlife as part of the journey. Hillman disagrees. He prefers to think that such resolution of inner conflict is the hero's journey of monotheism. Instead, Hillman asks, “Which fantasy governs our view of soul-

making and the process of individuation—the many or the one (Hillman, 1989, p. 38)?

Further, he says,

Balance, integration, and wholeness, important values in a monotheistic psychology, have no place in polytheism, which demands a stretching of the heart and imagination. The polytheistic soul is richly textured and textured. It has many qualities of character and is the theater where many stories are enacted, many dreams mirrored (Hillman, 1989, p. 38).

Jean Houston says that polyphrenia, the orchestration and integration of our many selves, “may be the health [of the human condition]” (1987, p. 30). According to Houston, children become what they see—a dog, kitten, horse, tree, bug—many and diverse selves understanding the world through incarnation. However, soon this is deemed unreal and inappropriate and they learn to play the game and join their social group in Western cultural beliefs about “growing up” and “developing maturity.” Early in childhood, the children learn to be limited by false realism like the rest of the culture and come to believe in one, singular self. The diverse views of Jung and Hillman simply add richer and deeper possibilities to dream reading. Hillman’s notions of dreams as soul recovery are particularly fruitful.

*Psyche* comes from the Greek and means “soul.” “*The logos of the soul*, psychology, implies the act of traveling the soul’s labyrinth in which *we can never go deep enough*” and “There is no end to depth, and all things become soul” (Hillman, 1979, pp. 25 - 27, emphasis in original). Hillman calls the process of soul-making, meaning-making and psychologizing. Ideas are the source of soul-making. Considering Norah’s actions, I began to glimpse some understanding of Hillman’s particular view of soul. I recall my first feeble attempts in the late 1980’s to move my thinking and beliefs from dreams are irrelevant to dreams as symbols of transformation and soul as *psyche* (from Greek) and

*anima* (from Latin). Soul to me was a religious word. For Hillman, soul is a perspective or a viewpoint toward things, not a substance or a thing itself as in the Christian “lost” to evil or going to “heaven” soul. In his initial writings about soul, Hillman suggested that soul refers to “that unknown component which makes meaning possible, turns events into experiences, is communicated in love, and has a religious concern” (1975b, p. xvi). Later, he added,

First, ‘soul’ refers to the *deepening* of events into experiences; second, the significance soul makes possible, whether in love or in religious concern, derives from its special *relation with death*. And third, by ‘soul’ I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and *fantasy*—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical (Hillman, 1975b, p. xvi emphasis in the original).

For Hillman working with dreams is working with soul recovery; that is, the rediscovery of our ability to live experiences, to understand death as part of life, and to honor imagination and fantasy as well as symbolic and metaphorical realities.

Below are excerpts from *Unless* written *as if* they were night dreams. Jung believed that every dream interpretation is a hypothesis, “an attempt to read an unknown text” and I use a numbered series of literary dream images because of Jung’s statement that

An obscure dream, taken in isolation, can hardly ever be interpreted with any certainty. For this reason I attach little importance to the interpretation of single dreams. ... (T)he basic ideas and themes can be recognized much better in a dream-series, ... (1974, p. 98).

Dream images are simultaneous, that is, there is no sense of linear time but rather a superimposition of characters and events producing imaginary, metaphorical connections and relationships between the dreamer and the dream. I imagine that Norah, Reta’s maiden self, appears in a series of her dreams.

*Excerpts from Unless (Shields, 2002) considered as a series of Reta's dreams<sup>9</sup>*

Dream #1

It's like [Norah is] hibernating. Everything about her is slowed down (p. 161).

Dream #2

Norah seems lodged in a child's last irresponsible days, stung by the tang of injustice, 19 years old, with something violent and needful beating in her brain. It's like a soft tumour, but exceptionally aggressive. Its tentacles have entered all the quadrants of her consciousness. This invasion happened fast, when no one was looking (p. 162).

Dream #3

We are all trying to figure out what's wrong with Norah. She won't work at a regular job. She's dropped out of university, given up her scholarship. She sits on the curbside and begs. Once a lover of books, she has resigned from the act of reading, and believes she is doing this in the name of goodness. She has no interest in cults, not in cultish beliefs or in that particular patronizing cultish nature of belonging. She's too busy with her project of self-extinction. It's happening very slowly and with much grief, but I'm finally beginning to understand the situation (p. 165).

Dream #4

Tom said, "They're burns," gesturing toward Norah's hands and wrists. Norah has an oxygen tube connected to her nose. She looks like Snow White in her glass case, and the girls and I are gathered around the bed like curious dwarves. ... reddened, scarred hands lying exposed on the white cotton blanket (p. 301).

Dream #5

I think, there's a fair amount of scarring, and some of it might have been avoided if [Norah had] been properly cared for (p. 302).

Dream #6

Natalie reminded us, "She always has gloves on" ... "Even last summer when it was boiling hot, in the middle of July even, she wears these old floppy gardening gloves." ... The garden gloves—she was wearing them the first day we found her last April at Bathurst and Bloor (p. 302).

Dream #7

We read about it in the newspapers, though we didn't read closely about it for some reason; it is recorded on videotape, so that we have seen the tragedy replayed and understand how its force usurped the life of a young woman and threw her into an ellipsis of mourning (p. 309).

Dream #8

Norah walks over to Honest Ed's to buy a plastic dish rack, which she holds in her hand. She is standing on the corner when a young Muslim woman stepped forward on the Street, poured gasoline over her veil and gown, and set herself alight. Norah rushed forward to stifle the flames. The dish rack in its plastic shopping bag became a second fire which burns into Norah's flesh. She pulls back. Stop, she screams, or something to that effect, and then her fingers sink into the woman's melting flesh—the woman is never identified—her arms, her lungs, and abdomen. These pieces give way. The smoke, the smell, is terrible. Two firemen pull Norah away, lifting her bodily in a single arc, then strap her into a restraining device and drive her to Emergency, where she was given first aid. A few minutes later, though, she disappears without giving her name (p. 314 – 315).

As I begin this dream reading, I remember that a daughter often represents the younger maiden self of a female dream. Further, I consider Hillman's (1989) suggestion

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<sup>9</sup> These stylized imaginary dreams are 'bits' taken from the novel as indicated by page numbers.

that the etymology of words may prove fruitful in dream work. I also reflect on the context of Reta's life when the dreams occur. Reta's novel, *My Thyme is Up* has been published. *Thyme in Bloom* is a work in progress and *Autumn Thyme* is bubbling at the back of her mind. The OED indicates that thyme is a mint plant. The word comes from Latin, *thymum*, from Greek, *thymon*, possibly from *thyein* "burn as a sacrifice" which could indicate it was used as incense. Further, sacrifice comes from Latin, *sacrifise*, *sacrificium*, from *sacrificus*, meaning "performing priestly functions or sacrifices," from *sacra* "sacred rites." Sacrifice is etymologically linked to immolate, "to sacrifice, kill as a victim." Reta has sacrificed her voice in fear of subtle reprisal, that is, loss of her already limited acceptance into the publishing world. The fire is transformative indicating that suppression has reached the saturation point and spontaneously combusted bringing forth the possibility of freed intuition and creativity from the human ashes. Through her writing, Reta breaks through an unconscious barrier. In her new novel, she writes the character Alicia more boldly. In her epistolary writing, she uses a different pseudonym for each of five unsent tentative and then increasingly scathing letters of feminist protest to various publishers. These letters may be a metaphor for the unconscious and Reta's struggle for agency, subjectivity and awareness. Eventually, she mails one letter, which may be a metaphor for emerging new consciousness. At a deep inner level, *The Burning Muslim Woman* is a psychic event thrusting Reta into the change process of a woman at midlife. Ever so slowly she begins to birth possibilities, thinkable alternatives for her life including a more equitable distribution of power in the field of writing and publishing. The shattering process of psychic change may be lengthy in our culture where rationalistic materialism rejects anything paradoxical, ambiguous or obscure. When I am



uncertainty itself, I can't just put the pieces back like gluing my grandmother's old and well-loved china teapot.

Through dreams we may learn the nature of psychic reality—that it is not “I” but “we”—for consciousness is polytheistic. Our dreams tell us that we are a multitude of personified images. “We can describe the psyche as a polycentric realm of nonverbal, nonspatial images” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 33). For this reason, mythology with its multiple personalities, gods and goddesses, and imaginal space serves as a site for soul recovery. Mythically we might look for a god or goddess in the complex or disease. Thinking about the image of The Burning Muslim Woman, we look for the god and consider Hades, the god of the underworld receiving the burned dead woman. What is dying? Anxiety arises from threats of the unconscious to come to the surface and be made conscious. The ego experiences a shift in consciousness as death or severe trauma. As a personified archetype, The Burning Muslim Woman brings a style of consciousness or following Jung, “typical modes of apprehension” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 35). Hillman explains such an image as a pathologizing image. He suggests we return to the basic Greek meaning of *pathos* as something that happens, an experience, being moved or the capacity to be moved. “The movements of the soul are *pathe*” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 97). Such movements show potential change or actual change already happening. Hillman asserts that

... *pathos* and suffering can be distinguished; the soul can go through its changes, even pathologizing changes, without these alterations in its quality having necessarily to be identified with suffering ... without having to sustain and overvalue them by the suffering of the Way of the Cross” (1975b, p. 97).

It is possible that we can learn from both Jung and Hillman's approach to the fictive dream imagery of The Burning Muslim Woman.

Hillman (1979) traces the history of dreams through Heraclitus, to Homer's *Iliad* where Hypnos (sleep) and Thanatos (death) are twin brothers, to Hesiod's *Theogony*, with the sons of Night, to Homer's *Odyssey* where Night resides in the underworld, to Virgil and Ovid, and finally to Orphic mythology. He explains that dreams belong to the archetypal cluster of "the world of Night. Each dream is a child of Night, affiliated closely with Sleep and Death, and with Forgetting (Lethe) all that the daily world remembers. Dreams have no father call, no call upwards" (Hillman, 1979, p. 33). Dreams belong to the underworld where the spirits are plural, dead persons are spoken of plurally, and "the endless variety of figures reflects the endlessness of the soul, and dreams restore to consciousness this sense of multiplicity" (Hillman, 1979, p. 41). This perspective makes no claim to a unified consciousness or to the individuation process of Jungian tradition. Hillman (1975b) explains that it is only by "falling apart," that is, disintegrating into these multiple dream figures that we expand consciousness to hold the psychopathic potentials.

Hillman suggests that names in dreams may hold meaning. According to ancient stories, the name Nora [Norah] may be likened to Norea, sister of Seth, daughter of Adam and Eve. So the story goes, a group of heretical Gnostics fabricated books, including a book called Norea. These Gnostic heretics wrote Norea as the wife of Noah and claimed that when she was refused permission to enter the ark, she burned it down three times! Further, the heretics were supposedly planning to translate the name of the Pyrrha of Greek mythology into a pseudo-Semitic name, Nora. Pyrrha was the Greek flood heroine whose name translated to "fiery" or from Aramaic it became "fire." As well, Norea was the voluptuous, beautiful virgin who seduced the Archons. Supposedly the Archons were never

able to intercept her and were destroyed by their burning desire for her (Pearson, 2006, pp. 87 - 95).

For Hillman (1975) etymology is an imaginative way to seek the mythical perspective necessary for archetypal psychology. Thus the underlying essence of the dream Norah may be fiery, virginal and heretical. I might link the notion of Gnostic heresy to the fears I experience when I claim that I am my own authority as I began to do in the summer of 1991 when I ventured forward on the rocks and shoals of my own uncertainty. I clung to the chaos. Changing deeply held but unknown-until-dreamed, re-imagined, and re-claimed unthinkable ideas may create fear of accusations of heresy.

The Burning Muslim Woman is a strange and curious image which appears at first glance to be destructive in the negative sense. However, for Hillman, this image might be likened to a soul image, a pathological image within which lie the riches of Pluto. This death instinct or self-immolation is one aspect of the realm of myth which our culture chooses to attempt to control, repress, hide, or fight against as sinful and evil. It seems as though there might be a rotting and blackening going on in the psyche, the soul. A *putrefactio*. The dreadful burns and collapsing body of The Burning Muslim Woman could be likened unto a radical change in perspective from the material world of every day to the world of soul. Yet another aspect of image is that “whatever appears wounded, sick, or dying may be understood as that content leading the dreamer into the House of Hades” (Hillman, 1979, p. 146). Norah’s hand goes “through” the image. This then may be likened to a soul undergoing *putrefactio* occasioned by its fall into the chasm, similar to the fall of Persephone to the underworld of Hades when the sacred chasm of Cyane opened up to receive her into the underworld. We speak of image as though it were some thing yet an

“image is a complexity of relationships, an inherence of tensions, juxtapositions, and interconnections. An image is neither pure meaning, nor pure relations, nor pure perception. ... Nor can one say that image is *this* literally and *that* metaphorically (Berry, 1982, p. 98). As I work with the image, I must remember that every image is polysemous.

Doll (2000) speaks of the work of Niel Micklem (1979) when she writes on the healing role of that which turns back reflection to the depths of psyche as critical to the work of imagination.

(W)hen the psyche, or image-making function, is removed from the direct gaze of literal representation, when it is bent back or repelled, there is a turn toward a desert wasteland of hidden images. That which is hidden, that from which the “normal” gaze recoils, nevertheless contains its own vitality. The journey away from literal representation, [Micklem] concludes, is a journey into an energy space that activates imagination (Doll, 2000, p. 38).

Dream Norah is the aspect of Reta that is plunged, thrust forcibly downward into soul-work, sacrificing her body to the underworld, to create a more equitable distribution of power between her underworld and upperworld. Dream Norah, The Daughter Who Sits in the Street, experiences the loss, lethargy and aloneness of ego being in the realm of the dead. Hillman (1979) points out that the baseness of the psyche is *not* to be considered from an egoic moral perspective. Within the psyche there is no morality, no judgment, no religious or societal norms, and no expectations. Dreams do not take or have an ethical stance (Campbell, 1971).

This necessitates a preparatory task before working with any dream: we must demoralize the soul from entrenched upperworld standards owing to its two-thousand-year solitary confinement in the cells of theological Christianity, where all its introverted imagination was morally appraised (Hillman, 1979, p. 165).

As humans, we experience the need for soul as pathology. Through myths, we are able to see that which in psychology we call abnormal—the bizarre, absurd, sick and self-

destructive. Pathology is inherent in the myth. For Hillman, the abduction and rape of Persephone must happen so that the ego, the “I,” is twisted and shocked out of its normative, literal, idealized, unimaginative, maidenly innocent identity. The ego, the pathologizing in the soul, is opened to falling apart disintegrating the centered, unified feeling into multiple parts, disrupting its rigid control. The dream image of The Burning Muslim Woman performs these soul tasks for Reta so that she might crack out of innocent oblivion into new shapes for her life.

Nowhere in his writing did I find Hillman make any gesture to feminist understandings. He ignores any possibility of erroneous patriarchal interpretation of mythology. He does not acknowledge that the abduction of Persephone is a comment on the position of women in a patriarchal mythology. According to Bostock (2002), Hillman is inconsistent and has a “radical, self-contradictory split” in his psychology. Bostock reports that Hillman disputed the need to even discuss gender and claimed, “Gender is a class concept, dividing the populace of the world into some three billion folks amassed on either side of a barbed conceptual fence” (Bostock, 2002, p. 4). Later, Hillman joined Robert Bly, author of *Iron John*, in the creation of a Christian men’s movement whose goal is to “reclaim what it has supposedly lost to women—to feminism and the cult of the mother” (Bostock, 2002, p. 4). Like Bostock, I sometimes found Hillman to be contradictory and patriarchal; however, I have learned a good deal from his notions of archetypal psychology, particularly that of a polytheistic self without the necessity to strive for wholeness or perfection as in the individuation theory of Jung.

For Hillman, until Persephone has been raped, until our natural consciousness has been pathologized, our souls project us as literal realities. We believe that human life and

soul are naturally one. We have not awakened to death. So we “refuse the very first metaphor of human existence: that we are not real” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 209). Rather, we refuse to live through the psyche’s imaginings insisting that only our rational, positivistic, empiricist theoretical notions of life are real. We regard the world of the dreamer and poet, beauty and art as frivolous. Like Savonarola in 14th century Florence, we attempt to burn away the masks and carnival disguises, the books of poets and artists’ renderings of beauty, together with playing cards, the lute or the harp. We try to destroy soul and its reminders of death rooted in the imagination (Hillman, 1975b). According to Hamilton (1942),

In ancient mythology gods of light and gods of darkness were intertwined. With the onset of Christianity, the goal of human kind was deemed to be light and the darkness became associated with evil. In this binary, the good/evil dichotomy suppresses the natural life cycle. Goddesses were demoted to fairy tales and the gods became One Supreme Father God. Other gods, such as Dionysus, for example, became the god of debauchery rather than the god of the vine at Demeter’s side at Eleusis (p. 62).

The dual nature of the mythical gods and goddesses of antiquity was sacrificed to the binary of a new mythology intent on power and control. Myth is paradoxical, from the Greek meaning “against opinion,” that is, a paradox rubs against our accepted notions of reality. The ultimate irony is using words like fanciful or passing fancy as putdowns when paradoxically fantasy may show us the direction of new knowledge.

The burned veil of The Burning Muslim Woman may be significant in asking questions about the death of conscious and unconscious content. When I participate in the dance of the veils, I begin to unravel the meaning of life, paradoxically, to weave my life. When I stand still, the veil becomes the Great Illusion. Let the storms of fire, wind, rain or hail dance the veils in creative unmasking. If Reta is undergoing a psychic change, both The Burning Muslim Woman and Norah, The Daughter Who Sits in the Street, may

indicate patience with psychic movement. For psyche moves as it will. “From the soul’s viewpoint, there is little difference between *patient* and *therapist*. Both words in their root refer to an attentive devotion, waiting on and waiting for” (Hillman, 1979, p. 65).

Death in a dream is not “real” but rather considered to be the ego’s literal point of view and fear of change expressed as physical death. Soul is immortal and in archetypal psychology such trauma as death by fire may be likened unto a great loss. Reta is working through some “stuff” and in order to shift her consciousness from the day world to the night world of meaning and soul, she must metaphorically experience the descent of the dream Norah to Hades, the mythological world of death and loss. “*Death* is the most profoundly radical way of expressing this shift in consciousness” (Hillman, 1979, p. 66 emphasis in the original). *Unless* is shot through with losses.

It happens that I am going through a period of great unhappiness and loss just now. All my life I’ve heard people speak of finding themselves in acute pain, bankrupt in spirit and body, but I’ve never understood what they seem to mean. To lose. To have lost. (Shields, 2002, p. 1)

There is no easy and simple way for Reta to make a midlife transition from maiden to mother to crone. Like Shiva, the destroyer, The Daughter Who Sits in the Street sits death to old, upper world ways of thinking. For depression is a little death. Depression provides for the emptying out of the psyche moving across the Acheron. As Berry (1982) points out, Demeter is above all a “depressive goddess.” Demeter’s delight at the return of her daughter is brief. She searches for her daughter as the “underworld component which belongs by birth to her.” It is her tie to her daughter that gives her life a “significance of the senses ... wholly life-giving because sensation reaches to and incorporates the underworld” (pp. 19-20). From the perspective of archetypal psychology, soul is created from depressive and negative experiences; dreams are the soul doing its work. Within the image of The

Burning Muslim Woman is a perspective of initiating Reta into the underworld viewpoint. Old upperworld ideas burning, dying, collapsing. An intellectual death. A grieving of old ideas as the death of the ego.

Using archetypal psychology, I cannot interpret The Burning Muslim Woman as potential death. The blackness of burning could be Thanatos and the archetypal “violating” phenomenology of Hades. The Burning Muslim Woman might then be a subtle essence, a ghostlike spectre. Hillman (1979) claims to provide a consistent psychological attitude to dreams rather than the coherent metapsychology developed by Jung and Freud as the basis for dream analysis. As well, he insists that rather than positive knowledge of the psyche, the science of dreams and of “*knowing* something about dreams,” he wants to have “an attitude of unknowing” (pp. 195, emphasis in the original). Freud and Jung put the dream in the dreamer and his life. Hillman claims to put the dreamer in the dream with the images as the dreamer’s psychic context and reality. Hillman does follow the Jungian exhortation that the dreamer must “stick to the dream,” (Jung, 1974, p. 97) that is, she must sit with the psychic images. The dreamer and the dream worker must not be tempted to force the dream to serve “ego development, integration, social interest, individuation” (Hillman, 1979, p. 196). For Hillman, the notion that there is a literal libido, Oedipus, Eros, Thanatos, hero, anima/animus pair, self or Self belongs to the era of medical empiricism. He considers that Freud and Jung were unable to loosen the grip of their cultural epoch with its belief that myth can be systematic, objectively established and literal truth. We must learn to live with the metaphor and understand that myth is never resolved but is a pattern involving both agreeable and disagreeable aspects. Never are the archetypes replete with wholeness (Berry, 1982).



Through the Norah image we might consider that something archetypal is going on. One archetypal aspect of her life, The Burning Muslim Woman, governs Reta by presenting moods, reactions, ethics, thought, and speech. Boundaries are shattered through the Norah image and her encounter with The Burning Muslim Woman.

One summer day I sat having pizza with a friend and contemplating The Burning Muslim Woman. This particular image had brought me many questions with no answers. We had nothing else, so I wrote our conversation on the pizza box. We wondered why Shields used this image. It almost seems apropos of nothing. Where did it come from? We considered that Freud based his theories on the word, Jung on images and Hillman on the belief that we are the images, somewhat akin to a hologram. Words “pin” the image, like a specimen, making ready for “rational” examination. Images are more experiential. We “see” the boundary and remember other experiences “like” that and think “knife.” We are in fact seeing the edges of the knife which remind us of other utensils. The likeness then becomes knife. Language shapes/bounds experience. Shattering of boundaries leads to thoughts of fractals as expanded states of consciousness, that is, which have no center but are a constant unfolding pattern. The Norah and The Burning Muslim Woman images are numinous. Jung had periodic fantasy experiences/dreams like a bleed through boundaries. The imagery is akin to a psychotic episode if one is hooked on normalcy or a mystical experience if one is attuned to the universe pouring into the psyche. Does significant change in one’s underlying belief system require shattering long-held beliefs to make room for the change? Could this be a “bleed” through the boundaries of the *constructed* self? What is a mystical experience other than an experience of “self-immolation?” For a brief moment, the universe is boundless; it is both all and nothing. All is nowness. This is the

embrace of the unbearable, the ineffable world. This is the meditative experience that weakens, changes or shatters the boundaries of the constructed self and provides space for the possible. Disintegration and rebuilding themes run through these dream experiences (Appendix V).

What if Norah's many questions about goodness have thinned her boundaries and the explosion of those boundaries of her belief traumatizes her? It's *as if* Norah is shocked by the "intolerable image" (Hillman, 1979) of the self-immolating woman; this is the *event* and her consciousness explodes. She sits, metaphorically, on the street corner integrating the event into an *experience*. Perhaps Norah needs to "sit with her new consciousness." Self-immolation = destruction of the constructed self = shattering of boundaries = enabling new experience/new consciousness. It may be an experience with no cultural boundary that causes trauma. The literary dream figure of Norah has no cultural boundary, or what Iser (1993) might call "culture-bound patternings" (p. 297) for the experience of actually touching, seeing, hearing, and smelling a burning woman. Word/thought makes the new boundary to enclose the new consciousness which I would call learning. What propels one to a new consciousness? Are we always aware of new consciousness? Is new consciousness really as traumatic as the reality of a person burning and dying on the street? *Unless* treats the self-immolation of the Muslim woman on the street corner in a very low-key, almost after-thought, desensitized manner. Close your eyes and imagine the actual reality of a person burning. The screaming, the smells, the disbelief, the horror. Hillman (1979) claims that smells in dreams are rare and therefore to be considered as "something essential, pneumatic, esthetic, even ethereal" (pp. 185-188). He speaks to Heraclitus' claim that "In Hades, souls perceive by smelling." Further he suggests that Plato claims that Persephone

etymologically means “seizing that which is in motion” and asks if the movement of soul is so deep that it is only perceived by that which is hidden, “a perception of intangibles by intangible means” which could be attributed to the gods and their recognition of sacrificial “burnt offerings.” Can Shields have recognized the powerful potency of the image or does it arise unbidden from the unconscious?

Both Jung and Hillman tell us to pay particular attention to small details in the dream. Following that advice, the veil of The Burning Muslim Woman could be likened to a burning away, an opening, a look through the haze which has held Reta from seeing/perceiving the difficulties she has repressed to her personal unconscious. According to Jungian tradition, we spend the first half of life focused on growing self and career. At midlife, supposedly we no longer have the inner strength to keep our issues at bay. It is as though Psyche rebirths Reta to “see” and to burn away her fears. She may be afraid to know the scope and depth of the patriarchal control in her life. Perhaps at some level she prefers to “stay dumb” as Patti Lather (1991) might say. Perhaps she has a fear of reprisal, of speaking her mind, of losing her friends, of being accused of being “sensitive,” or a host of other less than subtle accusations, if she speaks out about her growing feminist musings (Carol Shields does not use the f-word anywhere in *Unless*). She writes a contemptuous letter to a male professor who has written a story wherein the male character is offended, assaulted, disgusted, and repulsed by the sight of a mastectomy bra in the window of a medical supply shop. But now the fear has receded. Perhaps something archetypal has taken place. Reta says, “But now I don’t mind if you kill me” (Shields, 2002, p. 309).

Perhaps The Burning Muslim Woman is the thrust of the unconscious, the horrific image of the hand thrusting through the burned body, through the veil, that energizes the

potential to move Reta out of her maidenly innocence, her both blissful and miserable state of unknowing. “Looking back, I can scarcely believe in such innocence” (Shields, 2002, p.

11). Perhaps this is the image of Reta’s initiatory rite of passage in which she meets

the terrors of destruction and receives the phallic powers of regeneration — not from a male figure, but from the Great Goddess, who carries both male and female within her own image. ... (F)or women, the creative process, when engaged at its deepest level, demands that we undergo this initiation for its own sake” (Reis, 1995, pp. 55-59).

The Norah image is Persephone, seduced by Hades aided and abetted by Gaia, the earth Goddess who recognizes neither rape nor death as traumatic nor even significant (Berry, 1982; Downing, 1992; Reis, 1995). From a Jungian developmental perspective, there is the possibility that the image of Norah is an aspect of the maiden-mother-crone trilogy and that the trauma of witnessing and seemingly reaching right through The Burning Muslim Woman is an initiation into potential transformation.

Dreams speak only to the imagination from the imagination since they are psychic phenomenon. Donald (2001) tells us that intuitions of truly creative and novel symbolic expression come not from thought but from “somewhere else in the mind,” and a series of “fuzzy insights” tease and twist a nebulous intuitive symbol into thought. Language is never the “inspiration, interpreter, or final judge” of thought. He summarizes his discussion of the inadequacy of language to fully express the thoughts of even the most skilled writer by saying that symbolic expressions are evaluated from “outside the symbol system, from a region of mind that, in its principles of operation, is different from and much more powerful than the reach of any consensual expressive system.” These consensual systems are available to us to satisfy our “deeper semantic intuitions.” Even if we only vaguely suspect that an idea is valuable, but elusive, we may pursue it “passionately for a lifetime”

(Donald, 2001, p. 275). The only instrument we have for listening, for hearing, for seeing our dreams is the imagination. This is difficult for we have learned representational thinking and we want to make dream images represent. But representational thinking is calculative thinking. It is also confrontational thinking which is technical thinking that limits beings as objects. Reasoning and argumentative thinking have been considered superior, more respectable, objective, rational and logical and thus more responsible than the imaginal work of the artist, poet, or fiction writer—and I might add, dream worker.

Dream reading could involve us in more radical thinking, that is, “thinking that is part and parcel of being” (Avens, 1984, p. 40). Dreams are within, thus openness and receptivity to dreams is a form of waiting upon, not waiting for, a form of what Avens calls “meditative” thinking, that is, thinking which pays attention, takes images to heart letting them be what they are. According to Hillman quoted in Avens “the heart’s work is imaginal thought” or “imaginational intelligence” (Avens, 1984, p. 43). Thus, the heart is not the center of feeling as in our valentine world but is rather the center of sight, the center of imagining.

The image of the burning hands and collapsing burning body is horrifying to the ego. The image haunted me from first reading through to this writing. I gave myself permission to let the grotesque image lie there, inert. I knew it was there. It niggled at the strangest time just at the edges of thought. I have forced myself in the past to read horrific stories with inhuman images—Middle Ages history, *Roots* (no fiction there), some parts of the *Maleficus Malefactum* found in women’s history, and Holocaust literature. Hillman’s pathologizing the image changed the image. I began to “see” that the image points to the

realm of death, that is, the movement to a psychological perspective. This is the upside down world of Hades.

Underworld is psyche. When we use the word underworld, we are referring to a wholly psychic perspective, where one's entire mode of being has been desubstantialized, killed of natural life, and yet is in every shape and sense and size the exact replica of natural life (Hillman, 1979, p. 46).

Grasping the notion of the underworld as the realm of soul, the psychic realm, requires that we address certain barriers which Hillman identifies as materialism, oppositionalism and Christianity. In particular Christianity has created an ethos of denial of death and a focus on the victory, rising and resurrection. He claims there was a "... strong mission in early Christianity to wipe out a fundamental bastion of contemporary polytheism, the Halls of Hades" (Hillman, 1979, p. 86).

I think about my childhood Sisters of Service correspondence catechism lessons—lessons my brothers and I completed at the kitchen table under the tutelage of our mother. We studied the Baltimore Catechism during summer lessons at the Sturgeon Lake Mission School. I still look automatically upward when I think of heaven and down with a mention of hell. The strong focus on looking to the future, to the afterlife, to heaven, looking upward and rising, moves the focus from soul to spirit. In Christian theology, it is the spirit which rises from the grave and as Hillman says, we exchange psyche, soul, the underworld of the gods, for spirit, *pneuma*. And so the underworld, Hades, death, and Thanatos, were demonized and death became equated with sin (Hillman, 1979). "He descended to the dead," says The Nicene Creed. The classical descent to the underworld became fraught with fears of evil, the devil, and damnation.

Christianity and the underworld fell into opposition—material, functional, and logical, and we are left in a condition where Christian consciousness and

psychological soul-making through attention to dreams have been forced into contradiction” (Hillman, 1979, p. 89).

The very first dream in my journal, December 1988, is a descent to the underworld—something I surely did not recognize upon waking. I knew nothing of dreams or the archetypal underworld although I had been plagued by nightmares since childhood. A relative, thinking that my desperate healing search was taking me into the world of the occult, sent me a large box filled with books on Catholicism and spirituality. I read *Dreams and Spiritual Growth: A Judeo-Christian Way of Dreamwork* the first evening. It said that I could ask for a dream. I asked. The dream came. I woke up feeling exhilarated, lighter in body and spirit. In my enthusiasm I totally misinterpreted the dream from a literal and very egoic perspective (Appendix VI). In much of my cultural milieu, Christ stands between the underworld and us. Obviously, this has major connotations for those who are committed to dreams as the *via regis* to the unconscious and thus to knowledge and understanding.

As Hillman states, Jung was vexed by the problem of the victory of Christ over the underworld. Jung’s solution was to “darken” the Christ figure with Hermes-Mercurius but not Hades. Christ became, for Jung, the upperworld archetypal consciousness with Hermes-Mercurius as the archetype of the unconscious. Hillman notes that Jung retained Hermes as “the only recognized messenger to Hades,” as he is Bringer of Dreams (1979, p. 89 quoting from the Homeric Hymns translated by Charles Boer). I found that Jung wrote of Hermes as “...the god of revelation, who as *pneuma* and *nous* is associated with the wind. He would be the connecting link with the Christian *pneuma* and the miracle of Pentecost” (1954 [1988], p. 20). I have read many Christian books on dreams wherein Hermes is referenced as the Bringer of Dreams; however, the fundamental notion in Christian dream work is that dreams are messages of the spirit, the Christ consciousness (Clift & Clift,

1985; Sanford, 1989; Savary, et al., 1984). For me, Hillman's work clarifies a fundamental dichotomy, a major contradiction within the Christian adaptation of Jungian theory, that is the literalization of the underworld. I understand better now why dreams were condemned by St. Jerome as soothsaying prior to the advent of psychology and the papering over of the omission of the underworld from Christian dream work. The unconscious is treated with little if any mention of the underworld except for cautions about the possibility of psychosis and encountering evil in dream work (Kelsey, 1976, 1980). As Jung (1954) said,

Our mania for rational explanations obviously has its roots in our fear of metaphysics, for the two were always hostile brothers. Hence anything unexpected that approaches us from the dark realm is regarded either as coming from outside and therefore as real, or else as an hallucination and therefore not true. The idea that anything could be real or true which does *not* come from outside has hardly begun to dawn on contemporary man (p. 16).

Christ, the underworld, Hades, evil, death—all must come from the outside thus leaving us with the problem of dream reading and imagination as outside rather than inside forces.

Morton Kelsey speaks to the development of imaginative capacities as beneficial to Christian growth. His chapter on imagination provides *step-by-step* instructions for meditatively experiencing fantasy images. The intended movement is downward, over the edge of the mountain cliff into the abyss with the purpose of changing our inner world and shaping our lives. He refers to the self as a committee represented by inner figures. He recommends calling on the power of the inner Christ to forestall one inner figure from taking control for then "... my life is chaotic, becomes unconscious, and falls into patterns which are evil" (Kelsey, 1980, p. 220). My Journal May 12, 1989 speaks to my fear and anger around the never-ending warnings and connotations of evil. Demons behind every bush. It would be a long while before I would come to see the idiocy of my acceptance of



patriarchal control through fear of external, free floating demons and evil and to some understanding of my complete lack of knowledge of women's history, mythology, early goddess based religions and how the goddess was murdered (Daly, 1978) and female symbols became evil.

I am reminded of a dream which I recorded in April 1991, entitled "The Presence" (Appendix VII). Upon waking I wrote, "This dream scared the hell out of me." By evening I was filled with fear of the presence in the dream. Somehow, I lost track of the fact that dreams come from inside, not outside. To be honest, I have never again had the courage to enter into such a deep meditation prior to sleep. The fear remains. I have learned well the lessons of the patriarchy.

Whether arising from outside or inside, a major shift in consciousness may surely be experienced as death and/or loss. This surely was my own shift from a Baltimore Catechism childhood belief in hell to a belief in the misinterpretation of the entire concept of hell as a "place." I hadn't yet arrived at the underworld. Nor did I understand anything about Hillman's idea following Thomas Carlyle's Biblical notion of Christ forcing

... Thanatos to hide behind his own door. Christ was thus greater than the greatest of Man-Gods, Hercules, who might have driven Hades from his Throne but had not, like Christ, actually wiped out the entire kingdom, including death itself (1979, p. 87).

This process of un-making, this massive shift in beliefs beginning in spring and summer of 1988 was accompanied by a week in hospital with diarrhea, suffering from dehydration and bleeding from the bowel. After several months of intense prayer and meditation, my structures were being torn apart by forces I knew nothing about. The roots that bound me to meaning in my life were being cut (Appendix VIII). In a desperate attempt to hold myself together and to fill this abyss of dark emptiness, I intensified my

prayer, meditation and reading. I started to write. Three years later, in New York in the summer of 1991, at the Dream Intensive Workshop, I spoke with one of the workshop leaders, Sister S., a woman whom I intuitively trusted. She explained that this was “Holy Shit,” an experience accompanying the release of repressed memories and of purging the toxicity from the very cells of the body (Appendix IX). Now 16 years later, I understand that may be an upper world, Jungian interpretation; however, I have come to believe that both theoretical perspectives are valuable to dream reading. There are definite connections between upperworld and underworld. For example, there are a number of other possibilities linked to the “Egyptian underworld imagination, [where] the dead walked upside down so that the stuff of their bowels came out through their mouths” (Hillman, 1979, p. 183). This is the underworld, the mythology. This is *not* the literalization of Hercules cleaning the accumulated shit of hundreds of years from the Augean stables. I don’t remember the details of the task, but I recall reading about it years ago in the work of Jung. Hillman details the association of bowels and insanity, bowels as the seat of the soul, an interiorized underworld as it were. Shit in dreams is the great leveler of humanity. “Dreams of diarrhea [are] radical compelling movements into the underworld or as an underworld that has come to sudden and irrepressible life with us, independent of who and where we are” (Hillman, 1979, p. 184).

The inclusion of shit dreams in this dissertation may seem perverse. Not so. I admit I struggled with my inner censor/editor. He and I debated endlessly about their inclusion. I decided these images are important to the notion of death and loss. These are intolerable images linked to The Burning Muslim Woman. I know that dream workshop participants always shy away from discussing shit dreams or sexual dreams. Why? Possibly the

reluctance is linked to the Freudian ideas that abound in our culture regarding toilet training and anal retentiveness. It could be Western culture's iron social control of the body and its function. In the Jungian tradition, shit dreams are variously linked to creative expression, elimination of negativity or alchemical gold. Today, I consider an archetypal psychology interpretation wherein we bend to the underworld each day and which bends us to recognize its ongoing and everlasting presence. Hillman (1979) refers back to Plato, Aristophanes and Kerényi who described psychic substance as "paste, clay, dough, molten metal," "mud," "a swamp of everflowing excrements," and "the shit-filled stables of Augeias" (p. 183). From a feminist perspective, heroism, living out the myth of Hercules, must shift. Shift happens. According to Hillman (1979), diarrhea "signals the daylight order at its "end." The old king falls apart and shits like a baby—decomposition and creation at once..." (p. 184).

When I first wrote about dream reading in the winter of 2005, I was relying on the symbolic approach of Jung. Now in summer 2008, I find that approaching the dream figure of The Burning Muslim Woman through archetypal psychology, rooted in Jungian theory, is very different and leads to whole different circles of meaning about woman and depression. Through a theory of Norah, I believe I have glimpsed dimly a possible psychic challenge to the patriarchal order. I also believe the psychic resistance may come through dreams as I resist the change in the fear that *knowing* the reality of the suppression of women in the patriarchal order and *acting* on that knowing will turn my entire world upside down and inside out. Having experienced the intense fear of losing faith, family and friends if I act on my changing belief system, I also believe I understand why I may choose to try hard to ignore the psychic demand for movement. Chaos, uncertainty and disintegration

bring fear of being considered insane, crazy and weird, not to mention that if the change revolves around religious dogma, condemned to everlasting Hellfire. Dream work may educate the imagination and bring forth different worlds that deeply challenge the old. In my experience, dreams sometimes first create an incredible lightness of being—quickly followed by old belief system editors settling over the soul like a shroud.

We have much to learn if we pay attention to the imaginative possibilities of the dream that emerges from psyche that is for the most part autonomous and unconscious. Women can learn to trust that working *as if* they were a dream with the images that emerge has far better possibility of undermining the patriarchy than images already available in our hyperrational patriarchal pornographic imagination. I must continue to learn to trust my imagination, to understand that the psyche is not controlled by the patriarchy even though it may be colonized by patriarchal images. I have learned that fictive dream images may be interpreted through a wholly different lens than the patriarchal order invested as it is in monotheism, its One Father God. The additional possibilities of archetypal psychology provide for a multiplicity of personalities in the dream, a “we” not an “I.” I may learn to listen and trust the spontaneous image, the still small voice, the images manifest in my dreams. I must continue to listen to the voice saying, “Write Dreams Along the Way.” Dreams help me to face the fear of insanity and of being thought emotional, irrational and hypersensitive.

As dream Norah sits on the brink, we might think of Reta as a dynamic system. The Burning Muslim Woman dream image is an emotional shock, a trauma, a pathologizing image in an alchemical psychic process. It is emerging mythical and archetypal energies available or surging deeper and stronger than we usually allow through our linear screens

of consciousness. William James and Ilya Prigogine make essentially the same point. A complex structure, like a human being, must disperse significant energy to preserve its complexity. This surge of energy, or a perturbation, reaches critical point; the system amplifies the energy thus driving it to a new state that is more ordered, more coherent, more connected. I would like to think that the same emergence of a deeper consciousness of learning, a perturbation, an interruption, might be achieved through the generative process of dream reading as literary engagement.

To conclude this chapter, I ask myself how reading this series of literary dream images is different than reading *Unless* simply as a novel. To begin, I thought it passing strange that Carol Shields used the detail of the unnamed Muslim woman to “serve” as the image of suicidal, silenced woman in Toronto, Canada. Juxtaposing Hillman’s work with *The Burning Muslim Woman* provided a deeper, richer, different imaginative experience. This chapter implies discontinuity and traces ways of thinking and imagining differently instead of accepting and legitimating what are already the “truths” of our culture. This reading of a pathological literary dream image teaches that the reading the novel *as if* it were a dream pushes me to be attentive to details that may have gone unnoticed and unremarked. In dream reading, it is critical *to notice* and to go beyond thinking about their strangeness. These may be symbolic of ideas we have put out of bounds in our attempts to conform to certain cultural practices. My theory of Norah tells me that Reta has absorbed the culturally specific demand that woman express her disapproval or unhappiness in silent ways. Through this dream reading, I learn to travel the river of silence and find the possibility to express my anger, to question authority and to resist those who have power (Boler, 1999). I must explore emotion since it is a deep site of social control. Boler (1999)

claims that the social control of emotion is mapped differently onto female bodies than onto male bodies. Further, she says schools teach boys to control emotion to save themselves from difficulties. Girls are taught that emotional control is necessary to preserve their relationships with others. Boler (1999) says that “Pastoral power is a form of governing populations by teaching individuals to police themselves [and it] manifests through a combination of scientific and religious authority that governs emotional discourses” (pp. 32 - 33). In the context of this fictive dream series, the blackened pathological Burning Muslim Woman portends the transformation of Reta’s beliefs.

I want educators to question the legitimacy of authorized versions of truth. Reading novels *as if* frees the teacher’s imagination to begin to question how we use unexamined versions of truth. For example, Boler likens the mental hygiene movement of the 1920s with the emotional intelligence and character education of today. How many educators consider that character education is used to exert power over both students and teachers?

In Chapter 4, I develop a hermeneutic reading of the literary dream images which arise from the unconscious of Reta Winters and disrupt the “normal.” I examine the possibilities for transformation of silence and fear into agency and changing subjectivity.

#### 4.

### Unlearning the World: A Theory of Reta

Breathing in  
renders  
powerless the ego.  
Enables the energy of the first raw wounded thought  
to emerge  
birthed in gushing red across the page.  
Breathing out  
enables  
freshness to spiral  
creating a life  
of webbed thoughts in  
a torrent of letters  
connected by emptiness.  
Personal Journal, 1993

\* \* \*

There is no-thing except that consciousness makes it so.

**January 27, 1991**

**Religuere<sup>10</sup>**

*In my dream, a powerful, peaceful presence seeks to “show” me that man, myself, is moving to an understanding of consciousness linked to all humankind. A sense of Catholicism moving through old doctrines and beliefs to a new age of thought whereby the unique individuality of persons expressed in many ways is everywhere linked to One Divine Source. “Someone” speaks, not clearly, but seemingly expressing intuitively the underlying invisible energy that brings each person mysteriously to sense a need for newness in thought. New thoughts that focus on the god-like image imprinted on the psyche of every individual on planet earth. New thoughts which struggle to come to the surface of consciousness. Because these thoughts are still inexpressible, I feel like I am surrounded by words that I cannot “see” or “hear” yet I both see and hear them. I feel a contradictory sense of struggle and of deep peacefulness. I awake with a deep inner smile.*

In this chapter I dream read a theory of Reta and a fear of knowing through The Baby Shower Invitation and related dream images such as Reta’s sent and unsent letters. I elaborate the impact of literary engagement in dream reading on the transformation of fear into personal and professional action. I begin this chapter with the *Religuere* dream because

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<sup>11</sup>At the time of this dream, I recorded its etymology in my journal as to re-connect to the source from Latin *religuere*. Religio and ligare to connect with prefix re (again). That is, to re-connect to the source. I did not cite the source of this idea then but I use the word with that connotation.

the almost inexpressible depth of the paradox of struggle (fear) and peace together with the seemingly explicit dream thoughts of change to my personal version of Catholic doctrine. The dream helped me to understand something of the deep struggle necessary to overcome my fears and bring new beliefs to consciousness. Since the dream, I remind myself often that all is connected. What does the literary dream image of The Baby Shower Invitation tell me about the transformation of Reta's consciousness?

Reta and her family live in the house where the McGinn family lived before them. The McGinns are woven through *Unless*. While painting the bathroom, Reta retrieves a still sealed envelope addressed to "Mrs. Lyle McGinn" from behind the radiator. Inside the ancient envelope, is an invitation to a baby shower dated March 13, 1960. Reta is consumed with questions and imaginary answers to the riddle of Mrs. McGinn. Significant to this dream reading, is the fact that Reta does not know Mrs. McGinn's first name and she assumes that her mother-in-law, Lois, didn't care much for Mrs. McGinn and did not know her first name either. Both assumptions, we learn from Lois, are wrong. Lois is intrigued with Crystal McGinn and her family. Lois had been invited to have coffee with Crystal McGinn. Now, years later, she is still upset that Mrs. McGinn had overstepped and presumed to ask her which University she had gone to. "Not *if* she'd gone to university, but where. Mrs. McGinn had gone to Queen's and studied economics. ... They hadn't seen much of each other after that, nothing more than an occasional wave" (Shields, 2002, p. 297 emphasis in the original). Reta muses much about Mrs. McGinn, early feminism and the girdles of the 1960's. She skims aside her thoughts about feminism in her generation.

What is Reta afraid to know? I believe that she is afraid to know the depth of the patriarchy buried in her consciousness for if she "knows," she must be accountable and



responsible to do something. To take some action. She is afraid to know that she is different. That she is successful. That she can be both mother and author without damaging her children or their father. She is afraid to know that her need to be the perfect mother, to fit the pre-formed concrete mold of motherhood, arises from outside herself but also from within. She is afraid to know the painful amputation of being different from family and friends. She is afraid to know that she is afraid to know. She is afraid to know that she can invite her soul back but that the invitation comes with some cost. “The retrieval [of her soul] requires several ingredients: naked honesty, stamina, tenderness, sweetness, ventilation of rage, and humor. Combined, these make a song that calls the soul back home” (Estes, 1992, pp. 6-7).

This writing feels difficult and anxious as thoughts slip-slide, seemingly unwilling to emerge from ... from where? I write for an imaginary reader thus engendering some self-censorship and some hope that the reader will not know me. I write for an imaginary writer. My “well taught consciousness” (Grumet, 1988, p. 59) resists the consciousness that participates in the act of literary anthropology and in opening the door to potential change because of this reading and writing. As I write I am aware that the text stops and starts and stops again. This is not a text for the readerly “good” reader, that is, the reader who can predict where the text might go (Sumara, 1994). Sometimes the text leaps here and there. Sometimes there may be contradictions. Sometimes the text may be receivable. I am indebted to Dr. Carl Leggo who provided ideas from Barthes (1977) who discusses the notion of readerly and writerly texts and then adds “a third textual entity.”

The *receivable* would be the unreaderly text which catches hold. ... This text, guided, armed by a notion of the *unpublishable*, would require the following response: I can neither read nor write what you produce, but I *receive* it, like a fire, a drug, an enigmatic disorganization” (p. 118 emphasis in the original).

Dreams are a potential source of disruption to “normal.” Dreams compel me to think again, to feel again, to seek the hidden structures of the cultural education of my childhood with all its mimetic elements of gesture, imitation, mime and skill and its tacit knowledge that establishes my acceptance of conventional beliefs. Dreams have led me to recognize that I am an agent of the very patriarchy I despise rather than an agent of self. With each new reading of *Unless* as dream, I am struck by the possibilities dreams bring forth for the creation of a feminist consciousness.

In this chapter, I write a theory of Reta unlearning the world through a series of *as if* Reta dreams and the hermeneutic principles of dream interpretation as suggested by Bulkeley (1994). I write from within the world guided by what David G. Smith in a 2005 doctoral seminar on wisdom literature called the hermeneutic imagination. Sumara (1994) says that “The hermeneutic imagination seeks to illuminate the *conditions* which make particular interpretations possible, and furthermore to *imagine* what conditions might alter our interpretations” (p. 74 emphasis in the original). Hermeneutic interpretation creates meaning and emerges from “a dedicated *mindfulness* of the matter of interest” (Sumara, 1994, p. 75). Bulkeley elaborates six principles of hermeneutic dream interpretation emerging from the work of philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer. These principles are

1. encountering the dream as text;
2. having some awareness of my own personal and gendered cultural biases and their influence on the dream interpretations;
3. understanding that I have no knowledge of what will emerge from the interpretation and working to be open to startling, even radical and strange meanings;
4. playing with the dream and surrendering to its unfolding through a dialogue of question, answer and question again;
5. recognizing the criteria for internal validity, that is how well the interpretation harmonizes with the dream series or other aspects of the dream and external validity as in coherence between the interpretation and my other knowledge;

and examining how well the interpretation “works” with my personal needs and interests; and,

6. opening new areas of meaning, raising new questions, widening and broadening my understanding while recognizing endless, ceaseless interpretative possibilities (Gadamer, 1982, pp. 111-118).

Gadamer says that “The hermeneutical experience is the corrective by means of which the thinking reason escapes the prison of language, and it is itself constituted linguistically” (1982, p. 363). Dream reading *The Baby Shower Invitation* may evoke a tiny crack into the tomb of the inexpressible. Klages (1997) claims that in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous tells us that “we must look for women’s writing in places, and using instruments not traditionally associated with writing, because those traditions are defined by male authors” (p. 3). Cixous coined the phrase “*l’écriture féminine*” and at the same time claimed that novels are the “allies of representationalism” speaking a stable language that is pointed, pinned, penned, and phallic. It is poetry, says Cixous, that sets language free since it is closer to the unconscious and thus closer to the repressed, the female body and female sexuality (Klages, 1997). I believe that dreams, like poetry, can play a role in setting language free.

I chose *The Baby Shower Invitation* from myriad possibilities because the image haunted me through many readings of *Unless*. My reading of Reta Winters lets me think that not only do I want baby showers included in the Western literary canon but also I wish to include dreams as the doorway to myth which holds legitimate experience and legitimate knowledge. Dream reading *The Baby Shower Invitation* and related metaphors reveals several feminist issues and the emergence of feminist consciousness: subjectivity, sexuality, gender, the body, and political practice as absence from history and culture. It

also exposes struggles with feminist thought as being unpopular with many including some of my own many selves.

This chapter further supports my commitment to personal transformation together with some small assistance to the radical undermining of patriarchal consciousness. In the late 1980's and 1990's, I learned that my work to change education must begin with my commitment to personal and professional transformation. Without realizing it, I positioned myself as a curriculum reconceptualist dedicated to "constant redefinition" (Pinar, et al., 2004). I began to take pride in rather than cry too long over being called a bitch as well as ballsy, determined and aggressive together with defiant, incorrigible, forward, rebellious, and a troublemaker. In February 1993, I found *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*. Among many other treasures in Estes' book, I found *La Loba* who "sings from the knowing of *los ovarios*, a knowing from deep within the body, deep within the mind, deep within the soul" (1992, p. 33). Also, I found the myth of *The Handless Maiden* (Estes, 1992, pp. 387 - 455). My work with women and dreams confirms that to dream of various forms of bandaged, injured, cut off, and shrunken hands has profound transformative implications for the dreamer. When Reta dreams The Baby Shower Invitation, she may be receiving a psychic invite to re-grow her hands thus becoming her own all-one woman-person, a woman who "only wants to be human."

Reta translates for a feminist writer. She reads Derrida. She reads Virginia Woolf. Perhaps Reta reads at a distance. Perhaps she suffers from an abstract, disembodied, intellectual feminism. Perhaps this is an invitation to an embodied, lived experience of the disintegration of the boundaries between inside/outside. Perhaps this is Reta's metaphorical gut response invitation to re-grow her hands which have been cut off by the foolish ruling

benevolent Father, editor Scribano, who “dies” from a fall down the stairs thus becoming an abject relentless superego in the unconscious. Myth lives in the psyche. In ancient women’s religion, the Goddess wielded the ax that ritually cut off the maiden’s hands as an initiation rite. Today feminist writers such as Belenky (1986), Boler (1986), DeSalvo (1999), and Doll (1995) might refer to this as finding her own voice, defining her own subjectivity or releasing her imagination in the postmodern equivalent of the myth of *The Handless Maiden*. These stories in which women are taken down and cut apart to be used in another way are the work of the underworld where helpful, integrative forces await.

Transformative woman stories must be told as the initiation of the development of a common ground between masculine and feminine resulting in women who are “still friendly, but beneath the skin ... most definitely no longer tame” (Estes, 1992, p. 454). Perhaps Reta will grow her own garden, destroy the ideological boundaries separating masculine and feminine, reason and emotion. Perhaps she will let the wilderness arise in what has been a well-structured, clipped and cultivated garden.

I deliberately chose not to focus a feminist theory of Reta through a Jungian lens. After much thought and reading several versions of the Demeter-Persephone myth, I chose not to elaborate Reta as a Demeter figure although a case could be made for Mother Demeter aspects of Reta as provider of nutrition and balanced meals and a mother who persists in seeking her daughter. Daly (1978) writes that Jung says of “Demeter (and those of her kind) that ‘she compels the gods by her stubborn persistence to grant her the right of possession over her daughter’” (p. 254). Daly is incensed that Jung confuses righteous wrath with stubbornness, Demeter’s right to a loving relationship with her daughter as the right of possession, and even more infuriating, that the gods *grant* her this right! Even

worse, Jung refers to the Divine Daughter, Persephone, as the wife of Zeus/Pluto, the wife to whom the god must *surrender* each summer. Daly (1978) definitively discards “the illusion of equality projected through Jung’s androcratic animus-anima balancing act” (p. 280). My experience with Christian dream workshops led by Christian women leads me to concur with Daly when she explains that women are trained to be thankful for “token inclusion” and “complementarity.”

Daly is even more scathing in her comments about Freud, “Tokenism is embedded in the very fabric of Jung’s ideology, in contrast to the obvious misogyny of Freud’s fallacious phallocentrism” (1978, p. 280). Thinking about the number of times Reta refers to Norah as good, nice, and docile, I am inclined to think that Reta’s long, calm, slow, quiet rise to anger suggests she is fighting against her inner voice which tells her that to be “normal” is to accept the lobotomized, tame behavior of “indoctrinated, artifactual, man-made femininity” (Daly, 1978, p. 287). It is entirely possible that Jung would have dismissed Reta as animus ridden, the negative side of the archetypal bitch, when she finally came to voice her disgust with the patriarchy (Aguiar, 2001, pp. 6 - 9).

Reta’s is a well enculturated consciousness learned through experiences which have fashioned her orientations to the world. This implicit knowledge is shaped by her participation in a particular family, religion or not, as well as education, political and economic systems, in short, her culture. Reta lives through multiple uninterrogated assumptions and the traditions, theories and authoritative discourses that have shaped her independently of what she may or may not have chosen because they have not been subjected to conscious thought. This is the struggle to bring forth a world which has “no institutional privilege because its practices are in opposition to socially sanctioned views

and normative meanings. It is the discourse of subversion” (Britzman, 2003, p. 42).

Perhaps dreams are the voice of struggle. Like in a theory of Norah, I now turn to consider excerpts from *Unless* written *as if* they were nocturnal dreams.

***Excerpts from Unless (Shields, 2002) considered as a series of Reta’s dreams***

**Dream #1**

I am painting the room in our house where the McGinns lived before us. I find a baby shower invitation in a sealed envelope behind a bathroom radiator, one of those old-fashioned, many ribbed hot water affairs with ornamental spines. It is addressed to “Mrs. Lyle McGinn.” It is dated March 13, 1961. A woman sits off in the shadows. She laughs a tiny, whispery laugh, and draws her hand up against her mouth. I am perplexed (Shields, p. 53).

**Dream #2**

I am at my desk writing. Around me are hazy voices in chorus repeating “How did you find the time? How did you find the time?” (p. 4). The scene changes. I am sitting in an office with a small, chilly, stooped, round-headed man who is slow to smile. He is an unattractive man, almost entirely lipless beneath a bony domineering nose. “Tell me Mrs. Winters, how are you able to balance your family and professional life? Wouldn’t you prefer to pursue your own writing rather than translate Dr. Westerman’s work? How did you and your husband meet? What does he think of your writing?” I stare back hard. A woman laughs. We are in a cappuccino bar in mid-Toronto. I am wearing a soft jade jacket of cashmere lined with silk. It has crystal buttons and mandarin collar. My drab beige raincoat hangs over a chair. The interviewer ignores me as he stares across the room at Gore Vidal. Then I am reading a bold black headline that says, “Mrs. Winters looked all of her forty-three years.” I shrink inside myself (pp. 30 – 34).

**Dream #3**

A squirming trilobite stares out from the lake bottom where it is stuck in the thick mud (p. 112).

**Dream #4**

In the great, wide bed (in the writer’s suite), I have a disturbing but not unfamiliar dream — it is the dream I always have when I am away from Orangetown, away from the family. I am standing in the kitchen at home, producing a complicated meal for guests, but there is not enough food to work with. In the fridge sits a single egg<sup>11</sup> and maybe a tomato. How am I going to feed all those hungry mouths (p. 83)?

**Dream #5**

Norah is attending a Saturday-morning story hour. She is about four. She sits cross-legged and absolutely still, wearing only a nametag. She is listening to the adventures of Bluebeard and looks ready to shed tears over the fate of the twelve dancing princesses (p. 38).

**Dream #6**

There is a pile of unsent letters beside a mastectomy bra. A very angry woman screams her outrage against the author of a story expressing disgust with the garment. I try to explain that I have written several protest letters in the past. I don’t say that I didn’t send the letters or sign my real name to them (p. 309).

**Dream #7**

Tom and I have sex. I feel guilty. I think, “We have regular sex and we are able, mostly, to sleep. It’s almost negligent of us, two heartbroken parents; yet to all appearances, we are able to carry on with our lives” (p. 184).

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 8 for research on the mythology of the cosmic egg

Dream #8

I see *My Thyme is Up*, newly reviewed and found not simple, but subtle and subversive. On the cover of *Thyme in Bloom* the name Dr. Charles Casey appears in the same size type as Reta Winters. My mind flies up to the box-room skylight, from whence it looks down on me, mockingly (p. 318).

I read the emerging feminist consciousness of Reta Winters through the above *as if* dream series in the course of which the “I” of Reta is rebirthed in the writing of *Unless* which begins in June of the new century and ends in February. Reta unfolds in every sentence as she comes to know and not know herself, and to know herself again differently. This is a time of ambiguity and difficulty, a liminal time. The online dictionary at [www.datasegment.com](http://www.datasegment.com) has an interesting definition of liminality.<sup>12</sup> Our rational culture does not encourage bringing forth a new world. It looks for a life-text that enables rationality, order, control, and predictability. Instead, through a dream reading, we might make the world strange. We cannot predict what the dream reading will bring forth.

According to Richardson (1997),

Cultures provide prefabricated narratives for hooking up the events of our lives. As cultural studies and discourse analysis demonstrate, those narratives are multiple, contradictory, changing and differentially available. As agents in our own construction, we choose among available cultural stories, apply them to our own experiences ... [and] often operate within contradictory implied narratives, and sometimes seek stories that transgress the culturally condoned ones (p. 181).

Conscious minds, human societies and their institutions are mutually produced. Reta Winters is “an implied subject—implied, that is, from acts of expression—the self is a social and linguistic construct, a nexus of meaning rather than an unchanging entity” (Kerby, 1991, p. 34). Reta’s consciousness is “shot through with cultural influences ... [she is] in the firm grip of the cultural web ... [and] prospers in proportion to the richness of [her] links with culture” (Donald, 2001, p. 151). Reta like her author is white, middle

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<sup>12</sup> <http://onlinedictionary.datasegment.com> defines liminality as a “temporary state during a rite of passage when the participant lacks social status or rank, is required to follow specified forms of conduct, and is expected to show obedience and humility.”



class, and has three daughters. She is well-educated, middle age, and lives with Tom to whom she is not married but is. As Reta writes she narrates Tom, her daughters Norah, Natalie and Christine, friends, mother-in-law, Lois, and Danielle Westerman. Two other characters are important to her emerging consciousness. Her first editor, Mr. Scribano, “sat in his big father bear chair” when she met him in his office (Shields, 2002, p. 176). He “dies” from a fall down the stairs just as Reta “awakens” and says “Suddenly it was clear to me,” that “the novel, if it is to survive, must be redrafted” (Shields, 2002, p. 172). Her second editor, Mr. Springer, prods her into facing her growing knowledge of the casual disregard for women. *Thyme in Bloom* might be a metaphor for the flowering of Reta.

Reta writes these individuals as characters in her culture as she creates herself as partner, mother, friend, writer, translator and daughter-in-law. Consciousness includes “conscious capacity [which] is ultimately the foundation of self-awareness” (Donald, 2001, p. 7). Reta continuously generates her sense of personal identity as she narrates her past (Kerby, 1991). “I dabbled in writing. It was my macramé, my knitting. Not long after, however, I did start to get serious and joined a local writers’ workshop” (Shields, 2002, p. 4). Macrame. Knitting. Reta becomes serious about her writing, but

the cognitive tools that we use to do much of our thinking seem to be dependent on our cultural institutions, and all our symbolic tools are imported from outside—that is, from culture. This raises questions about the sources of human awareness, and the role of consciousness in a being that is capable of such intense collective identification (Donald, 2001, p. 23).

I would re-write Donald’s use of “all” to “many” or “most, because I believe that the unconscious, if we are noticing our dreams, brings us tools from the inside, that is the psyche. I think that Reta must question the source of her awareness. It is her writing that brings her to question. To question is to live in ambiguity and ambiguity is a perturbation

of consciousness. Fleener (2002) and Capra (1996) explicate Ilya Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures. Capra (1996) writes

Many of the key characteristics of dissipative structures—the sensitivity to small changes in the environment, the relevance of previous history at critical points of choice, the uncertainty and unpredictability of the future—are revolutionary new concepts from the point of view of classical science but are an integral part of human experience (p. 193).

Culture, predominately the language of the patriarchy, constitutes the symbolic as well as woman's subject position; thus escape is difficult. Since life and cognition are inseparably connected, when Reta links writing to macramé and knitting, she conjures up a web of writing herself through the unpredictability of her beliefs. The many nodes and branches in the web include being mother to Norah and the "small changes" such as thoughts triggered about possible explanations for Norah's behavior as Reta reads the daily papers and magazines which come to her home. House/home in dreams may be a metaphor for the inner world, the psyche with its many rooms. The papers and magazines may be the potential for ideas both those Reta likes and those that perturb her inner belief system. The Baby Shower Invitation may be linked with a shower of new ideas or perhaps a shower of moisture for the growth of the soul.

The human mind generates and assimilates culture; it is a bio-cultural hybrid and thus cannot come into existence on its own. Donald points out that from our earliest birth as a species, humanity has relied upon collectively created "distributed" systems of thought and memory in which intellectual work is shared across many nervous systems (Donald, 2001). Similar ideas are found in Houston (1987), Capra, (1997), Johnson (2001), and Russell (1983). When this distributive network is loaded with the intellectual work of the male of the species, such as in the great Western literary canon, and when cultural

achievements are the programming for the communication networks forming the collective human mind, and when as very young children we assume our basic “tribal identity” and “social group” through mimesis, what then is the bio-cultural mind of woman? When models of thinking, feeling, perception, and sensation are built up from birth or before, reinforced by language, social institutions, and the behavior of those around us, change entails struggle. In the Western cultural canon, seeing, experiencing, noticing, and feeling are subordinate to thinking, argument, analysis, and received knowledge. Change then is bounded by invisible underground chains forged as consciousness through learned bio-cultural frames of reference. How is it possible to shift patriarchal consciousness?

Perhaps The Baby Shower Invitation leads Reta to rebirthing, to considering more carefully her place in her world. My personal experience with changing belief at midlife attests to the difficulty of change. This is very difficult work. The notion of individualism, that I can somehow “think for myself,” and that I am “self-made” is rendered absurd by Donald’s argument that “Culture distributes cognitive activity across many brains and dominates the minds of its members” (2001, p. 150). Grumet (1988) argues that the deceptive dream of individualism, independence is dead; it is just not buried. I understand that in Western culture we deeply believe in individualism. However, I believe that our thinking is greatly influenced by our participation in a particular culture. There is no doubt that I am powerfully indebted to all those who are part of my becoming. For reasons made obvious in this dissertation, I also believe it is possible to learn to think independently, to extricate oneself from patriarchal thought to attain varying degrees of autonomy. Writing about perception, its shaping and our potential to be misled by our past experiences, Rosenblatt (1978) asserts that we can learn new ways and make new interpretations. She

points out that “As important as the interdependence of the self and the world is the potentiality of choice among alternatives, the capacity to revise and reshape our perceptions and our actions” (p. 172). At the same time, Catherine Belsey says that

meanings control us, inculcate obedience to the discipline inscribed in them. And this is by no means purely institutional or confined to the educational process. A generation ago campaigners for women’s rights recognized (not for the first time) the degree to which ‘woman’ meant domesticity, nurturing, dependence, and the ways in which anti-feminist jokes, for instance, reproduced the stereotypes of the helpless little girl or the aging harridan (2002, p. 4).

Belsey explains, for example, how freedom, equality and choice have become code words that uphold the ideologies of capitalism, “... the inscription of a point of view does not have to be conscious or deliberate” (Belsey, 2002, p. 25). Supported by Oliver (2004), Belsey explains how it is possible for the oppressed to reaffirm the values of the repressive apparatus even while remaining oppressed. Cultural inscription comes through “religion, the family, the political system, even unions, the media, sport, literature, [and] the arts ... [all] produce and reproduce the meanings and values which represent the relationship we imagine we have to our real conditions of existence” (2002, p. 34). How then does one break the codes inscribed through culture? This difficult process is unfolding in the consciousness of Reta Winters.

The dream of The Baby Shower Invitation could be considered an initiatory dream, that is, a dream that signals the beginning of a process of change. “Dr. Jung assigned great importance to the first dream in an analysis [since] it often has anticipatory value” (Jung & Franz, 1964, p. 329). *Unless* provides some psychological insight into the struggle of the unfolding woman consciousness of Reta Winters as she reveals her inner conversations while developing the sequel to *My Thyme is Up*, entitled *Thyme in Bloom*. She writes her considerations of the many possible explanations offered *by* her and *to* her for Norah’s

silent vigil on Bloor Street. She feeds her family, cleans the house, has lunch with her friends, shops, meets and talks to her editors. She is an ordinary *woman*. She discusses translation and the vagaries of life with Danielle Westerman. She feels guilty. She feels guilty because she has sex with Tom. She is afraid of her desire. Perhaps she keeps busy because “what is waiting for [her], in a suddenly idle moment, is the seep of rage” (Aguiar, 2001, p. 78 quoting Toni Morrison in *Jazz*).

As Reta carries on her normal life, her mind considers many possibilities. She watches her mind, hears her mind, sees her mind. The specter of her absent daughter hangs silently in every room of her consciousness. Still, she is an *ordinary* woman. She wonders how she copes with Norah’s absence. Kerby (1991), Donald (2002) and Lodge (2002) suggest that literature must form part of the database of consciousness studies. Donald states that

the best writers have pushed the subjective exploration of the mind much further than would be permissible in clinical or experimental psychology ... writers always have an implicit psychology, which reflects the way the culture regards the human condition, including the condition of the psyche itself, and of awareness. Novelists in particular often explore our deepest assumptions about awareness. Their portrayals of it constitute a vast, unsystematic collection of phenomena observed from the inside and are possibly the most authoritative descriptions we have (2001, p. 78).

Lodge (2002) reaches a similar conclusion to Donald and Kerby. He states that the contest between literary and scientific theories of consciousness is unnecessary. “Literature constitutes a kind of knowledge about consciousness which is *complementary* to scientific knowledge” (Lodge, 2002, p. 5). Further, Lodge (2002) quotes Stuart Sutherland in the *International Dictionary of Psychology*, “Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon; it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved” (p. 6). Lodge also cites physicist James Trefil who concedes that “no matter how my brain works,

no matter how much interplay there is between my brain and my body, one single fact remains ... I am aware of a self that looks out at a world from somewhere inside my skull” (Lodge, 2002, p. 8). As a dream, *The Baby Shower Invitation* tells us that something is happening within the “I” that thinks, feels, perceives, has sensation, and calls itself Reta Winters.

Reta is a very busy and unified consciousness “center.” One of her polyphrenic “yous” assesses multilayered situations in depth, simultaneously, and very deliberately. She monitors her mind and monitors her own monitoring:

I think I was too busy thinking about the business of being a writer, about being writerly and fretting over whether Tom’s ego was threatened and being in Danielle’s shadow, never mind Derrida, and needing my own writing space and turning thirty-five and feeling older than I’ve ever felt since (Shields, 2002, p. 7).

As a character in *Unless*, Reta demonstrates metacognition, that is self-consciousness, that is mostly “unspoken, yet *potentially* spoken” (Donald, 2001, p. 84). A supportive birth metaphor, an upcoming 44th birthday as well as Norah’s sitting shivah<sup>13</sup> for Goodness on a square of pavement on Bloor Street are both crisis and turning point. Kerby (1991) quotes Roland Barthes about the “reality” of narrative, both literary fiction and historical discourse,

The function of narrative is not to ‘represent,’ it is to constitute a spectacle. ... Narrative does not show, does not imitate. ... ‘What takes place’ in a narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally *nothing*; what happens is language alone, the adventure of language ... (p. 93 emphasis in the original).

*Unless* constitutes a deeply understated spectacle. Reta keeps her fears for Norah dreadfully private. Perhaps Reta is self-conscious about her emerging feminism, having not considered it necessary even though she translates for feminist, Danielle Westerman. Or

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<sup>13</sup> Shiva is “the Destroyer,” the third member of the Hindu Trimurti, along with Brahma and Vishnu. Shivah is a Jewish mourning period of seven days observed after the funeral of a close relative. Webster’s College Dictionary, Random House, New York: 2001.

perhaps she fears the phallogocentric<sup>14</sup> compulsion to pin down, stabilize, order or pen the concept. Reta refuses to be a public “spectacle” by exhibiting anger, rage, sense of loss or deep fear. But Reta’s

years of looking straight into a straight mirror have reflected back clearly only the spectacle and rule of the father. We know it well. But we also know our otherness by virtue of being in the dark and on the outside of those refractions: knowing ourselves in the hidden and oblique spaces accessible through the curved specular mirror (Irigaray in Luke & Gore (Eds.), 1992, p. 3).

Reta has voiced her concerns with self-identity but only marginally—now Norah’s defection from the school of the patriarchy to the school of the streets precipitates a crisis. The Invitation becomes urgent. She experiences more difficulty with “the endurance of cultural myths with accounts of experience that contradict them” (Grumet, 1988, p. 60). Reta begins to unlearn the world which has taught her that identity must remain intact and predictable. Kerby states

Questions of identity and self-understanding arise primarily in crisis situations and at certain turning points in our routine behavior. Such events often call for self-appraisal. That we have, at any moment, the *belief* in a continuous and relatively unchanging identity is itself often little more than one story we have learned to tell ourselves (1991, p. 7).

Faced with her daughter’s crisis, Reta’s questions can no longer be denied.

The Baby Shower Invitation may be an opening to the question of whether Reta can escape from the belief structuring imposed by language and its attendant ideologies (Greene, 1995; Lewis, 1993). Reta’s writing challenges the ruling ideology through the process of feminist emergence. She begins to look at things as though they could be otherwise. She taps into the flow of her imagination (Greene, 1995). Through writing and re-writing character’s lives in *Thyme in Bloom* and through her sent and unsent letters, she

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<sup>14</sup> Made up of penis, words, and centered. Used by feminist critics to indicate language driven by male reasoning and featuring misogynistic logic or argument.

births multiple perspectives. She reinterprets her early experiences and considers the possibility that she can “carry out the possible rather than the necessary” (Greene, 1995, p. 21). Through a combination of imaginative experiences and emergent thought, she begins to work through her fear-imposed inertia. Reta is a translator. She must break up and deconstruct a phallogocentric language and cultural system if she desires to unlearn her world and conceive a new consciousness.

(Im)agining things being otherwise may be a first step toward acting on the belief that they can be changed. ... A space of freedom opens before the person moves to choose in the light of possibility; she or he feels what it signifies to be an initiator and an agent, existing among others but with the power to choose for herself or himself (Greene, 1995, p. 22).

Reta is not concerned with “the process or unfolding of life events, but rather makes the writing itself an aspect of the selfhood ... [she] ... experiences and brings into being” (Luce-Kapler, 2004, p. 4). Reta writes herself, enacting subjectivity and identity changes in multiple and various ways. Her writing signifies “both continuity with an ongoing life and a community, and dissociation within that life—gaps, amputations, silences” (Perreault, 1995, p. 4). Through her language Reta transgresses the traditional woman’s roles and continually produces change and renewal in her self. Reta is a fluid experience.

A number of questions are unspoken through Reta’s rebirthing: “Who will construct the categories into which “I” and “we” fit ourselves? Whose words will we attend to? Whose texts will we honor?” Rather than being named by a male God as in Genesis or by man as historically constructed by man both writing and then reading Genesis, feminists declare their intention to name the “I” who writes. Reta Winters refuses to comply with editor Springer’s condescending patriarchal, universalizing, assumed necessity to rename, reshape, and re-author herself, *aka Thyme in Bloom*. In the game of “I-den-ti-ty” politics



(Shields, 2002, p. 275), woman silence and erasure, Springer attempts to speak *for*, to speak *about* and to speak *as*. Reta reveals Springer's fear of being rivaled by a female writer with a female character at the story center. He wants Reta's submissive return to her proper sphere and the transfer of control of her writing, her body, her self, to the discretion of a male editor. At first through flattery and then through demands, he *suggests* that Reta make a *few* editorial changes to her novel:

1. recreate Roman, the trombonist, as a violinist;
2. enlarge Roman's role ... his interiority; at midlife he wants, yearns, for more;
3. change the setting from Wychwood to New York or some other large urban city;
4. change the title to *Bloom*, "it gestures toward the Bloom of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom, that great Everyman;
5. change the author's name, Reta Winters to R. R. Summers. Does it matter if it sounds like its male? "You're dealing with universal themes. You've gone beyond the gendered world;" and the final "tweak,"
6. "I am talking about Roman being the moral center of this book, and Alicia, for all her charms, is not capable of that role, surely you can see that. She writes fashion articles. She talks to her cat. She does yoga. She makes rice casseroles" (Shields, 2002, p. 285).

"Because she's a woman" (Shields, 2002, p. 286). "So, who is this madwoman, constructing a tottering fantasy of female exclusion and pinning it on her daughter" (Shields, 2002, p. 227)? Reta is "vulnerable to being named from the outside and thus, paradoxically, created for others' purposes while being eliminated for [her] own" (Perreault, 1995, p. 6). What if Reta succumbs to the Evil Trinity of supreme language, identity and power, to "Man is the self; woman is his Other" (Tong, 1989, p. 224)?

But Reta has been writing more than a novel. Norah comes home "safe." Reta draws the line. Finally. She is outraged. Fueled by the depth of rage and anger revealed to her through the mastectomy bra dream image, she signs her own name to the sixth letter and sends it. This sent letter is prompted by a story in a magazine in which a Czech

philosophy professor, newly arrived in Los Angeles, is disgusted by, among other things, a MASTECTOMY BRA [emphasis in original]. Reta voices her shock and outrage.

Get a grip, Mr. Sandor. ...The Czech professor in your story wonders why he gags at the straight-in-the-eye sight of a mastectomy bra. I suggest the obvious: that he hates women, and his hatred of women extends to.... I am shockingly offended (Shields, 2002, p. 308).

Reta explains that she has written letters in the past, ... but I have never mailed any of them or even signed them. This is because I don't want to be killed, as your professor almost kills his wife, ... but now I don't mind if you kill me. I have suffered a period of estrangement from my daughter - she is now at home, safe - ... (Shields, 2002, p. 309).

Reta signs her name, not truthfully, but as it appears in the telephone book. Finally, through the space of her daughter, Reta has “found spaces for questioning the cultural labels of women's discourse (e.g., too personal, too emotional) and the cultural values (e.g., mundane), which emerge in commonsense logics as powerful first premises that are increasingly hard to challenge” (Ratcliffe, 1996, p. 24). Her questioning has spun her into honesty. She publicly contests the dominant culture, “Contestation is that act when the powerless refuse to live by the definitions of the powerful” (Lewis, 1993, p. 127). Metaphorically, Reta accepts the invitation. She authors herself. Reta wants. Reta desires and “trouble [becomes] a scandal with the sudden intrusion, the unanticipated agency, of a female ‘object’ who inexplicably returns the glance, reverses the gaze, and contests the place and authority of the masculine position” (Butler, 1990, p. vii). Just at midlife, just when “female trouble” (Butler, 1990) becomes public, just when hot flashes send sweat pouring over the body in the middle of a meeting with Important People, Reta disrupts the thinly veiled notion of masculine superiority, entitlement and normative privileged place as the moral center of the universe. Reta has transcended the “split between personal experience and social form” (Lewis, 1993, p. 177).

In writing of women's silence, Lewis (1993) concludes that acting counter to the dominant culture through feminist practices in fact "*creates* rather than ameliorates, a feeling of threat ..." (p. 178 emphasis in the original). Threats. It's the constant subtle and not so subtle threats of abandonment by family and friends. It's the never-ending uphill struggle with unequal power relations. It's the psychological/social/sexual as well as economic and political marginality. It's the threat of violence. It's the fear of being labeled deviant if I don't follow the prescribed rules. It's the fear of knowing my own dark side while pursuing the conventional feminine quest for Goodness. It's the fear of being laughed at. It's floating fears that I prefer not even to know (Lewis, 1993). I just want to be normal.

Women's writing through the "ordinariness" of their experience is a challenge to the Herculean hero myth, a struggle for power.

(In a set of social relations where women's ideal discursive state within phallogocentric discourse has been defined as silence, a woman speaking is seen to be in and of itself a political act. Under these conditions the very act of speaking becomes an intrusion and a potential basis for a violent reaction on the part of those who have decreed our silence (Lewis, 1993, p. 128).

Reta writes her question, speaks her question in five letters, only mailing the sixth one to which she signs her "authentic" name. Using the patriarchy's traditional technology, *logos*, the word, she reauthorizes and empowers her self. She re-names herself. Rita (Reta) also shifts her consciousness to a new place. She uncovers both her body (emotions) and her head (intellect). She transgresses the Biblical injunction in *1 Corinthians 11* and *Timothy 2, 9-13* which says that a woman must cover her head while praying or prophesying. I see this as the uncovering of feminist consciousness in Reta Winters. Who is Reta Winters anyway?

Reading Reta as dream, I needed to explore why I was so frustrated with Reta's slow-to-anger response to editor Springer and several disgusting magazine articles. I am still not sure. Reta's inner voice lives in creative tension with her world voice which seems to be never endingly agreeable and most always sunny, convivial and pleasant even while her mind works endlessly on the Norah problem. Reta writes herself bland; she wears a beige raincoat. She dusts the furniture. She modulates her outer voice. Her inner voice shrieks and questions. I want her to stand up and scream. I want her to do *something*. Do *anything*. I am slow to recognize my own fear and its relationship to the fictional Reta. It's the patriarchal requirement for Goodness. Norah's sign points to the masculinized feminine. It's that notion that woman is goodness, kindness, gentleness, intuitiveness but never rage. It's my own inability to express the anger. Where is the goddess of destruction who has no fear of expressing devastation as a tornado or as winter expresses the need to renew the earth through the life, death, rebirth cycle? I need to recognize that "one of the primary forces of domination is that the Western subject's privilege is secured by forcing those oppressed to carry their affective burden—guilt, shame, anger, depression (Oliver, 2004, p. 81). And to carry the burden in silence. I think about the conventions of my childhood. Anger is a sin, bad manners, unladylike, and in my mother's voice, "Only dogs get angry." Normal.

However, Reta's anger and pain with the canon, her patriarchal editor, misogynist magazine writers, and her daughter's square of cardboard on Bloor Street may become resistance and her "subjectivity can be a product of conflict" (Oliver, 2004).

Finally, through the space of her daughter, Reta has "found spaces for questioning the cultural labels of women's discourse (e.g., too personal, too emotional) and the cultural

value (e.g., mundane), which emerge in commonsense logics as powerful first premises that are increasingly hard to challenge” (Ratcliffe, 1996, p. 24). Reta has accepted the invitation and her questioning has spun her into honesty. Reta is a “self ... clearly in process, and cohering [that] in no way suggests a necessary closure, or an absolutely fixed identity, but rather a basis from which to interact with one’s contexts” (Perreault, 1995, p. 17). *Unless* occurs within a transition space that, “[can be] ‘entered into’ or ‘used’ as that zone or site in which a ‘knowing self’ is experienced as knower and (un) known, engendered and ambivalent, embodied and imagined” (Perreault, 1995, p. 17). According to Perreault,

It is this “T” that works for the social, material, and personal transformations that we know as feminism, seeking an alternative both to the suppression of difference that totalization implies and to the dissociations suggested by a fragmented subjectivity (1995, p. 17).

This gesture toward cohesion makes it possible to participate, to embrace “a process of transformation as a revolutionary concept, and as a feminist principle” (Perreault, 1995, p. 18). This position is consistent with Catherine Belsey’s observation that, “In the fact that the subject is a process lies the possibility of transformation (Constructing, 50)” (Belsey, 2002, p. 18).

I believe that a dream reading of Reta through The Baby Shower Invitation enables a look at an aspect of the unconscious, images in a dream, but that we then use consciousness as the “only feature that allows us to construct a credible scenario for our own evolution” (Donald, 2001, p. 7). Donald (2001) concedes that we have no theory to explain how awareness could have emerged from a material thing such as a brain and that it is very difficult to understand how that happens:

A mature theory of consciousness will have to describe not only the causal chains linking the activity of the brain to the detailed properties of subjective awareness but also the transformative powers associated with conscious capacity and the feeling tones that pervade conscious experience, including such things as emotions, moods, urges, and subtle feelings like doubt, envy, and ambivalence (p. 8).

Donald (2001) goes on to say that our cultures may “threaten our intellectual autonomy,” and “rob us of the freedom to think certain kinds of thoughts,” and that “few of our ideas and experiences can really be called our own, so thoroughly have they been washed and filtered through the fine cloth of the culture itself” (p. 9). I have argued that Reta is enmeshed in patriarchal culture and that extrication is difficult, almost impossible without help from the dreams arising from the unconscious together with conscious effort. Further, I suggest that Donald’s (2001) “fine cloth” of Western culture has “washed and filtered” the power of the unconscious from everyday life since, for example, dreams do not fit well with Enlightenment cause and effect thinking. Dreams threaten the established order. Dreams remain the provenance of “primitive” cultures. Donald reveals his privileging of rational, phallogocentric views in biological and cultural theories of consciousness and dreams when he says,

There is a coherence, an interconnectedness, about conscious experiences that makes them very different from unconscious ones, where ideas and images can coexist in a pell-mell, disorganized manner and no drive for continuity *tries to impose order* [emphasis mine]. This can be seen in the strange, irrational chaos of dreams, where there are seemingly no rules (2001, p. 213).

Since the conscious mind receives input “from any incoming channel that happens to be opened” (Donald, 2001, p. 220), perhaps if education and curriculum were to validate the unconscious and the dream experience, that is, accept the unconscious as another potentially open channel, dreams could provide new images to the conscious mind from which to “construct a world”—perhaps a world very unlike our patriarchal culture.

Carl G. Jung rooted the collective unconscious in cultural archetypes and myths that are, according to Donald (2001),

archaic cultural inventions that have hung around and may have sunk temporarily from view. However, they originated in consciousness and can return to it at anytime. They are not permanently and by their very nature out of reach (pp. 286 - 287).

Donald rejects the power of the unconscious. For Jung the collective unconscious is very powerful and also feminine. Although feminists have rejected aspects of Jungian theory, there appears to be general agreement about the fact of the existence and power of the unconscious. I think Ratcliffe (1996) would agree with Weedon (1997) who says that

Radical-feminist discourse ... reject[s] patriarchal concepts of meaning, and the ways in which they have defined women. Instead of arguing over the facts of women's nature, countering one set of scientific "truths" with another, radical feminists, such as American writers Mary Daly and Susan Griffin, attempt to redefine females by subverting accepted language and conventional rationality and producing new meanings and new subject positions. Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (1979) is a powerful example of this strategy (p. 128).

Many feminists challenge the Symbolic Order even while recognizing that the words available to make the challenge are the words of the Order (Tong, 1989). I would argue that dreams provide a possible avenue to subvert accepted language and conventional rationality. Mary Daly used many strategies to undermine patriarchal discourse including spinning a new language (Rupprecht, 1999, pp. 99 - 135). Spinning feels a bit like the language taught to me through dreams, a language which seems to undermine the discourse of the Father and the Symbolic Order.

Weedon (1997) summarizes the theories of Freud and Lacan then concludes that, "The theory that women have no access to the symbolic order in their own right has led feminists to develop theories of women's language as a constant repressed threat to the patriarchal symbolic order" (p. 53). She shows how Karen Horney, as early as 1917,

replaced the importance of the penis with the importance of female capacity for motherhood. Further she outlines the work of Nancy Chodorow, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous on, “the importance of the pre-Oedipal phase of psychosexual development—that time before femininity or masculinity when the infant is in a symbiotic relationship with her mother” (Weedon, 1997, p. 54). It is “Chodorow’s theorization of the psychic structures of femininity and masculinity in terms of the practice of parenting [and schooling]” that partially informs Grumet in *Bitter Milk* (1988). According to Donovan (2006), Luce Irigaray offers methods such as mimesis, strategic essentialism, utopian ideals, and employing novel language as some of the methods central to changing contemporary culture thereby altering the situation of women in Western culture.

Irigaray both seriously criticized and rejected the phallocentrism of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and was ostracized by the Lacanian community. According to Donovan (2006), Irigaray contends that

(T)he patriarchal definition of female sexuality caused women to lose touch with female-defined femininity which is located in the female body and its capacity for multiple and heterogeneous pleasure ... it is a theory of the ‘male’ rather than the ‘feminine’ ... [and she] argues for an integral relationship between sexuality and language” (p. 61)

Woman language is “... nonlinear and incoherent, and incomprehensible to male language with its focus on the logic of reason” (Weedon, 1997, p. 61). Dreams have long been dismissed as irrational. Could dreams be the repressed language of the feminine? “Woman ... just barely separates from her-self some chatter, an exclamation, a half-secret, a sentence left in suspense—when she returns to it, it is only to set out again from another point of pleasure or pain” (Irigaray, 103, in Weedon, 1997, p. 62). As Reta says,

Yes, I must get home. A long day, yes. Rain, rain. The weather forecast. Goodbye. My umbrella, good heavens, I almost forgot. Yes, busy, busy. Parked just outside.



Don't really need. Still have the dog to walk. Yes, I will, of course I will. Thank you again, thank you both. You must be glad to see the end of a long day (Shields, 2002, p. 47).

Weedon focuses on the impossibility of defining a feminine practice of writing but she does link feminine writing within the patriarchy to women writers.

Writing becomes a way of giving voice to repressed female sexuality and the female libido which it sustains [Weedon quoting Cixous]. By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her. ... Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth (Weedon, 1997, p. 65).

Reta writes her self. Perhaps she writes in response to The Baby Shower Invitation pressing Reta to push, that is, to birth her self into more and deeper awareness of the unconscious resources within.

According to Weedon (1997), subjectivity is in *process* in the work of Julie Kristeva who “argues that there are feminine forms of signification which cannot be contained by the rational,thetic structure of the Symbolic Order and which therefore threaten its sovereignty” (p. 67). According to Weedon (1997), Kristeva terms feminine modes of signification *semiotic*. Symbolic and semiotic modes of signification are aligned with feminine and masculine energies and all signification incorporates both modes but

(T)he semiotic, which has its origins in the pre-symbolic, pre-Oedipal, is heavily repressed. The representation of the feminine by the phallogentric organization of the drives on the resolution of the Oedipus and castration complexes gives rise to what Kristeva calls the unconscious semiotic chora. This is the site of *negativity*, from which constant challenges to the subject of the symbolic order and symbolic meanings come (p. 67 emphasis in the original).

The semiotic chora is visible before repression in the pre-Oedipal infant and in non-rational discourses—and I would add, dream images such as The Baby Shower Invitation. There are a number of aspects of Kristeva's theory that I find useful in the study of dreams and consciousness: the constantly *in process, not fixed* subject, composed in language and the

unconscious as the “most important contribution of psychoanalysis to subjectivity” (Weedon, 1997, p. 68). The return of the repressed feminine from the pre-Oedipal as the material of the unconscious provides hope for radical transformation.

I am pleased to find an authentic feminist home for my theories. For the poststructuralist feminist, the unconscious is a necessary component of any consciousness theory. I believe dreams assist me to imagine new/old interpretations by bringing forth images. Remnants of myth surface in dreams if I learn how to “read.”

Social and biological theories of consciousness give little credence to the unconscious beyond the notion of personal unconscious. I consider this against Grumet’s contention in *Bitter Milk* that women teachers must reclaim the pre-Oedipal symbiosis of mother and child and celebrate it, not accept its rejection as infantile, regressive, and manipulative as written and lived through the patriarchal order. I read this against Donald’s claim that

symbols of all kinds are the playthings of a fantastically clever, irrational, manipulative, largely inarticulate beast that lives deep inside each of us, far below the polished cultural surface we have constructed (2001, p. 285).

The Baby Shower Invitation emerges from the depths, from a deep memory “we knew as children.” Grumet whose work emerges out of the work of Kristeva and Chodorow says

If we bury our memories of this relation we knew as children and again as mothers under language, under law, under politics, under curriculum, we are forever complicit in patriarchal projects to deny its adequacy, influence, and existence (1988, p. 20).

It is possible to interpret The Baby Shower Invitation as a desire to return to the bliss of childhood. Instead, I prefer to think that The Baby Shower Invitation invites Reta to birth, to touch, to link, to spin her life out of the infant pre-Oedipal experience of nurture, the Imaginary, rather than the *spearated* order, law and code of the Symbolic Order.

But she is afraid. What is it that Reta is afraid to know? What am I afraid to know? What will we lose and gain from that knowing? Perhaps we will bring forth some new knowledge in the unconscious semiotic chora—from the irrational, chaos of the unconscious through our dreams.

I consider again the introductory dream in this chapter, *Reliquere*. Russell (1983) writing about the quest for unity and the perennial philosophy of Aldous Huxley, brings religious and mystical tradition together with poetry and the social sciences. He concludes that

To someone who has not experienced such states, [of unity with all] this sense of interconnectedness might seem a bit farfetched. But the idea of a unifying element within all forms of manifestation is not just a philosophic construct. Within the last fifty years, this concept has been gaining increasing support from a seemingly unrelated field—modern physics (Russell, 1983, p. 140).

Citing Albert Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity, the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg, and the notion of the implicate order explicated by David Bohm and Richard Prosser, Russell suggests that "science seems to be discovering the perennial philosophy for itself, reaffirming that at the deepest levels we are all one" (1983, pp. 140 - 143). The rational intellect, for all its possibilities, cannot conduct women's escape from the language of the Symbolic Order. However, if physics together with complexity and bio-cultural consciousness theories are correct in their premise, through the introduction of women's experience into language, into the cultural web, through a kind of perturbation, intertextuality and blurring of categories, we can create some increase in the potential for a revolutionary change in the nature of patriarchy.

Throughout my life and particularly for this last 18 years, I have been drawn to the discourse of the mystics such as Julian of Norwich, artist works such as the *Theotokos*

(Appendix X) and witches such as Starhawk and excommunicated priest, Mathew Fox. I am Roman Catholic by birthright. I remain a Eucharistic Catholic because of the powerful Presence I experience in the Eucharist and the call to self-knowledge in the mystical tradition:

In her *Life* ... Teresa advises her students: 'This path of self knowledge must never be abandoned. ... Along this path of prayer, self knowledge ... is the bread with which all palates must be fed no matter how delicate they may be ... .' Catherine of Siena too '... images self knowledge as a basic food for spiritual growth. In *The Dialogue* ... Catherine pictures God as saying, 'So think of the soul as a tree made for love and living only by love. ... The circle in which this tree's root, the soul's love, must grow is true knowledge of herself ... (Wolski Conn, 1986, p. 59).

Weedon (1997) says that "the discourses of women mystics, poetesses, witches and artists [are the discourses] of women who have been historically suppressed or marginalized" (p. 69). The way to defy the Symbolic Order and the law of the Father is through a "return of the repressed feminine aspects of language" (Weedon, 1997, p. 69). As I re-read bits and pieces of Weedon, think about *as if* Reta dreaming, and my dreams along the way, I remember that in 382 AD, St. Jerome deliberately mistranslated the Hebrew word *anan* equating it with witchcraft, soothsaying, pagan superstition and evil (Van de Castle, 1994). I see dreams and dream reading as a powerful symbol of resistance to the Symbolic Order of the Father.

Eradicating the roots of patriarchal consciousness embedded through culture leads to ambiguity, uncertainty and fear—fear of knowing, fear of being conscious, fear of alienation, fear of being labeled the bitch, fear of being the conscious feminine. This hermeneutic dream reading of Reta Winters leads to hope for transformation.

To dream read literary images of Reta Winters is to be given a gift, which I can receive if I am willing to notice and to bracket my conformity and fear. The bits and

pieces, the letters, that float up from the unconscious must be read. I must notice The Baby Shower Invitation, open it, read it and act on this message from the unconscious. Dream work is an act of confidence that I have the power of vision and the power to choose to read differently. Dream work allows me to identify lack, to identify openings and possibilities. I want to unlearn the world. I want teacher educators to assume new perspectives about taken-for-granted ideas. I want teacher educators to notice and to feel their rage against injustice to animate unconventional and different ideas. I want teacher educators to see the source of injustice not as inevitable, not as “just the way things are.” I want teacher educators to understand clearly that human beings make culture and human beings can change it.

In chapter five, using *The Hallway Mirror*, I look into dream reading as a mode of escape from dominator language, the patriarchal discourse of the Western literary canon.

5.

**The Square of Cardboard She Occupies: A Theory of Lois**

In order to continue life, one must each day suspend the fear.

Emerson

**September 16, 1990**

**The Two Faces of Eve**

*The dream seems hazy. I am in a large hall, like a dance hall of my teenage years. I go to the ladies' room and as I stand in the doorway a young woman turns from the mirror over the sink to leave the room. I see her both in the mirror and turned toward me. Her face is arresting. Very stark white, costume drama makeup covers her face to somewhere at chin level. The open neckline reveals normal skin coloring below the chin. She is wearing gold jewellery which appears very real. The face is a startling contrast to her black, very fashionable dress. The dress is close fitting and made of filmy, bubble-like material. She sweeps past me, remote, haughty and cold. There is no emotion in her eyes; her eyes are blank. They do not make contact with me. I do not speak. Nor does she.*

This dream has stayed clearly in my mind for eighteen years. I could probably write it without ever reading my journal. Dream interpretive practices strongly recommend an aesthetic response to honor the dream. Although I did write a long and very thorough interpretation of the dream in my journal, I have chosen to share the poem I wrote to honor the dream.

**Persona**

Deceptive painted face  
Chinless  
Haughty, alien  
remote, dead eyes.  
Walks through  
reflected glass  
Stains above black bubbles.  
Out of her and  
through invisible doors.

Angry swirling flounces  
intricate steps  
in childhood patterns  
like wind in tall willows  
encased in raging walls.  
Out of her and  
through invisible windows.

Plastered, broken shattered pieces  
thawing, growing life within.

Prior to re-reading *Unless* in preparation for writing a theory of Lois, I had written drafts of the first four chapters. Immediately I wanted to call back those drafts and make massive changes based on yet other possible theories of Reta and Norah or other interpretations such as the various roles of Hermes in hermeneutics, mythology and dreams. Many dream researchers say that it is important to remember that one can never come to the end of the possible meanings and multiple significances of any dream or concomitant series of dreams (Hillman, 1989; Jung, 1989, Sanford, 1989; Savary, Berne & Williams, 1984; Taylor, 1983). Dream reading expands the possibility of possibilities but refuses to guarantee meanings. Dream reading then can be included as an important aspect of literary engagement. Recognizing the futility of another interpretation that would be “better” than the one already written, and vaguely embarrassed at not recognizing my need for closure, I began writing what is now becoming *The square of cardboard she occupies: A theory of Lois*.

Since I began keeping dream journals in 1988, I have found, like Dorothy Dinnerstein, author of *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, that it is fundamentally impossible to read in a systematic way. “I believe in reading unsystematically and taking ideas erratically” (Reinharz, 1992, p. 232 citing Dinnerstein). I almost always read several books at the same time, marveling at the links, the seams and connections between and among the ideas. I have returned to my journals many times to replace the old with new ideas gleaned from conversations, novels, and theoretical work. Now keeping the journals as a commonplace book enables deeper insight and a record of changing ideas. I am learning not to replace but rather to add ideas so that I can see the changes in my thinking.

Throughout this writing I have become increasingly aware of the slipperiness of language and the near impossibility of coming to clarity. I am beginning to glimpse the limitations that language imposes on understanding. Images however are different from words. Patricia Berry (1982) says that “by image we ‘... do not mean the psychic reflection of an external object, but a concept derived from poetic usage, namely, a figure of fancy or *fantasy-image*’” (p. 57 emphasis in the original). Perception has to do with what I see as “real,” therefore having external reality. Imagination or fantasy-image is not derived from external objects, and any question of objective reference is irrelevant (Berry, 1982). Because they are not perception or “reality” based, fantasy-images enable us to imagine differently. Even though dream figures “frequently borrow the visage of perceptual reality, they need not be derived from perception” (Berry, 1982, p. 59). Another aspect of perception is discarding, described by Sumara, as that process by which we learn how to “see” and also how to “not see.” Further, “learning to notice something new usually means that it needs to be distinguished from the backdrop of what is usually ignored” (Sumara, 2002, p. 138). I continue to work to learn to notice the details required for seeing differently.

Reading Lois *as if* she were a dream figure in Reta’s psyche, I must remember that imagination and perception are two different psychic aspects. Lois, as dream figure, may be seen as the psyche working *away from* the perceptual world of close family or friends, *toward* the imaginal. Berry (1982) says that this dream image movement “may be regarded as the psyche’s *opus contra naturam*, a working away from the natural reality of the perceptual toward the psychic reality of the imaginal” (p. 58). To remain as true as possible to the imaginal, we must be constantly aware that to write the dream is to



potentially pull it back into perception. Jung taught clearly that drawing, artistry, painting, sculpting, and modeling are more likely to help us remain “in touch with” the fantasy-image than are words (Berry, 1982; Campbell, 1971; Jung 1989). Dream imagery is the womb of possible rebirth of the dormant seeds of the feminine.

Myths, dreams and the imagination sit on the edges of consciousness waiting to emerge as a possible crack into the structure imposed by language. I concur with Lewis (1993) and Belsey (2002) who write about the structures imposed by language and the resulting limits on what it is possible to think. Feminists and non-feminists alike, says Lewis, must question these limits and intervene to alter meanings, the basis of the norms and values we take for granted in our culture every day. Novelists provide the crack through which new thoughts may slip through old structures.

Whereas Richardson writes about the role of lyric poetry as ethnographic findings, I believe that her comments are equally and perhaps even more applicable to dreams. The dream “shows” the dreamer how it is to feel something. “Even if the mind resists, the body responds. ... It is *felt*” (Richardson, 1997, p. 180). Reading *Lois* as dream invites the reader to *experience* the novel, to feel what Reta *felt* as she lived into the experience of midlife while living the experience of mother-of-lost-daughter together with her multiple ordinary life moments. Reading *Lois* as dream might be thought of as a flash forward or as an insight into Reta’s fear of aging and her potential life 20 years later when she too is mother-in-law, grandmother and viewed through the lens of patriarchal culture as uninteresting, older, invisible, and unproductive woman. As grandmother, *Lois* may be the fantasy-image imploring Reta to bring forth the image of the motherline. “A grandmother locates an individual in the life stream of the generations. She is the tie to the subterranean

world of the female ancestors” (Zweig, 1990, p. 88). The fantasy-image may lead the dream reader to wonder if Reta is “identified with patriarchal attitudes that devalue our mothers and grandmothers, that split us from our bodies and our past, leaving us wandering like motherless children in the too bright light of masculine consciousness” (p. 87).

Dreams take us deeply into the human psyche. Dreams ferret out the deeply buried, hidden aspects of ourselves. Dreams enable us to hear our own unbidden voices through the ignored, discarded bits of identity we have thrown down in order to conform to the myriad standards, regulations, rules, and policies of a society obsessed with conformed individualism. As Jung found in his own inner journey, exploration of the unconscious is not for the faint of heart (Jung, 1989). Morton T. Kelsey (1976) in *The Other Side of Silence* warns against becoming lost in psychosis without a trusted partner in depth dream work. In dream reading the novel, I am most surely not arguing for a psychoanalytic journey into the unconscious in grade school. Dream reading the novel is at least one remove from the personal night dream, yet it may make us more aware of the role the unconscious plays in what we see, hear, think, feel, read, and write. Dream reading also feels dangerous. Our culture has sanitized us and taught us to believe that the outside is safe while our inside is tainted. Culturally, empirical data from experts is true; our own intuitions and feelings are mostly wrong and irrelevant. If we trust at all, we trust only the experts with our dreams. We have learned to distrust our dreaming nocturnal selves which accounts for close to one-third of our lives.

I believe that dream reading does have a role to play in literary engagement and transformation through literary identification with the characters. Dream reading is a series of nested relationships among cultural, mythical, biological, and ecological systems. The

reader brings to the dream text a multiplicity of narrative responses to various situations within which there are potential similarities and differences with past, present, and potential future experiences. Grumet (1988), Luce-Kapler (2004), Miller (2005), and Sumara (2002a) point to the need to disrupt the familiar—to “see” otherwise. In dream reading we bring forth an unfamiliar world from within, for that world may have even more depth coming as dreams do from both the personal and collective unconscious. Reading *as if* it were a dream has the potential to bring the reader in touch with hitherto inexpressible emotion and things which have gone astray as “small bits tend to do.” Atwell-Vasey (1998) argues that impersonality, objectivity, separation, and the control of emotion, of body, and of subjectivity are the hallmarks of masculine identity and the exile of the maternal. I believe that dream reading may play a part in the return of the maternal.

I further elaborate a theory of dream reading through reading Lois as a dream image of Reta. Thinking through many images of Lois in the novel, I leave behind several conventional or “easy” interpretations as Reta’s negative image of Crone—invisible, uninteresting, subservient, old-fashioned, and as outmoded as day-old bread pudding and Pyrex baking dishes. Lewis (1993) discusses the concept of mindbinding through “the minutiae of the everyday [that] comprises a practice, language, and discourse so subtle and piercing that they can barely be articulated even as they are cutting us to the core” (p. 101). Lois is a girdled woman; she exhibits no excess. She is presented as flat like a cardboard cutout tree. What happens to trees when a sapsucker in search of grubs, eats through the bark completely circling the tree trunk? The tree bleeds. It dies or is severely stunted. I am still nursing our Mountain Ash after a sapsucker attack plus drought in the summer of 2004. I reject the easy interpretation of Lois as a dried up and unproductive old woman.

Reading through Reta's dreams with Lois as dream figure reveals for me a dream image symbolically cut and bleeding to the core without recognizing the possibility of metaphoric death by a thousand cuts.

Throughout the novel, it seems that Lois is generally ignored by her family. In fact, I had to re-read *Unless* in search of Lois. I had only a misty image of her from the first several readings and often wondered about her role in the novel. I wonder if I have erected enculturated emotional screens against a woman my own age and the increasing number of times I am "looked through" like a Pyrex glass dish by midlife women such as Reta. Or, I wonder about my newly arrived questions about how I might avoid being alone, lonely and ignored. I think about some of the Lois scenes in *Unless*.

"The problem with everyday life is that it is always the ground, rarely the figure" (Grumet, 1991, p. 74). The unformed thought I have is to reflect on the link between the dream image Lois and the confusion surrounding the role of middle age women who are not yet old enough to be seen as feisty, eccentric, or even productive as in a Crone who expresses her entitlement to life and dignity. Somewhere just beyond consciousness a thought forms waiting to come to fruition. Lois is the ground and not the figure in the everyday life of her family. Is that it? Lois is past being reproductive in the cult of motherhood. Yet she may be still too young to be heard as Crone. She lives in the twilight zone, on the threshold, the bridge between now and the small glimmer of light in the house when she arrives with bread pudding in a Pyrex dish and entertains Mr. Springer over dinner and conversation.

Lois as dream image may represent a part of Reta that is afraid to know the Crone for our cultural image of Crone is ugly, dried up and burdensome old woman. If she is

thought of at all, the Crone is generally imaged as useless, invisible, forgotten, boring, and marginalized. Or, an old woman left mostly by herself living in her old home with her birds or cats and her memories. There is little solidarity displayed between Reta and the Lois aspect of her Crone self. The everyday life of the Winters family includes the evening family meal to which Lois always brings dessert. Lois keeps a revolving file of 100 dessert recipes. She has overheard her granddaughters laughing about the file. She feels hurt, but when Reta draws the red curtain (think red as the color of blood, menstruation and life), to signal dinnertime (Shields, 2002, p. 170), Lois always appears with sweets. Reta must give thought to the sweetness of life lived when as Crone she will no longer feel the socially conditioned need to prevaricate in order to please others.

As a reader I was irritated with Reta's inability to develop a relationship with Lois. Not once does she include Lois in her life as a friend, but also the space between them seems mutually acceptable. Reta does recognize that Lois erects "a wall of numb radar" against Reta's books. "[It] has nothing to do with rejection and everything to do with me being the mother of her grandchildren and her son's spouse. This arrangement cannot be challenged by my hobbies, my pastimes, my professional life, my passion" (Shields, 2002, p. 233). It seems as though patriarchal expectations separate the two women. I wonder if midlife women shun, ignore or avoid engaging with older women? If so, why? Is it that midlife women avoid walking into and standing in the space of possibility between midlife and old age? Is it fear of knowing the invisibility of the older woman? Complicity with the patriarchy? Or is it that there are no positive models of woman as Crone since the Burning Times? Does the crazy, ugly Old Hag remain the dominant older woman image despite the efforts of feminists such as Daly (1978) and Cixous (1976) who argue that women must

invent, create, write our selves and reclaim the past when healing and the wise arts were associated with old women? Daly argues that the Crone has been defaced and erased and worse, women have been co-opted to participate in the erasure.

The spookiness of this situation is intensified by the fact that women's minds are constantly being filled with debased images of Crones. ... 'wicked stepmother' images injected through fairy tales and Halloween caricatures of witches to mother-in-law jokes ...” (1978, p. 350).

Oliver (2004) states clearly that the reclamation of woman's psychic space requires the social support necessary for agency and also the social space to recognize the value and contributions of all women. Further, Oliver fully supports Kristeva's notion of celebrating the genius of women. She urges that in addition to the need to overshadow the degradation of women, we must “acknowledge and idealize both extraordinary women, and more important, the extraordinary in the lives of ordinary women” and thus inspire creativity as well as “open psychic life to sublimation and idealization as an antidote to the depression caused by oppression” (Oliver, 2004, p. 162). From where can Reta learn to celebrate older women and thus help to ease her own fears and to develop her own Crone voice to speak plainly with no patience with patriarchal fools?

Grumet (1991) theorizes that women repudiate their mothers, (and I would add mothers-in-law), “in the pursuit of erotic heterosexuality” (p. 77). She links industrialization with the “decisive schism between reproductive and productive worlds” wherein gender differences were grossly exaggerated as the changing economy sent men out to work in the world and women to stay home in charge of home and children. Thus arose the cult of motherhood, the feminization of teaching and the requirement for male leaders to contain the supposed emotional excess of women. Women reject other women in favor of being on the safe side, the winning side, the male side. It's easier. It's safer. It's

deadening. It's ... I discard the easy interpretation in favor of The Hallway Mirror fantasy for this is the image I really want to avoid with its perversion of possibilities. But it wants to speak.

Hillman (1989) argues that “[A]rchetypal psychology holds that the true iconoclast is the image itself which explodes its allegorical meanings, releasing startling new insights” (p. 25). He advises treating images on the soul level, that is, befriending them. Following Jung, he suggests again the importance of actively imagining the image

through word play which is also a way of talking with the image and letting it talk. We watch its behavior—how the image behaves within itself. And we watch its ecology—how it interconnects, by analogies, in the fields of my life (Hillman, 1989, p. 25).

I interpret the literary dream figure of Lois based on “an archetypal consciousness, [a] notion of consciousness definitely not based upon ego” (Hillman, 1989, pp. 31 - 33). From Hillman’s (1989) perspective, if we “shift our conception of the base of consciousness from ego to anima archetype, from I to soul,” we will realize that ego never has been the basis of consciousness but that “consciousness refers to a process more to do with images than will, with reflection rather than control, with reflective insight into, rather than manipulation of *objective reality*” (p. 32 emphasis in the original). Also, we might recognize the egoic myth of the hero, that self-inflating tale of conquest and destruction, and become aware of the heroic ego’s epic as other than consciousness. We would become conscious of fantasy-images as being everywhere and not consider them as unreal or not “reality.” Hillman (1989) says that we would then “realize what Jung so often insisted upon: the psyche is the subject of our perceptions, the perceiver through fantasy, rather than the object of our perceptions” (p. 33). We might therefore analyze by means of fantasies rather than analyze fantasy into reality. This consciousness based on anima would

be described in “metaphors long familiar to the alchemy of analytical practice: fantasy, image, reflection, insight, and, also, mirroring, holding, cooking, digesting, echoing, gossiping, deepening” (Hillman, 1989, p. 34). How does the image of Lois behave? How does it talk? What are its intersections with Reta’s life? Hillman (1989) suggests that images are “soul mines;” therefore, we must keep “an eye attuned to the dark” (p. 26).

Lois as dream aspect may be the subordinated aspect of Reta. Lois tells her story to Mr. Springer, a total stranger, simply because he says “Tell me all about yourself.” As dream image, Lois might bring to Reta’s attention the “political meaning of [her] personal reality: that subordinate groups live subordination and marginality through [their] subjectivity” (Lewis, 1993, p. 101). Reta has ignored this aspect of herself telling herself that she chooses to care for her home, her partner, and her children. Perhaps Lois appears in a dream to help Reta recognize her fear of knowing that “It’s because she’s a woman” that reviewers are not totally embarrassed to ask if her husband approves of her writing, to call her Mrs. rather than Reta, to talk about themselves rather than her work, or to indulge in casual disregard in a host of other insults. Reta will be constrained to act if she recognizes her fears. What is the alchemy of mirroring? The Hallway Mirror dream occurs after Springer attempts to reject Alicia as the central character of Reta’s second book, *Thyme in Bloom*. I now turn to consider several literary dream images from *Unless* written *as if* they were nocturnal dreams.



### **Excerpts from *Unless* (Shields, 2002) considered as a series of Reta's dreams<sup>15</sup>**

#### **Dream #1**

An older woman who looks like my mother-in-law, Lois, appears standing before the hallway mirror. She is sucking in her stomach and saying musically: I am the wife of a physician (p. 298).

#### **Dream #2**

One lone leaf remains on a tree. Either it is exceptionally healthy and strong, or else it is somehow deformed or unable to engage the mechanism that allows it to fall to the earth where all the normal leaves lay buried in snow. The leaf is an anomaly; something ails it (p. 296).

#### **Dream #3**

I ask my mother-in-law, Lois, Why have you been so silent all these months? Why didn't you tell us what was wrong? Because no one asked me, she said (p. 316).

#### **Dream #4**

My mother-in-law, Lois, had politely excused herself and returned to her house next door. I am thinking that she would never miss the ten-o'clock news; her watching of the ten-o'clock news helps the country of Canada to go forward (p. 19).

#### **Dream #5**

Lois appears with a dish of bread pudding in her hands, one of her rectangular Pyrex casseroles from fifty years ago (p. 290).

#### **Dream #6**

A woman appears. In her hands she holds a degree from Queen's stamped with one word, "economics." Lois stands beside her with another piece of paper, a diploma for secretarial college with MRS stamped on it (p. 297).

#### **Dream #7**

There is a honey cake with the word "German" crossed out and replaced with "Swiss" (p. 298).

#### **Dream #8**

Lois lies in bed. There are several empty bread pans in the corner of the room. A male figure repeats "Mayo Clinic." Then the scene changes to the bathroom which is more hygienic than it has ever been. Lois is silent while toads stare at me from the foot of her bed (pp. 298 – 299).

### **Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?**

Following Hillman (1989), Jung (1989) and Savary, Berne, & Williams (1984) and because I was stuck in perception rather than fantasy-images of my imagination, I took a blank piece of paper, closed my eyes and sketched the emerging, exploding image of The Hallway Mirror. At first I resisted the image, for there, looking into The Hallway Mirror, a miniature Lois stared at a monstrous man surrounded by misty darkness (Appendix XI). Days later I encountered two feminist references to women and mirrors. "Women," writes

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<sup>15</sup> These stylized imaginary dreams are 'bits' taken from the novel as indicated by page numbers.

Virginia Woolf, “have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice his natural size” (Salvio, 2007, pp. 36 quoting Felman and Laub, 1992). “The mirror is the ultimate image of enclosure; instead of looking outward through a window, a woman is driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self” (Paludi & Steurnagel, 1990, p. 94). It seems that as far back as Petrarch’s Laura, the mirror was seen as the image of the idealized woman, the pedestal woman who could never live up to the cultural idealization. When I read *as if* the literary image were a dream, I come to understand that Reta is guilty of complicity in her unconscious deification of the masculine. In her fantasy image, she “sees” her belief in heroic man. Reta must wake up and accept her own feminine power.

Possibly *The Hallway Mirror* invites Reta to stand behind Lois looking over her shoulder into an image that comes from the self, the inner world and the body and reflects the potential questioning of the patriarchal structure of the literary canon. The image may gesture toward the enormity of the patriarchal structures in Reta’s inner world. In the midst of her struggle to overcome her reluctance to continue to challenge conventional structures, Reta dreams Lois and *The Hallway Mirror*. The triple-size image of the man in her fantasy-image could point to her own strong resistance to subverting “canonized practices,” to writing the ordinary experiences of women. The dream provides a subjunctive space where Reta can explore the “potentials of certain paths” (Luce-Kapler, 2004, p. 94).

Perhaps *The Hallway Mirror* invites Reta to reflect on her letter writing and to speak aloud the fact that there are enormous contradictions between the rhetoric of liberal democracy and the reality of women’s experience. What is the hypocrisy of the cultural invitation to freedom, equality and possibility? Lewis (1993) says that the political effect

of this hypocrisy is “the way in which it invites us to internalize our limitations as if they were of our own making. In such a social system, critique and dialogue is closed out at the very moment it is offered up as a possibility” (Lewis, 1993, p. 113). The incidence of depression and melancholy in women is significantly higher than that of men. Too often this is viewed as the result of woman’s inferiority and is treated with prescription drugs to ensure that the molten lava of women’s rage does not spew forth and eradicate the patriarchal discipline which subordinates them (Northrup, 1995; Oliver, 2004). Weedon (2004) emphasizes that “[the] prescription for depression and melancholy is ... intimate, or psychic, revolt. Intimate revolt is a challenge to authority and tradition analogous to political revolt that takes place within an individual and is essential to psychic development” (p. 142 quoting Kristeva). Perhaps timidly, but spurred on by Norah’s Goodness crisis, I believe that Reta is writing revolt. She writes unsent letters to heal her self and to surface the patriarchy embedded within her own consciousness. She writes to identify and then to eradicate the patriarchy from her psyche through the metaphors of planting, growing, blooming, and ripening *thyme*. She writes to redefine her subjectivity and subject position.

It is possible that Lois’ image of The Hallway Mirror is a bridge between the outmoded and the new. It may be a bridge to dawning consciousness of her innate feminine power. Lois has accepted her socially conditioned subject position as the wife of an important man. I believe the literary dream image could be interpreted as a psychic push to utilize her own power rather than leave it projected onto her now deceased husband.

As I developed this dream reading, I connected Reta’s experiences with my own and through my identifications with her I began to believe that Reta is a midlife liminal

woman, that is, her status is “socially and structurally ambiguous,” not to mention invisible to those around her. She is upper middle class, educated, privileged and yet still subjected to the patriarchy. She lives within “the realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise” (LaShure, 2005, pp. 2 citing Victor Turner, 1967; Salvio, 2007). This is the world at the edge of her personal boundaries; this is the world where she is working to escape the patriarchal social structure. Perhaps Lois represents a warning against being secured more deeply into that structure. Perhaps as a liminal midlife woman, Reta is dangerous, a pollutant, a threat to the establishment for she is writing extraordinary possibilities for ordinary women. Reta metaphorically removes the pins and uses the authority of the pen—an authority that the patriarchy tries to protect as its own. Perhaps Mr. Springer unconsciously recognizes the possibility of her escape from socially imposed structures and the danger she poses if other women should learn of her insubordinate actions, for she mocks the patriarchy by making Alicia the central character in *Thyme in Bloom*. In dream reading, curious knowledge and theory rub shoulders as ideas that we may often find slightly ridiculous, but we bring them forth trying to see where they are in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Reta’s reminds me of my own midlife experiences when my journal writing helped me to channel my own experiences into new beliefs and identifications.

In dream reading we read as if we were referring to a real person. The literary dream image of Lois lives in a state of constant surveillance by The Hallway Mirror. The gaze of the image gazing back at her is not her self, but the gaze of the dominator. Van Manen (2002) explains:

Sartre (1957) ... writes about ‘The Look’ and how it somehow robs us of our subjective selves. When we realize we are being observed we become aware of

ourselves as an object for the other. We cease to be ourselves or a subject and become instead a set of parts for someone else to evaluate (p. 21). For the dream reader, Lois is a set of parts to her constructed self. She is the object of the patriarchy's prohibitions against women's knowing. She has felt the absent presence of not knowing and the fear of knowing. Lois is role identified and she has consoled herself with being "the physician's wife." But when her physician husband dies, what is she then? What happens when our cardboard identity is changed against our wishes? Doll says "The role becomes the identity until there is no true inner self, only a persona. All energy goes to fulfilling the expectations of the collective, which in the case of women define them as servile, puerile and dependent" (Doll, 2000, p. 103).

Like Lois, Reta is a physician's wife. She closets the scope of sexuality out of her writing to satisfy her fear of public knowing of desire even in fictive paper characters. "I have three daughters; naturally I shrink from the thought of embarrassing them with what I publish" (Shields, 2002, p. 187). Reta conforms to her inner censor's frame of social convention. She never says these words out loud but they are there in her head. I believe the image of the no self in *The Hallway Mirror* may render visible to Reta how role playing has defined her life performance. It frames her within the socially constructed boundaries of her culture. Reta is woman acting like woman when woman is defined by social convention. She gives herself the patriarchal correct answers.

Weedon (1997) writes of the "affects of oppression—depression, shame, anger, and alienation [as] pathologized as individual or group sickness or even evil" (p. 87). Dream #8 gestures to the patriarchal medical narrative of melancholy. Lois takes to her bed for two weeks. Her husband, with the patriarchal male authority of both doctor and husband, is determined that he will "take" her to the Mayo Clinic. Lois refuses. But, rather

than examine and change beliefs and assumptions unconsciously inherited and internalized from our culture, she succumbs to an acceptable level of normalcy—she gets out of her bed and sanitizes her bathroom like it has never been sanitized before. Metaphorically, she eradicates earthiness and passion from her being. Northrup (1995) asserts that we have been conditioned to believe in the “myth of the medical gods ... that the expert holds the cure” (p. 9). To satisfy the myth, the patriarchal medical structures demand that women succumb to being made “normal” even at the risk of losing ourselves. Reta uses the narrative of the cure with Norah, “It may be you have some mineral or vitamin deficiency, something as simple as that” (Shields, 2002, p. 131). In the margins of *Unless*, I have penciled, “WOW! Still.”

Memories of my own medical narrative flood back to me as I work with The Hallway Mirror image. The narrative includes a never-ending series of prescriptions for everything from little red “rheumatism” pills beginning when I was six—the body doesn’t forget pain—and Phenobarbital at 16. I was quiet then. I still remember the constant aching pain. The pills didn’t help. Tonics. Iron tonics. Vitamin tonics. Later, Valium. Then, Tranxene. Over many years, dozens of prescriptions from doctors, therapists and psychiatrists for different drugs including anti-depressants. Drugs whose names I don’t remember. I didn’t write everything down then. I also know well the affects of oppression, that is, despair as “sin” to be confessed to the priest (Appendix XII). Both the doctors and my parish priest were angry when the medical cures didn’t work.

Claiming that even the space to fully articulate these experiences is “denied in mainstream cultural and social institutions,” Weedon (1997) adds that the oppressed are doubly disqualified by their exclusion from positions of power (p. 89). Women in fiction

such as Reta and Lois are also excluded from power. I think about reasons for what feels to me like the flat emotional landscape of *Unless*. As a reader, I find it difficult to think of Reta as oppressed. By conventional standards, she has a very good life. Yet she struggles to articulate anger and claims that “it’s dehumanizing.” She struggles to have her literary fiction considered serious and to have her fictional female characters deemed “suitable” as the moral center of her writing. As Reta dreams The Hallway Mirror Lois image, perhaps the dream is asking her to reflect on the multiple bits of dark shame, anger, depression, and alienation that occupy aspects of her psyche. Her psyche has been invaded by aliens, colonized by the negative self-images that alienate her as Other and from herself as an agent in her own life. Lois and The Hallway Mirror, in Jungian terms, may reflect the shadow side of Reta.

Mythologies throughout cultures “are replete with archetypal images of the creative and destructive Madwoman, showing the universality of her presence in the human psyche and of our experience of her forces (Leonard, 1994, p. 8). In a psychotherapy art and dance class, I learned to “dance” the Dark Goddess, Kali (Carlson, 1989). This therapeutic art/dance process was designed to provide women with the energy and foresight to ground themselves deeply before entering reluctantly into the devouring surveillance realm of patriarchal power such as the director’s office, or when making a presentation to an all male audience in three piece pinstriped suits, or sharing an unwelcome truth with a domineering colleague—male or female. Traditionally Kali is the Hindu Goddess of creation and destruction. “Kali dances wildly on the corpses of the dead, surrounded by wailing female spirits. She also “gathers the seeds for creating new life” (Leonard, 1994, p. 8). Kali represents many aspects of both creation and destruction. “For women to contact

Kali, they often have to become violent and terrible—traits not considered feminine nor associated with the ‘nice little girl’ idealization” (Starck & Stern, 1993, p. 82).

As an image in Reta’s dream, what is Lois telling me? As Lois sings into The Hallway Mirror, she sees not herself, but a man thrice-normal size! Is it possible that she has gone mad? Leonard (1994) says that

To be put under external, unnatural rules though values, duties, and structures that are not his or her own can throw any person off balance. The person expected to conform to these restrictions and models of behavior will inevitably fall short and be victimized by the authority figure’s negative judgments (p. 15).

She is framed. Constructed by a frame. A woman constructed in the image of the patriarchy. Lois is the image of Reta’s inability to accept her own feminine powers. As dream, the image might be telling Reta that she has become identified with the victim role and gives the patriarchy more power than is truly necessary. Reta’s dismissive comments about Lois’ desserts could be the image of outdated sweetness or sentimentalism, but it also might be the alchemical transformative image. The Pyrex dish could be seeing through to the other side. Or the image might shout about feeling the lack of appreciation for the idealized pedestal role that women play in nurturing and supporting the family even while that same role is denigrated. The Madwoman archetype, in many forms, appears in dreams to invite the dreamer to wake up and to look at the patriarchal structure together with her suppressed fears and anger.

Lois has spent her life in the service of family, of proper public image and as the wife of a physician. Rather than mirroring herself and providing self-affirmation, the image speaks to unacknowledged and buried fears which suppress her soul energy. She is silent. The mirror shows her the twisted, distorted forms of the feminine and the masculine and the tragic imbalance that exists. The mirror has a fairy tale function. It induces narcissism



but with a twist. This female narcissism is Lois settling for patriarchal structures and dry invisibility. She is prostituted, that is, “kept” by the false image. Fears not consciously faced become the destructive aspect of the Madwoman archetype. Leonard (1994) outlines the lives of many women who have used the spirit of the Madwomen archetype to remain true to their vision and to the erotic and creative relationship to soul. Speaking of Anaïs Nin, she writes, “Remaining true to her own vision, she created from her own center of feeling and intuition. She wrote many novels and brought the journal form into popularity” (Leonard, 1994, p. 135). Further, she explores the process of “surrendering to the body’s process of aging,” a process Reta alludes to many times (Leonard, 1994, p. 135). Women struggling to integrate the powerful energies of midlife often experience Madwoman dreams.

The Hallway Mirror may reflect Reta’s non-reflectiveness. It may indicate her struggle with the Madwoman and the Judge energies (Leonard, 1994). But Reta’s creative madness could be “madness of divine origin” as opposed to destructive madness which “isolates and impoverishes us” leaving us to believe that “social convention” and the “mundane world” are reality (Leonard, 1994, p. 19). Lois and The Hallway Mirror fantasy may be telling Reta to pay attention to the archetypal Madwoman madness and to utilize the energy for creative and positive action (Leonard, 1994). Notice that Reta is astonished that Mr. Springer has learned more about Lois in one conversation than Reta has in years of living next door. Lois’ response? “He asked.” Metaphorically, this might mean that Reta must befriend the Madwoman in her dreams, ask her what soul wisdom she brings and how to harness that energy.

Leonard (1994) speaks to the creation of the Madwoman projection as often landing on widowed, older women who stay to themselves. We know only that Lois has been widowed 12 years. She is not “old” as Danielle Westerman is old. “The presumption that solitary women are unhappy or pitiable is not only patronizing, it usually reflects the fear of loneliness with the [the person] making the projection” (Leonard, 1994, p. 188). Lois is the “widowed, older woman.” She appears in Reta’s dreams. Reta writes letters. Reta writes *Thyme in Bloom* and plans for *Autumn Thyme*. The dream image encourages her to continue her creative pursuits in the face of the Man in the Woman’s Self Mirror and to recognize her need to feel safe by succumbing to Mr. Springer’s power. Reta fears the possibility of being eliminated from the world of publishing. She stands on the threshold. The Hallway Mirror may say that the Madwoman energies are considered dangerous to society for the woman imbued with Madwoman energy is prone to truth telling. The unwelcome truth. Reta writes letters. Eventually, Reta integrates her good girl image, goes public, and makes a small rebellious move. She mails the sixth and final letter. I write a short poem in honor of the Madwoman.

**Stay Silent**

Despondent, burbling woman.  
Invisible flaw in a male universe.  
You complain that you are completely and casually shut out.  
Your anger is not humanizing.  
Speak gently. Whisper.  
No screaming. No whining. No hysteria. No stamping of foot.  
Look down the hallway past the series of  
obstacles and aligned locked doors.  
Miniaturist of fiction.  
*Casual* disregard is making you crazy? You might be mad?  
Ah! But that’s all in your imagination.

## Invitation into the Imagination

Dream reading is accompanied by a writing practice. Writing *The Subjunctive Cottage*, Luce-Kapler (2004) quotes Carol Shields:

A narrative isn't something you pull along like a toy train, a perpetually thrusting indicative. It's this little subjunctive cottage by the side of the road. All you have to do is open the door and walk in (p. 79).

A narrative dream reading of The Hallway Mirror image invites us to imagine walking into and through the mirror. Imagination invites us to walk into and through the largely invisible margins and contexts of our lives and to find potential hidden meanings. The Hallway Mirror further invites us to make the margins of our lives visible to ourselves. Pulling from Sumara (1996), Greene (1995), and Pinar et al (1995), Luce-Kapler (2004) writes, "One can only imagine how the teaching-learning relation could be transformed if students and teachers could read cultural and literary texts differently, more actively" (p. 129). I believe dream reading as literary engagement helps to school the literary imagination. In this dream reading we simply have to open The Hallway Mirror and walk in. If this were my dream ... If this were my dream and I had unlimited pages and time, I would play with the image of bread pudding as a sacred image of the Holy wafer. I would play with the image of toads coming out of Lois' mouth since toads were believed to be the witches' familiar in the Middle Ages and in the Burning Times. In pre-Christian times, toads were seen as the embodiment of dead souls. When Christianity took over, killing toads was considered an act of piety for which one was forgiven nine sins (Valk, 2001). If this were my dream, I ...

According to Guiley (1998), Kelsey (1978) and Jung (1989), dreams exist beyond the limits of time and space, incorporate past, present and future simultaneously and are populated with persons both familiar and unfamiliar. This is the world of Jung's *mundus*

*imaginalis*, the imaginal world, the bridge between worlds. It is not the imaginary or fantastical but is rather a timeless reality continually arising from the material world. In terms of the so-called new physics, the *mundus imaginalis* emerges from David Bohm's implicate order, that is, the enfolded order, the unbroken, and deep level of timeless reality. The explicate or unfolded order arises from the implicate and is known to us as the material world. Energy flows on the threshold between the worlds and gives rise to what Jung named synchronicity. The implicate order is the world of deep meditation, the mystics' world known through meditation and prayer. We sometimes gain access to this world through our dreams. Our attempts to fit the world of dreams into behaviorist, positivist, rational models has resulted only in attempts to measure, quantify and replicate experiences which do not fit into modern Western conceptual notions. Dreams cannot be evaluated against the canons of science. The dream world is unacceptable to the patriarchy.

In this chapter I have argued that dream reading characters in the novel makes it possible to escape from the dominant thought forms embedded in the patriarchal discourse of power. Interpreting the reader's identifications with the consciousness of characters in a novel is like interpreting a dream. With the literary novel, it is the novelist's dream that more fully represents a depiction of consciousness beyond what we can see in "real" life. I use the subjunctive *as if* to enter more deeply into this consciousness. The "dream" of *The Hallway Mirror* then becomes a metaphor for the structures of the conscious mind both conscious and unconscious. The commonplace created by various readers' writing and theoretical practices can yield a personal / cultural world of insight beyond the ordinary. As I read *The Hallway Mirror* dream, I enter into Reta's consciousness. I come to believe that I have been too male-identified. Like the dream image in *The Two Faces of Eve* which

began this chapter, I was hard, cold, aloof and “manly.” Through the literary dream image I can explore the cultural limitations imposed by socially conditioned gender roles. Writing my dream journals enabled me to identify the role that institutional church and education played in limiting my beliefs about women and the downfall of *mankind*. I identify with Reta’s epistolary writing to misogynist magazine publishers and authors who “routinely overlooked half the world’s population” (Shields, 2002, p. 220). I believe that her letters are like my journal wherein I write my way to freedom by questioning, redefining and reshaping my beliefs. Like my dream journal, Reta’s letters help her to bring to consciousness her self-policing unconscious beliefs that she is wrong and will be condemned as hysterical, irrational and overemotional. In every letter, Reta repeats variations of the same thought. “I am trying to put forward my objection gently. I’m not screaming ... whining ... stamping my lady-size foot. ... Whispering is more like it. ... Anger is not humanizing” (Shields, 2002, p. 220). As a child, I learned that anger is against the Ten Commandments and therefore a mortal sin.

As a teacher educator, I believe exploring consciousness through literary dream images in the novel provides the opportunity to think otherwise, to explore the unfamiliar and discover the unwanted, hidden structures imposed by *logos*, the word. As a teacher educator, I need to explore the social control of freedom with my students. Boler (1999) identifies the power of self-policing taught through character education and the new mental-hygiene movement renamed as emotional intelligence. Grumet (1988) provides a list of what women were to learn according to Louisa May Alcott in *Little Women*. I learned everything on the list. I identify deeply with Reta’s all too quiet silence and anger. As a teacher educator, I want to work with my students to understand the role of education

in the social control of emotion. I want my students to see clearly that without the history of women's lives including their intellectual contributions, a whole generation of daughters is doomed to repeat the cycle, going over the same ground that our generation and countless generations past have already uncovered. I conclude this dream reading of *The Hallway Mirror*, with a quote from Boler (1999):

Women are conscripted as the agents of this power: required to enforce patriarchal values and laws, to instill virtues which are gendered. Not only do women assist in strategies of individualization, urging children to 'self-control,' they also participate in their own subjugation by reinforcing the control of emotions and gendered rules of emotions (p. 40).

As educators, teachers need to understand this.

In chapter six, I argue that through studying the consciousness of *as if* literary dream characters, I can uncover aspects of my self that I have unconsciously hidden as I become one of my tribe through the socialization process.

6.

**Creating the Space of Doubt: A Theory of Danielle**

The open door to the soul lies  
through the scars of the wound.  
Leering scarred burned nightmare face  
—door to ancient wisdom.

Personal Journal, June 6, 1993

\* \* \*

Like a thief at the gates, the unconscious slips through the cracks of conscious control.  
Mary Aswell Doll, 1982, p. 198.

\* \* \*

Dream reading the novel and its symbols is an interpretive activity creating a new life pattern. It has the potential to provoke, to disrupt and to enrich both personal and professional identity. How is Reta's identity shifted and shaped as I read the fictive images of Danielle *as if* she were a dream?

In this chapter I further explore how the reader identifies with and interprets an *as if* dream image. Dream reading the novel loosens language; it unfixes the one-to-one meaning of words. In the Genesis creation myth, Adam names the animals—and also woman. Given that Eve was not consulted, indeed, the world is named from the male point of view. As women begin to re-name the world, we are upsetting the “natural order” of things. Dream reading may help to call humanity and the world into new being as we name women's experience in a transformation of culture and religion. Dream reading brings the literary text closer to the unconscious or at least points to the power of both the personal and the collective unconscious. I further interpret my fictional identifications with Reta through a theory of Danielle as The Wise Old Woman, the Crone. This continued dream reading

amplification highlights the built in gender analysis in *Unless*. As the dream reader, I identify with the fictive characters through imagining what the character is thinking, feeling and re-membling. I notice the continued attempts at the containment of women. Through the shadow as an aspect of psyche and the archetype of the Crone or The Old Wise Woman, I reflect on Danielle, interpretations of the dark side and translation. I briefly consider the trilobite and the egg as archaic, archetypal images.

The Western literary canon has determined that dreams do not contribute to knowledge for “enlightened” people. The dream has been “othered” much the same way as women, Indigenous people, the poor, and races “other” than white. Written scholarship and literature have been privileged as ways of knowing. However, I believe that the dream places our inner world on a different plane. Despite the Canon, women can come to know, to understand and to identify more deeply with aspects of themselves learned through the practice of dream reading. I recognize that I will never fully understand my own identity. All that “I” am is beyond my grasp, beyond the range of my understanding. Because I am never fully able to comprehend my self or the world around me, I employ symbols to assist in conceptually creating the unrepresentable. Further, I “produce symbols unconsciously and spontaneously, in the form of dreams” (Jung & Franz, 1964. p. 4). Some of these symbols and images I recognize and others I may not; therefore, interpretation becomes a ceaseless work. Both natural and spontaneous symbols always stand for more than their immediate meaning. As well as individual symbols meaningful to each person, Jung spent a lifetime excavating symbols arising out of his collective unconscious through dreams. Cultural anthropologists such as Riane Eisler (1987) and Jungian story tellers like Estes (1992) show us that the symbolic patterns of ancient ritual and myth still exist in our



culture as well as among tribes virtually unchanged over the centuries and living on the edges of supposed civilization. Feminist archeologists such as Gimbutas (1991) continue to uncover the ancient history of civilization through artifacts and remnants of surviving myths and images. According to Jung,

(T)he human mind has its own history and the psyche retains many traces left from previous stages of its development. More than this, the contents of the unconscious exert a formative influence on the psyche. Consciously we may ignore them, but unconsciously we respond to them, and to the symbolic forms—including dreams—in which they express themselves (1964, p. 98).

According to Lodge, the novel can create dense representations of life as consciously experienced, that is, “fictional models of what it is like to be a human being, moving through time and space” (2002, p. 10). At the same time, dreams are a direct expression of both the personal and the collective unconscious. Thus dreams have the potential to open us to greater consciousness. It is possible that the reader responds to the novelist’s fictive images *as if* they were dream images arising from their own personal unconscious or the collective unconscious. Lodge (2002) argues that literature is a rich, far-ranging and inclusive record of human consciousness. If we read a novel *as if* it were a dream, we expand the possibility to understand more deeply the development of human consciousness. And if we expand our understanding of the development of human consciousness, perhaps we will expand our understanding of the roots of patriarchal consciousness and our involvement in it. Jung (1964) thought that perhaps since we consider that it is worth investigating the life of a louse, we might consider further and deeper ongoing investigation of our dreams. If we assume that dreams are normal events, we are “bound to consider that they are either causal—i.e., that there is a rational cause for their existence—or in a certain way purposive, or both” (Jung & Franz, p. 18). The

content of the unconscious is only temporarily obscured while it continues to influence our consciousness.

I approach this final dream reading in the manner of the critic of consciousness wherein literature is “viewed as a genesis, a conscious effort on the part of an individual artist to understand his (sic) own experience by framing it in language. The reader who encounters the work must recreate it in terms of *his* (sic) consciousness” (Greene, 1975, p. 300 emphasis in the original). Citing Sartre, Greene (1975) maintains that a work of literature becomes meaningful only through continual reconstructions. Over time, the dream reader creates structures through her imagination which move her away from the writer’s work while creating a structure or semantic mapping of her own meaning.

Using my own peculiar meaning system, I elaborate the image of feminist Danielle Westerman as a manifestation of Reta’s midlife experience as her understanding of crone consciousness grows into expression. As the dream reader, my personal experience with the growth of crone consciousness further develops through my readings of *Unless*. It is important to make sense of Danielle *as if* she were a crone in Reta’s dream life so that I might more deeply understand how Reta’s experiences continue in my life and in the lives of “older” academic women. I believe that, like many women living in bodies deeply inscribed by patriarchy, I have been and continue to be compelled by my own midlife experiences to create change in my personal and professional identity. I identify deeply with Reta and through her with the images surrounding Danielle.

As I began to create this theory of Danielle, it is helpful to remember that a dream always points to the unknown, unconscious, and potentially emergent. Dreams do not reiterate situations that I already understand. Also, throughout the reading and writing of a

theory of Lois, I struggled to forge a meaningful link between the dream images of Danielle and Lois. Now as I write a theory of Danielle, the two women begin to both merge and emerge as twin shadow figures in Reta's psyche.

***Excerpts from Unless (Shields, 2002) considered as a series of Reta's dreams<sup>16</sup>***

**Dream #1**

I am sleeping in the great, wide bed [in the writer's suite]. I have a disturbing but not unfamiliar dream—it is the dream I always have when I am away from Orangetown, away from the family. I am standing in the kitchen at home, producing a complicated meal for guests, but there is not enough food to work with. In the fridge sits a single egg<sup>17</sup> and maybe a tomato. How am I going to feed all those hungry mouths (p. 83)?

**Dream #2**

Danielle Westerman appears again. She has thin shoulders, rather narrow, a blue wool knitted vest that should be replaced. A silver bangle on a wrist that looks like it's made of old wax, three silver rings, loose on her bony hands. She listens as I explain my bitter disappointment with the article about The Goodness Gap and the letter I dashed off to its unreconstructed author.

"Did you mail this letter?" she asks. I explain that I sometimes don't believe what I write. I wonder who is this self-pitying harridan who has put down such words, who is the person writing pitiful letters to strangers? So who is this madwoman, constructing a tottering fantasy of female exclusion and pinning it on her daughter? I ask her how she bears the exclusion. All the words she's written, all the years buried inside her. What does her shelf of books amount to, what force have these books on the world?

She shrugs. For a split second I interpret this as a shrug of surrender. But no. To my surprise, she breaks suddenly into a bright smile, her false teeth gleaming like tiles. And then, slowly, making a graceful arc in the air, she salutes me with her glass of tea. The dream ends (p. 227 – 228).

**Dream #3**

Danielle Westerman appears yet again. I "know" that she is working on the two identities she never reconciled—daughter, writer—are coming together. Translation is keeping her mind sharp, she says, like doing a crossword puzzle. A daily task to begin and complete. She's just turned eighty-six (p. 319).

**Dream #4**

I am not surprised when Danielle Westerman appears yet again. A voice reiterates that she is a woman with twenty-seven honorary degrees and she's given the world a shelf of books. She's given her thoughts and her diagram for a new, better, just world. A high school in Ontario is named after her, and in France, in the small city of Mâcon, there is a Danielle Westerman Square, a surprisingly beautiful public space with linden trees and cobbled paths ... (p. 223).

The shadow archetype is an important concept in Jungian psychology. Jung preferred the poeticism of the word shadow rather than a more scientific term. He believed that the shadow shifted with the mood and the moment, being sometimes more and sometimes less aware (Berry, 1982). The shifting, slippery nature of the shadow is not that of the binary. Rather it is like the nesting of spirals. The shadow refers to those aspects of

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<sup>16</sup> These stylized imaginary dreams are 'bits' taken from the novel as indicated by page numbers.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix 8 for research on the mythology of the cosmic egg.

the personality that have been tucked away, repressed and ignored for the sake of the ego.

If we want to “see” our shadow, we need only to look to the “other.”

(T)he shadow cast by the conscious mind of the individual contains the hidden, repressed, and unfavorable (or nefarious) aspects of the personality. But this darkness is not just the simple converse of the conscious ego. Just as the ego contains unfavorable and destructive attitudes, so the shadow has good qualities—normal instincts and creative impulses. Ego and Shadow, indeed, although separate, are inextricably linked together ... (Jung & Franz, 1964, p. 110).

Leonard (1991), Starck and Stern (1993) as well as many other Jungians alert us to our fear of the shadow and its role in midlife change. It is difficult to think about, but what comes to mind for me when I think about this fear, is the possibility of my own immense fear of knowing the power, vulnerability and chaos represented by the dark feminine.

Aguilar (2001) supports Jung’s theory of the drive to wholeness or individuation and therefore the evolution of woman through life stages—child, maiden, mother and crone. Danielle, The Old Wise Woman, acts akin to the Oracle at Delphi. Danielle evokes The Wise Woman Crone archetype saying, “Don’t hide your dark side from yourself ... it’s what keeps us going forward, that pushing away from the blinding brilliance” (Shields, 2002, p. 82). Danielle as a visitation dream image provokes internally persuasive discourse or “the discourse of becoming” and speaks of one’s own subjectivity including the objective conditions around us. This is the discourse of the rebellious and is “denied all privilege” (Britzman, 2003, p. 42). This is renegade, subversive knowledge and has no institutional privilege, but it “is able to reveal ever newer *ways to mean*” (Britzman, 2003, p. 42).

Dreams provide internally persuasive discourse through presenting new images and new metaphors which we can extend, discard or retain as part of our world. Dream content is the starting point; the dreamer must develop her own insights into the dream.

Following Cixous, Aguiar (2001) is definitive in her claim that

Women are taught to despise themselves, to distrust other women and to fear the parts of their selves that strive toward power. The myriad of bitch portrayals in myth and literature serve to underscore that self-hatred, teaching women to reject their own ‘dark’ sides. In essence ... [a] false model of femininity is rendered: compliance, self-abnegation, fidelity, and opposition to this model are then decried as bitchiness, evil, malignancy (p. 114).

This is a very powerful statement in relationship to social convention and the dark side as well as mimetic role playing and group identification as social regulation and coordination.

Donald (2001) explains how group interaction will quickly break down to become “unstable and quirky” when there is no agreement on the role that each person plays in the dyad or in the group.

What is the mimetic role of Crone Danielle Westerman in the Western literary canon? Donald (2001) claims that “Social structures depend heavily on mimetic consensus for their smooth operation” (p. 266). When Reta behaves outside of her canon-defined role in her conversation with Mr. Springer, both are uncomfortable. As a dream character in Reta’s psyche, when Danielle Westerman behaves, dresses, speaks out of canon crone character, social consciousness is disrupted. Danielle is an 86-year-old woman and a highly published feminist writer. What mimetic role do old women play in Reta’s life? Remember, in *Unless* we learn only that Reta’s mother painted china teacups. Reta must translate Danielle, as dream figure, into the mimetic structures of her consciousness. Mimesis is a highly effective form of social control. According to Donald (2001) it is a “management device [and] it evokes and enforces a pattern of consensual action [that] is controlled largely by mimetic action, such as pointing, vocalizing, and eye movements” (p. 267).

The essence of mimesis explains some of the extreme difficulty in recognizing and responding to both the need and the desire to change female roles such as the canonical role

of the crone. A check of dictionary references shows that the crone is seen variously as withered, witchlike, a hag, an ugly evil-looking old woman. Other descriptions in the vernacular include old biddy, crazy old bitch, crazy woman, dried up, unproductive, and crazy old bag. Crone Reta is birthing even though the juices of physical reproduction are leaving her body as she enters into menopause. As the crone aspect of the Trinity, the crone appears ageless, timeless, exquisite and terrible, frightening and awesome. As Medusa the Crone, she is wise and aged. Her wild grey hair loops like snakes. She is. She is Life. Death. Rebirth. She is Death as the beginning not the end. She is the turning of the wheel; the Owl, bird of wisdom and the Vulture, bird of prey. She is both Creator and Destroyer. New juices inhabit her body—vision, power and creativity birth her wisdom into words and images reflecting her likeness into the culture of the world.

The crone must fill the modern cultural distributive network with crone-seed so that the authentic stories and images of the crone can be born back into the culture and so that the crone archetype will be endlessly activated. Danielle suggests that Reta explore the dark side. I have come to understand that it is in the darkness that healing is found. Patriarchal Christianity has reviled the Medusa as one of the three sister Gorgons who turn men to stone, as the fearsome death dealing goddess. Danielle calls forth images of the Medusa. She is not the modern version of the pastel purple knitting granny. As Crone she calls forth strength, wildness, and connection. She is unafraid and unapologetic. Danielle's writing isn't in the canon but the public square, perhaps symbolic of the wholeness of the quaternity, will stand long after she is gone.

Jungian analysts Abrams and Zweig (1991) and Sanford (1989) tell us that we must meet the shadow and develop a relationship with it so that we may balance our

conscious and unconscious attitudes. Jung pointed out in much of his writing that the shadow becomes dangerous because we work far too hard to repress what we fear to know about ourselves. This explains the fervent need we may have to eradicate the “evil” in others rather than acknowledge our own. It also may explain why I took an early negative attitude to Lois and her invisibility. I fear my own. I was angry with Reta for virtually ignoring Lois. As I age, the fear of being ignored and invisible heightens.

Jungians often use the metaphor of the shadow as the “invisible long bag” we drag behind us and which drains our energy. The theory is that whatever we put into the shadow bag regresses and over time degenerates into barbarism. We then project this regression and barbarism onto the “other,” projecting onto them all those things we dislike and fear in ourselves due to the prevailing social conventions of our culture (Abrams & Zweig, 1991; Jung & von Franz, 1964). But the fact is that much of our potential treasure lies dormant in the shadow (Leonard, 1994; Sanford, 1989; Savary, et al., 1984; Starck & Stern, 1993). With each peer, parent, teacher or other authority’s negative comment, we put our anger, our creativity, our insightfulness, wildness, impulsiveness, intuitiveness, sexuality, and spontaneity into the metaphorical shadow bag and pull it tightly closed.

The prevailing Jungian attitude is that we must recognize and integrate the shadow so that we are able to develop a coherent (not essential) and dynamic sense of self. However, “... some aspect of the shadow always appears negative—the shadow is too assertive, too independent, too sexual—doesn’t act the way a nice girl should” (Stark & Stern, 1993a, pp. 3 - 4). Jung and his followers have long advocated the transformation of old beliefs and patterns of behavior. Danielle is too independent and outspoken to be a nice girl. Lois on the other hand may have shoved her independence and her thoughts into the

unconscious in exchange for the rewards received for quiet and passive “feminine” behavior. Lois is the vapid, mousy, servant-like, and unassuming mother-in-law.

Becoming aware of old patterns of behavior is the work of midlife. There seems little doubt that aging is an issue in *Unless*. We learn the exact ages of Norah (20), Reta (43 and 44), Lois (70) and Danielle (86). As dreams, these shadow figures may be the tendencies Reta has hidden from herself—the tendency to stay away from any controversy, to worry about Tom and the girls and to not let her writing be more important than her role as wife and mother. These dream images may be telling Reta about her own desire not to know and appreciate her gifts and talents. Reta has two possible dream models of aging—Danielle or Lois. Perhaps Reta is afraid she will emerge as strong, outspoken and assertive like Danielle but still be excluded from the canon. Perhaps she is afraid she will become the almost invisible and seldom noticed Lois. It seems that the dream reader may be able to pay attention to the contradictions in the two figures. Lois and Danielle as aspects of the shadow may symbolically be the creative union of opposites.

Dream reading as literary engagement is akin to experiencing a kaleidoscope. The multitudinous glass bits and their endless interpretations define an approach of deep power to the “pattern which connects” (Bateson, 1979, p. 77). Humans are pattern seekers. Myriad ideas, figures and images appear in our dreams and over time create a feeling, an environment, a pattern of connections. They become a narrative, a created, reconfigured, interpretive story of who we are and who we are becoming. As Kerby says,

Our identity is that of a particular historical being, and this identity can persist only through the continued integration of ongoing experience. Because we bring our history along with us ... new experiences will tend to flow into this story of our lives, augmenting it and adapting themselves to it (1991, p. 45).

Dream reading Danielle creates many possible experiences of cronedom.



Jung (1964, 1989) considered our tendency to repression as the major issue with the shadow aspect of our psyche. Rather than demonic or evil, he saw the shadow side as undeveloped, inferior, primitive, and unadapted. These qualities, if developed, would embellish and animate human living. Many cultures construct darkness as evil and have little understanding of the workings of the unconscious or the shadow side. “When we come face-to-face with our darker side, we use metaphors to describe these shadow encounters: meeting our demons, wrestling with the devil, descent to the underworld, dark night of the soul, midlife crisis” (Abrams & Zweig, 1991, p. 3). The collective unconscious contains numinous figures such as the archetype of The Old Wise Woman. The dark side or shadow holds deep treasure and whereas this has been culturally constructed as shadowed, dark, black in dreams, there is no essential evil in color. In dream work, black is recovered from the Inquisitors who assigned evil and darkness to women’s sexuality, procreativity and the healing arts. Black is referenced to The Song of Songs and to the

black Virgins in Spain and Southern France—we have a famous one at Lluch in Majorca—are black because the Saracen occupation during the Middle Ages taught the local Christians to equate black with wise—hence the Black Arts were originally the Wise Arts” (Graves, 1973, p. 15).

Black might also be considered the color of mastery as in the black belt of judo. It is the dark phase of the moon which gives way to its next phase. Black is the alchemical color of the dissolution of the soul in its last stages of development. Black is the color of the witch, the hag, and the crone. No seed grows which does not thrust its shoots up from the warm nurturing darkness of the earth. Black is the Black Madonna (Mato, 1994). Black is Kali (Leonard, 1994).

The crone, hag or other derogatory word has been thrust down and hidden as part of the collective shadow. Part of that shadow is our fear of death. We will not become old. Through whatever possible miracles and machinations of diet, cosmetic surgery, makeup and physical fitness regime, we shall remain young. Perhaps Danielle is advising Reta to invoke Hecate, the Dark Goddess of aging. According to Starck and Stern (1993), Hecate comes from older mythology. She is linked with Persephone but usually seen as a separate figure. Hecate is the hag or the crone, the dark aspect of the triple goddess. Women are advised to evoke the shadow through ritual to celebrate the crone stage and its freedom from childbearing, childrearing, housewifery and the rules of the patriarchy and its Western canon. The crone, hag, old wise woman stage is the psychic opening to the inner questions and life ambitions which have yet to be realized. The crone phase may be the one-third of life that belongs to woman all-one (alone). But first, the woman must integrate aspects of the shadow such as rage. She must acknowledge her fear that unleashing her rage will drown all those around her in molten lava, or that due to her rage she will be deemed pathological (Weedon, 1997). She must not relate literally to the dream images. She must work to accept dissolution and change. Perhaps when The Old Wise Woman advises Reta to pay attention to the dark side, she is referring to rage. Perhaps she is also advising Reta to use her rage as e-motion, that is, energy to move her toward assertiveness.

As I read and re-read *Unless*, I am struck with Reta's muted response to the disappearance of her daughter, to the comments of her editors, especially Springer, and to the many articles she read that showed a total and "casual disregard" for over half the human race. Yet, for me she continued to project total equanimity. I find myself wondering if Reta has confused the position of women as individuals with their position as a group.

There is no doubt that as an individual Reta has benefited from the privilege of White race and middle class. However, as a member of the group, woman, she is automatically labeled inferior. She is expected to justify her success outside of the home while recognizing that she has selfishly put her own needs as a successful writer above her family. I suggest that the grossly unfair but continuous drip of the acid of inferiority and selfishness just might produce rage. Rage. “Rage is a quality that the Dark Goddess represents. She rages against humanity in her form as Pele, the Hawaiian Goddess, who, when the volcano overflows, destroys all that is in her path (Starck & Stern, 1993, p. 6). I understand buried anger and rage. As I write this, I recall the many times I heard as a child that anger is a sin; anger is not ladylike; anger is inappropriate; anger is something nice girls neither experience nor express. This is the colonization of psychic space (Oliver, 2004), the creation of patriarchal culture that I continue to work to re-create. The generation and reproduction of patriarchal consciousness is a key consideration for radical feminists devoted to changing the structures of patriarchal society.

Merlin Donald (2001) tells us that the human mind, being a *hybrid* product of biology and culture, cannot come into existence on its own; therefore, we must abandon the solipsism. He further argues that the human mind both generates and assimilates culture and that the experiences of the human mind are screened through culture. We are programmed by culture to respond in certain ways using the symbolic skills that we acquire beginning with infancy or earlier. Donald (2001) maintains that human cultures are potent teachers since their members manage one another’s interests through a labyrinth of cultural practices. Weedon claims that meaning is produced through language. Individual signs (signifiers) do not have intrinsic meaning, but acquire meaning through the language chain

and through their difference from other signs. Language exists in “historically specific discourses” (Weedon, 1997, p. 23). Learning language embeds us in that discourse from which escape is difficult. Thus, to break out of the meaning produced through written language into the symbolic language of the dream creates internal dissonance. “(T)he individual is always the site of conflicting forms of subjectivity. As we acquire language, we learn to give voice—meaning—to our experience and to understand it according to particular ways of thinking, particular discourses, which pre-date our entry into language” (Weedon, 1997, p. 32).

It is important to recognize that the culturally produced maiden-mother aspects of life are not forgotten, not less significant, not erased through our journey to the crone. They are re-created and integrated. Women must never deny the “adequacy, influence, and existence” of the pre-Oedipal relation we knew as children (Grumet, 1988, p. 20). Dreams and therefore dream reading might be an endless becoming, a perpetual birthing of the world of the feminine and pre-Oedipal language. Weedon (1997) is emphatic in her declaration of the phallocentrism of the symbolic order “structured according to the law of the Father” (p. 69). In summarizing her rejection of Freud and Lacan and their focus on the phallic structuring of psycho-sexual development, Weedon speaks to women’s “rejection of the rationalist norms of the symbolic order” and points out that “the feminist discourses of mysticism, magic, poetry and art” contest the patriarchy and attempt to restore the feminine. She states, “There can be no escaping patriarchy except through a return of the repressed feminine aspects of language” (Weedon, 1997, p. 69). I want to add dream reading to this educated resistance. Perhaps it is the role of the crone, secure in her self-authority, who can dream the return of the repressed feminine.

It is through integration that the enormous shadow power latent in the unconscious can be transformed into an energy force for joyful, productive aging. I identify deeply with the literary dream image of Danielle. I want, I need, I desire to unleash the potent and creative inner forces to become like Danielle as Reta sees her through volume three of her memoirs.

What is new is the suppleness and strength of her sentences. Always an artist of concision and selflessness, she has arrived in her old age at a gorgeous fluidity and expansion of phrase. My translation doesn't begin to express what she has accomplished (Shields, 2002, p. 14).

We have precious few positive images of The Old Wise Woman (Anderson & Zinsser, 1988; Lerner, 1993). The knowledge of the village midwife and wise woman as, “an elder acknowledged to have special skill with herbs and who knew rituals and prayers that could cure” (Anderson & Zinsser, 1988, p. 110) disappeared or was driven underground with the inquisition and witchcraft trials in the 14th through 17th centuries.

As Danielle appears in Reta's dreams, she is caring, feisty, self-assertive, strong, and independent. For centuries women such as Danielle have been left outside of history and denied any acknowledgement of their role in building human society and culture. Lerner (1997) points out that for generations gifted women were ghost writers under the “protection of” husband, brother or son where they “expressed the disappointment and frustrations of their situation in their creative writing, the women characters they created and with whom they identified” (p. 210). Danielle appears in Reta's dreams as the successful 86-year-old white woman creating history—but not accepted into the great Western literary canon. As I read and reflect there is a continual drumming in my head. It's Mr. Springer's response to Reta as they discuss his demands for changes to *Thyme in Bloom*. The conversation between Springer and Reta haunts me. Springer suggests that the

Alicia as the main character makes Reta's novel popular rather than quality fiction.

Dismissing Reta's suggestion that he admired Alicia for her goodness, he says, "Goodness but not greatness. Who said that?" Reta tells him it was Danielle Westerman, he says, "Really, I haven't read the old girl." With that line, Mr. Springer reduces Danielle Westerman to the "other," the outsider. He dismisses her as one without identity other than age and gender. He effectively silences Reta's life-world experience as a woman, as a writer and as a person. This then is the power of social definition, the power of the ruling elite to construct old women as a deviant group and to suggest to Reta that she is not immune from definition by the powerful patriarchal publishing industry. It is in her best interest to rewrite her novel according to the prescription of the patriarchy and the Western literary canon. It only requires that she make a *few* shifts in perspective, move the novel toward the universal, tweak the title and the author, and replace Alicia with Roman as the main character who needs his role enlarged together with his interiority. Roman must make "a pilgrimage to the land of his fathers." Danielle exemplifies the assertiveness and self-authority that Reta must "translate" as her self.

Translating for Danielle Westerman may be Reta's metaphorical dream attempt to think, experience and become those feminist thoughts. Rupprecht (1999) identifies translation as a historical core metaphor in Euro-American dream theory. She states that, "virtually all of our knowledge about dreams has been mediated through language and that all dream reporting is itself an act of intersemiotic translation ... and [there are] often uncanny affinities between language/translation studies and dream/interpretation studies." She asks "What do people interested in the study of dreaming have to gain from attention to the process of translation" (Rupprecht, 1999, p. 1)? Her main interest lies in learning

how to “read” a dream report and what can be learned from “this linguistic construction.” Following Gadamer (1982), she argues that “Reading is already translation and translation is translation for the second time. The process comprises in its essence the whole secret of human understanding and social communication” (p. 2). How does a dream find its way into our remembered consciousness? Writing the dream, drawing, acting, and dancing the dream enable bringing the dream more fully into consciousness. No matter what the action, we will fall short of representing the dream even to ourselves. As Sumara and Uppitts (2004) point out,

Most of what we know, it seems, can’t be explained, isn’t even available to perception. And even [if] what is experienced finds its way to consciousness, it can’t always be represented, much less translated ... acts of translation are also acts of shifting identities” (p. ix).

Unlike the language of the patriarchy, the dream reader, that is, the translator is not at liberty to fabricate the meaning of the dream but rather must attempt to move it from the imaginal and the symbolic into the linguistic world. The fictive image arising from the novel or the image emerging from the dream must be expressed in a new way simply because the translator cannot possibly reproduce or represent the image. Every dream reading is, like every translation, an interpretation. There is no doubt that this is a re-creation of the text that is guided by the way the dream reader understands what the images might be saying. As Gadamer (1982) suggests, “No one can doubt that we are dealing here with interpretation, and not simply with reproduction” (pp. 346 - 347). Dream reading attempts to bring to consciousness, to translate, some aspect of the reader’s experience with the images in the novel. The dream reader, like Reta, can never reproduce nor represent the original dream or the original work. Perhaps women writing and women dream reading are always translating and attempting to change the symbolic order through infiltration.

When I reflect on Danielle, I think of her as feminine, old, self-sufficient, independent, assertive, caring, kind, and seemingly imperturbable. I reflect again on Reta's work as the translator of her Danielle dreams into her life-world. According to Jung & Franz (1964), if the dreamer has been struggling with animus or anima problems, we may dream in a new symbolic form representing the Self. In a woman this dream figure may appear as a respected female historical figure or a esteemed woman known to the dreamer (pp. 207-208).

Reta has been working as Danielle's translator for many years. Reta must translate wisdom from her personal unconscious, that is, from the archetypal wise woman into her consciousness. I believe that dream reading the novel has the potential to bring forward the wisdom which resides in the unconscious. Jung (1964) insists that

for more than 70 years the unconscious has been a basic scientific concept that is indispensable to any serious psychological investigation. ... But we still complacently assume that consciousness is sense and the unconscious is nonsense. In science such an assumption would be laughed out of court (p. 92).

Whereas Donald (2001) does not dismiss the collective unconscious as nonsense, he does point out the issue of representation when he comments that

Repression is, more often than not, a failure of apperceptive or representational capture in the public arena. Some psychoanalysts, notably Jung, rooted the collective unconscious in cultural archetypes, but surely he meant only that the influence of such archetypes is usually implicit, rather than explicit. The deep cultural unconscious exists in a representational limbo that is temporarily uncaptured (p. 287).

I argue that one way to begin to make the implicit explicit is through dream reading. We can create new and different words, images and concepts through noticing and working with images from the unconscious.

Elements often appear in a dream that cannot be attributed to personal experience. Freud called these completely unfamiliar images "archaic remnants," and Jung explained



them as archetypal. Evolution is seen from a biological perspective. However, what about the psyche? Over millennia, the psyche has evolved from primitive to ever increasing complexity and patterns of psychic behavior and social organization.

Just as the human body represents a whole museum of organs, each with a long evolutionary history behind it, so we should expect to find that the mind is organized in a similar way. ... By “history” ... I am referring to the biological, prehistoric, and unconscious development of the mind in archaic man, whose psyche was still close to that of the animal (Jung & Franz, 1964, pp. 56 – 57).

In chapter two, I wrote about the controversy that surrounds Jung’s concept of the archetype. I believe it is important to say more about this controversy as it relates to dream image Danielle. Rowland (2002) and Samuels (1985) discriminate between archetypes as “potential structures” and “substances” in an attempt to clarify the common misconception that Jungian archetypes are inherited images. Jung himself knew that his concept of archetype was grossly misunderstood. He insisted that archetypes form representations of a motif but that the representations varied greatly without loss of their basic pattern.

Archetypes are *mythos* not *logos*. Archetypes “are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world—even where transmission by direct descent or ‘cross fertilization’ through migration must be ruled out” (Jung & Franz, 1964, p. 58).

From a feminist perspective there are also significant concerns (Daly, 1978; Noddings, 1989). How can we be sure that myth, religion and legend, rich though they may be and well celebrated by Jungians, capture authentic female experience? Perhaps, instead, they are the result of male projections of female experience. Noddings (1989) points out that Jung does recognize that the intellect is not supreme and that feeling is powerful; but he did not recognize that the feminine relational mode invokes both and that feeling may

indeed be the ultimately rational mode of being (p. 71). As Noddings (1989) and Rowland (2002) suggest, Jung's relationship with his mother and with female spiritualist mediums surely colored his view of the animus/anima archetype. Even if we accept the positive clusters of attributes—compassion, maternal caring, nurturance, receptivity, responsiveness, relatedness, patience—which have been named over and over again for centuries as the positive “essence” of the feminine, we must remember that these have been described, analyzed and written about largely by men, or, as Cixous makes clear in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, by women whose writing in no way differs from that of men. Noddings (1989) argues that classical Jungian theory must be revised to free the development of consciousness from an “inner man” or a woman's “helpful animus” to focus on woman-self as causal agent. Like Aguiar (2001), I feel that the concept of archetype is useful even with its flaws.

I like to imagine the trilobite as an archaic element, an archetypal gesture to the Triple Goddess and to the journey of evolutionary psychic change—the coming together of maiden (Norah), mother (Reta), crone (Lois and Danielle) within Reta Winters. Reta's partner, Tom, studies trilobites and “keeps his precious trilobite collection in a locked glass cage” (Shields, 2002, p. 51). Further, “No one has ever seen a trilobite, since they exist only in a fossil record. ... (W)hen threatened, these creatures were able to curl up, each segment nesting into the next and protecting the soft animal under bodies (Shields, 2002, p. 61). Often called the “Butterflies of the Sea,” no animal better captures the drama of evolution and extinction. Beautiful and bizarre, trilobites lived in shallow seas some 350 million years ago, long before the fish inhabited the seas and the dinosaurs roamed the

land. The simple trilobite represents the most successful of all animal life forms.<sup>18</sup> Of the quadrillion life forms available to the author, why this one? What archaic, extinct yet living through image, fossilized, triple-form am I reading? Not binary but three-lobed. There are very many Trinitarian symbols: Father, Son and Shekhinah. Maiden-Mother-Crone. Norah-Reta-Danielle. Three-Goddesses-in-One. The Old Mother. The Triple Goddess—Hecate, Baba Yaga, Mother Holle. These myths strike some very deep chord, a sympathetic resonance. The myths reveal cyclical intertwining rather than the irreconcilable dualism of the patriarchy. Hillman made clear that the underworld and the unconscious are analogues. In the collective unconscious or in the underworld, the goddess nurtures not only physical life but the life of the soul as well. “Myths do not tell us how, they simply give us the invisible background which starts us imagining, questioning, going deeper” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 158). Perhaps Reta will recognize the trilobite *as if* it were a call to look to whatever is below. Perhaps a call from the deep instinct, the deepest knowing from out of the primal mud. She may hear the metaphorical voice of *La Loba*, a call to hear the voice of Wild Woman and accept her timeless guidance.

Downing (1992) provides some thoughts about the use of a goddess metaphor in writing. “Like any primordial archetype, the Great Mother provokes profound ambivalence” (p. 12). The goddess has never disappeared; she simply went underground, back to the cave, back to the earth. The trilobite may be the anthropomorphized, long considered extinct, but evolving goddess appearing in *Unless* to portend the reawakening of the feminine spirit as Reta enters the mysterious transformational years from mother to crone. The trilobite suggests that Reta may be ready to accept information from hidden sources and that she must plunge deep into Genesis’ primal mud beneath superficiality to

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<sup>18</sup> [www.trilobite.com](http://www.trilobite.com)

reconnect with her soul. Danielle as a dream figure opens the way to a metamorphosis, a transformed consciousness, a rebirth, not an aging toward physical death. For the goddess intertwines death and a new vision. “She is the source of vision—and lunacy, which is altered vision” (Downing, 1992, p. 13). Like the trilobite, the egg in the refrigerator evokes the notion of feminine energy as transformative energy (Appendix XIII). In my imagination, I can see food representative of transformed substance.

Through cultivation and cooking, grass becomes bread. Women perform this transformation and incarnate this transformative power in their capacity to make milk out of blood and to give birth out of their own bodies (Downing, 1992, p. 11).

In Reta’s dream, the big bed in the writer’s suite may be the place of creativity, pregnancy and the birth of new ideas. Midlife women often dream of pregnancy and birth. This is not the patriarchal dream of the empty nest. It is the dream of the birth of new ideas, creativity, lunacy, and productivity. The dream re-occurs whenever Reta is away from home, that is, outside of her daily routine. Reta is stuck in the familiar. She needs to move outside of familiar ways. The lone egg sits in the refrigerator as if in an ice cave where cool temperatures keep it from birthing or transforming. This is the cosmic egg. The egg of the universe. It may symbolize new growth in consciousness. It is a motif for emerging new life. Reta’s refrigerator dream, she says, occurs often on her book tours. The dream episode does not mesh well with her identity and so she simply makes it “fit” her patriarchal consciousness by relating it to her “responsibility” to provide food for her nearly grown family. As Jung said, “if the meaning we find in the dream happens to coincide with our expectations, that is a reason for suspicion” (Campbell, 1971, p. 327).

Reta must warm up to the notion of living in a new universe. “Simply waking up in an alien surrounding (e.g., while on holiday) can momentarily unsettle the part-whole gestalt” (Kerby, 1991, p. 46). Or, as Winterson (1995) explains:

We mostly understand ourselves through an endless series of stories told to ourselves by ourselves and others. It is necessary to have a story, an alibi [personal] to get us through the day, but what happens when the story becomes a scripture? ... (W)here whatever conflicts with our world-view is dismissed or diluted until it ceases to be a bother (p. 60)?

Reta’s mother and wife stories have become her life scripture. She tells herself the story of woman duty and the irrelevance of dreams rather than the dream story that questions her life script and permits new learning to emerge.

Dream reading has the potential to render more explicit the role of dreams as cultural experiences deemed appropriate for wide formal distribution through the cultural network thus creating expanded consciousness. The personal and the collective unconscious might enlarge our imaginative capacity and give us the imagery to recognize the inner psychic life that is so often at odds with our external self-imagery. The *as if* it were a dream image of Danielle asks Reta, “How can you pretend that what happens in public policy and public spaces is now inclusive of women just because more women are physically present in those spaces?”

Language is a means by which consciousness is changed. Dream reading in literary engagement takes the reader vertically into the text where questions are more appropriate than answers. Dream reading may be added to the many ways of women’s knowing and to the possible ways in which women can unravel the patriarchy. Wise women crones have known dream reading for millennia. I suggest that through dream reading the fear of

knowing the crone might be diminished. Reading Danielle as the crone aspect of the Triple Goddess, women might re-appropriate identifications that have always been theirs.

In this chapter, I argued that the interpretive act of dream reading can highlight our unknowing and transform repressed and hidden images into a shift in consciousness. Women have been contained in a world named and structured by the dominant male viewpoint since at least the writing of the myth of the Garden of Eden and the fall from paradise. Language can change consciousness. We must bring up the repressed feminine through a new imagery language from the unconscious. Shadow images in dreams provoke internal dissonance, questions about social convention, social control of emotions and patterns of consensual action that have gone generally unquestioned in homes, religious institutions and school classrooms. I believe that through new language can be developed and old language can be brought into consciousness through dream reading. Dream reading must be included in the Western literary canon. This dream reading creates a space of doubt. It shows that through interpreting fictive dream images like feminist Danielle Westerman as an aspect of the Crone, Wise Woman Archetype or an archaic image such as the trilobite, we generate new knowledge. If educators can bring strange and weird literary dream images into consciousness through the arts, we can change the symbolic order through infiltration. If teacher educators can use the generative act of dream reading to produce new knowledge and new meaning, we can begin to create new subject positions and identifications and re-appropriate old and honorable ones for women in the cultural distributive network.

In the next chapter, I outline the potential significance of dreams and dream reading in curriculum studies and teacher education.

7.

**In Celebration of My Womb**

If we are interested in arresting cycles of violence to produce less violent outcomes, it is no doubt important to ask what, politically, might be made of grief besides a cry for war.

Judith Butler, 2004

\* \* \*

**November 17, 1992**

**Healing Light of Mother**

Part I

*I am in Calgary. Many women are chanting, singing. "If all the women in the world shout, 'Freedom'."*

Part II

*Then I am travelling in the countryside. Seven brothers are on a farm or in some kind of pastoral-shepherding business. There are seven vacuums. I am sitting on the floor in a room. There are several pails. I remember three. One has beets. One has milk. I cannot recall the content of the third pail. I also have on skates and am walking around carefully on the floor. The room is ancient. It reminds me of Aunt Anne's log house in the 1950's.*

Part III

*A woman, very old, white hair, and wrinkles is lying on a bed. I think it is my mother. There is a strong, very beautiful white light. The Crone explains that the Light has healed her appendix by simply removing it. It was a little black blob and it has flown out the window.*

**November 26, 2004**

**Shadow Bites**

*I am in EDSE 503<sup>19</sup> and I talk about a newspaper article about George Bush and his "use" of Christ symbolism to gain the vote of the poor.*

*I am telling the group that the words "moral values" appear to be code words for anti-gay legislation and opposition to abortion, the latter an issue that Bush has never moved on. V., a young woman in our class from Ghana and a self-proclaimed born again Christian is very angry with me because of my comments. She is so angry that she rushes across the room and bites me on my little finger! I am hurt and appalled. Then I am even more hurt when everyone in the group rushes to protect her from me! The bite breaks the skin on the finger of my right hand.*

I dream these two dreams twelve years apart. I include the first dream because of the image of women chanting, the sacred number seven, the pastoral imagery and the ancient healing mother / woman reminiscent of goddess imagery. I think the dream points to hope that the communal voices of women could well compel changes that tip the balance

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<sup>19</sup> A Curriculum Foundations course in my doctoral program at the University of Alberta. Each student chose a presentation topic from a predetermined list. I chose last. My topic was feminist pedagogy and I had a focus conversation plan developed because I thought there was less possibility for open conflict. I was wrong.

toward equilibrium in the symbolic order. I include the second dream because it brings my fears of religious fundamentalism into direct focus. The dream prompts me to ask questions like, “What would happen to me if certain elements of my culture knew my real beliefs?” The dream points to my fear of anger, disapproval, intimidation, and possible violence. It points out my need for approval as well as the dichotomy of learning / not learning in the university classroom. The nocturnal dream is a different version of an actual event although the daylight verbal attacker was male. There were no defenders during the attack although there were many after the class. As Mary Daly (1973) points out in the Original Reintroduction (1985) of *Beyond God the Father*, the level of violence against women has escalated and

... women have experienced in agonizing detail the mazes constructed by the patriarchal backlashers whose intent is to obstruct this movement of integrity and transformation, tracking women into repetitive circles ... (p. xiv).

I understand that such fears might be considered hysterical, exaggerated or emotional. I think that hundreds of ordinary women every day clamp their mouths shut and silently swallow their anger. I know that I often fear reprisal in whatever form that might take. I want to recognize my fear and silence. I hope that my experiences might support other educators in the transformation of both personal and professional work.

In this chapter I articulate my position on the relevance of dreams and dream reading to the field of curriculum studies and teacher education. I have come to understand that who I am is how I teach. Further, I have come to believe that the inclusion of dream reading in the curriculum field and teacher education would focus on the alchemical imagination which can turn lead into gold through “alien encounters” and propel the reader



into the “uncommon territory of the unexplored psyche” (Doll, 2000, p. 6). Dream reading is the journey away from literalism into the space of doubt where imagination thrives.

In 1984 – 85, I completed a masters degree in education and began to glimpse the possibilities that there was more to curriculum than the prescribed government documents. Although I was enrolled in an educational administration degree program, I was drawn to taking a curriculum course with Ted Aoki and Kenneth Jacknicke. In that class, I read *To Have or To Be?* (Fromm, 1976) and used language analysis to evaluate the language of the grade nine Alberta social studies program. I don’t have a copy of that paper, but as I recall, I was fairly naïve about the depth of power over that existed in that curriculum. Power over is thought to be the power of the dominator rather than the notion of power with, partnership power, as some feminists describe it. As I noted in the introduction to this dissertation, beginning in 1988 I faced a deepening personal crisis which ended many years of clinical depression and led to deep and vast personal changes. In 1992-1993 my colleagues and I completed an analysis of Social Studies 30 based on the dominator-partnership model elaborated in Riane Eisler’s (1987) book, *The Chalice and The Blade: Our history, our future*. The confluence of these events fueled my deep rejection of the technical-rational modes of teaching and learning.

Legitimate power, that is the legal power of authority, such as that exercised by Alberta Education is very effective in allowing government and institutions to exercise “power over” without even being aware of its effects. Within the curriculum are unexamined values of competition (natural to humans or biological rather than ideological), individualism (as the only form of political, economic, and social freedom) and unexamined history (written by experts). Teachers become unwitting participants in

promoting hegemonic perspectives, and in this way the curriculum abuses teachers as well as students (Grumet, 1988). Tupper (2004) explains

I have also been disappointed by the absence of women's lives and experiences from curriculum documents and textbooks, struggling to make sense of my own relationship to curriculum as a result. Further disappointment has emerged through my involvement in the curriculum development process with Alberta Learning. When asked to rank order a list of topics for inclusion in the curriculum, teachers throughout the province selected women's history as one of the least important areas of study for students (Alberta Learning, 2002). Often the only woman at the curriculum writing table, I fought for the inclusion of gender in the curriculum with very limited success (p. 64).

Tupper's statements also beg the question of female complicity. It is interesting that even when asked, women teachers remained silent about women in history and curriculum. Is it that I desire not to know because in knowing, I have to act, be accountable, and recognize my own complicity?

I have come to see curriculum as living in the middle of my life. The word curriculum derives from *currere*, meaning to run a course. Pinar (1975) recollected the etymological roots of curriculum to refocus on the need to reconceptualize curriculum studies. Pinar challenged educators to shift focus from an institutional fixation on design and development to consider more deeply what intention is served by curriculum. Curriculum inquiry and curriculum theory were added to the field.

What about the course of a life? Beginning with Pinar's provocation, the curriculum field opened to broader questions in many areas including psychology, history, philosophy, culture, religion, feminism and the course of identity. Thinking about curriculum as *currere* requires an exploration of individual histories and experiences. Today the field brims with a multiplicity of discourses that are expanding the horizons of curriculum and the question of which knowledge is of most worth (Pinar, et al., 2004). These openings in the

curriculum field have enabled me to write this dissertation about the course of my life and my relationship to feminism, consciousness, dreams, dream reading, curriculum, teaching, and learning.

Educators continue to experience great difficulty in moving away from curriculum as an arranged subject, “a structure of socially prescribed knowledge” (Greene, 1971) to curriculum as a life-world. Greene explains:

Rarely does [curriculum] signify possibility for him as an existing person, mainly concerned with making sense of his own life-world. Rarely does it promise occasions for ordering the materials of that world, for imposing “configurations” (Ponty, 1964) by means of experiences and perspectives made available for personally conducted cognitive action (1971, p. 1).

As curriculum is reconceptualized, hundreds of education researchers, philosophers and writers have advocated on behalf of a curriculum that occasions, initiates, facilitates, and invites the learner into experiences that help to create and make sense of her life-world. Dream reading is one more aspect of a curriculum of possibility in making sense of our own life-world.

What provokes change in teacher beliefs? Teachers must be acting subjects in their own transformative possibilities. Teachers must “become” the change. How does a teacher come to see herself as teacher and living the life of teacher that is different from the received role? Theories of consciousness illustrate that teachers have been “deeply formed by their personal and national histories” (Carson, 2005, p. 3) and they are surely contained within the cultural distributive network elaborated by Donald (2001).

Britzman (2003) theorized about how teacher identity is constructed while learning to teach. She identified a set of cultural myths that deeply impact the development of teacher identity and repress teacher subjectivity. These myths of the teacher as the expert,

the teacher as self made and experience as the way to learn to teach structure the student teacher's views of "power, authority, knowledge, and identity" (Britzman, 2003, p. 30). These myths serve to create conflicting realities in learning to teach. According to Britzman (2003), over familiarity with the teacher's role, the "normalcy" of school structures and the power of one's institutional biography invite and accept the suggestions these cultural myths offer about the work and identity of teacher learners. These cultural myths identified by Britzman (2003) "partly structure the individual's taken-for-granted views of power, authority, knowledge, and identity. They work to cloak the more vulnerable condition of learning to teach and the myriad negotiations it requires" (p. 30).

In the traditional model, teachers stand at the edge of the teaching space because that is how culture conceptualizes teaching. Students are pushed to the outside of their life space (the classroom is not the "real" world). The "real" world is "out there." Britzman (2003) states emphatically there are no simple maps showing how to teach or how to learn to teach. But if, as she says, learning to teach is "the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 31), then I believe dream reading could assist in that process. Fundamentally, dream reading is a tool for finding our own centrality as teachers within our lives as teachers.

According to Britzman (2003) and Davis (2004) poststructuralist discourse considers how personal identities are shaped through language, identity and power and the hidden structures that mold and form a way of life that supports imbalance, oppression and aggression as normal. Evolving knowledge questions entrenched commonsense notions that are rooted in conventional beliefs and assumptions thus

disrupting long established patterns. Poststructuralist thought works to dismantle prevailing, mostly invisible, language by creating new words and reinventing or resurfacing old ones. Dream reading provides ways to make hidden structures visible.

Identity is formed through mastery of the “normal”—that is the embodiment of culturally privileged habits of interpretation of the world. The degree to which the individual is molded by the language determines the degree of their inclusion or marginalization. As currently conceived, the system consists of experiences that allow the hidden structures to remain hidden and to be disguised by what masquerades as new knowledge. Critical and liberatory discourses are oriented to the social and cultural consequences of identity formed through myriad acts of ignorance that discard multiple possibilities to accept particular “normal” ideologies or social groups. Schooling consists of learning despite the rigorously hidden structures which enable the maintenance of the status quo. Dream reading provides one possible way to reclaim what has been discarded, that is, to reinterpret the life-world through different experiences.

Working with literature as dream, perhaps teachers can come to see that selves are a priority, and perhaps they might come to ask, “What self surfaces in my own dreams?” “What self surfaces in my teaching?” Dream reading may be disconcerting just as interpreting and working with dreams is disconcerting. Dreams are the “other.” Dreams, like the feminine, like woman, have been designated irrational, unreasonable and emotional. The not-so-hidden curriculum agenda is the appropriate normative socialization of both teacher and child. Dream reading presents the disconcerting possibility of questioning the status quo. Dream reading enables a “pedagogy of discomfort” (Boler, 1999; Phelan & Luu, 2004).

What preparation do teachers have for teaching that includes difference? What teacher education programs in Alberta routinely encourage deep consideration of feminist perspectives in the life-world of becoming teachers? Boler (1999), Lewis (1993), Doll (2000), Grumet (1988), and Britzman (2003) identify resistance to acknowledging difference in teacher education discourses. They also acknowledge that status, power, knowledge, and control are often submerged in the student teacher's need to be "nice" and to not upset their classmates. Often as a teacher I am my own blind censor.

Dream reading creates a site for negotiation in the student teacher's constant struggle for meaning. Tupper (2004) writes of resistance to and refusal to listen to, impatience with and outright denial of the possibility of sexism in both the Alberta curriculum and the Alberta classroom. Feminist literature is rife with accounts of silence, resistance, refusal, impatience, and denial from both men and women (Boler, 1999; Britzman, 2003; Grumet 1988; Lewis, 1993). Phelan & Luu (2004) give a teacher educator and student teacher account of the difficulties faced in educating for difference in an increasingly diversified school population where the population in "teacher education programs continues to be predominantly White" (p. 176). I read the theoretical positioning of gender issues as based on cultural codes deeply embedded within consciousness. What can dream reading add to the conversation about how to undermine, problematize and subvert the reproduction of hegemonic text in curriculum and preservice teacher education? Can dream reading help educators to get past the superficial meanings already imposed?

By raising the unspoken and the repressed, I open the gaps and indeterminacies in curriculum into which we might infill intolerable images that subvert the boundaries of "good taste," that is, the rationality and reality of the "normal." I argue that my dream work

and dream reading have resulted in significant personal and professional identity shifting and shaping. I also argue that the juxtaposition of life experience and the sharply different views in my night dreams has resulted in the production of significant new knowledge. My new knowledge and shifting identities have changed how I teach and what I think curriculum is.

I am happy to tell my classroom of becoming teachers, “You will dream strange things, and your dreams will tell you, if you notice, what you are struggling with. If you are experiencing struggle with what you are learning, your dreams will have ideas for you. Notice. Pay attention. Watch your dreams. Dreams come from the personal unconscious and from the collective unconscious. You may well have the ‘nude teacher dream’ when you are first required to teach an actual classroom of students on your own.” I tell them that self-reflection is imperative.

We work to figure out what self-reflection means as opposed to keeping a diary. We work with different readings of text from various perspectives. We read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs from the Wolf's Perspective* (Scieszka, 1996). We close our eyes and imagine that we are a 17C Aborigine woman inspected by an early anthropologist in Australia (Clendinnan, 1999).<sup>20</sup> We close our eyes and fantasize first school days and first classes. We draw images of daydreams in our construction of what our first classrooms will look and feel like, what our students will be doing. I tell stories of how I have come to see the social studies curriculum as the reproductive agent of the patriarchy. We talk about learner and learning as the center rather than student-centered or teacher-centered. I ask the students difficult questions about gender, race, class, and sexuality. When silence descends,

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<sup>20</sup> *Incident on a Beach*. I read this story of a scientific expedition and anthropologist's encounter with an Aborigine woman. I teach fantasy as a teaching strategy in social studies. The question is, “How do others experience what we do with and to them?”

I wait. I talk about wait time and engaging students. I wait again. And, I ask, what are you thinking? What are you feeling right now? What personal stories come to mind when we discuss this topic?

I re-write social studies program definitions of thinking to include emotion. I ask them who decided emotion was irrational and unacceptable. Who decided what knowledge should be constructed in their classrooms with their students? I show them and model for them and have them practice using Focused Conversation Method<sup>TM21</sup> wherein objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional questions are structured to help students “to see” relationships between the curriculum questions in the classroom and the stories of their lives (Nelson, 2001). I tell them that without struggle, without crisis, without anger and resistance, all we are learning is reproduction, not knowledge and not living.

And, if they are angry with me, as they sometimes are, I don’t like it, but I am trying to learn to live with it. For as I say every semester, “It isn’t my job to make you happy. It is my job to make you unsettled enough to question, irritated enough to think about and to try to show me that what I am saying has no substance. I am a Crone. I want, but I don’t need, this job.” I make a wall poster that says, “If you and I always agree, one of us isn’t necessary.” What can anyone do to me that is more harmful than what I can do to myself by going back to unconsciously and unwittingly living outside my own life space and teaching my students to reproduce the patriarchy? Why should dream reading enter into the curriculum and into the classroom of preservice teachers?

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<sup>21</sup> Focused conversation is a whole-system process with four stages using the body’s resources to come to terms with an object or experience. It is the conversation of encounter with the world as a bundle of relationships. As a method of facilitation, it is intended to interrupt, surprise, initiate, and to notice possible cracks in the conversation where new ideas can come through. It lives with the question and growing ambiguity.



## **Dream Reading and Darkness**

Dream reading involves some understanding of the shadow aspect of the unconscious and creates a better understanding of images of darkness. In teacher education and curriculum, we edit out the “darkness” to align with cultural role prescriptions of the innocence of women and children.

(T)hose who would throttle the voice of darkness may not understand its urgent need to be heard. In an effort to protect the young, the censors rewrite Little Red Riding Hood so that she is no longer eaten by the wolf; and, in the end, the young are left unprepared to meet the evil they encounter (Abrams & Zweig, 1991, p. xxi).

Through dream reading *Unless* and through my personal dream interpretation work as well as dream workshops, I have learned something of the aspect of the shadow as the buried qualities that don’t fit my self image as well as about those feelings and capacities rejected by the ego. As explained in Chapter 6, the shadow is formed through interactions with family, school, church, and community in the socialization process in any particular culture. Thus, the personal and collective role of teacher has evolved with a shadow side relevant to each becoming teacher. When that student teacher encounters experiences aligned with her incorporated shadow, she rejects the experience and projects her negativity onto the “other.”

There is no direct approach to the shadow except as seen through everyday life in jokes, feelings about others, negative feedback from our “mirrors,” “oops” behaviors, feelings of shame and humiliation, and exaggerated rage or love with others. Depression, I have learned, is a paralyzing confrontation with the dark side. It is the fruit of failure to know about or give in to the inner demand for a descent into the underworld.

Some arts and entertainment media safely reveal the dark side, the collective shadow, of human nature which may explain our fascination with monsters, science fiction and horror movies. Other cultures such as the Soviets or Iraq become the containers of our Western culturally repressed evil with its fixation on duality, rationality, goodness, and purity (Abrams & Zweig, 1991). Thinking through Grumet (1988) and recognizing my own fear of controversy, particularly ridicule, I ask, “How can I teach teachers to work with difficult knowledge (Britzman, 2003) and controversial issues in the social studies classroom without asking them to work with their own controversial, unclaimed, and hidden inner knowledge, and without working with mine? How do I own my own shadow? I need to unearth my own history and reconstruct, negotiate and integrate those repressed aspects of my own self. How can I work within a curriculum that has its own shadow; its hidden, buried past, replete with the suppression of women’s history, Japanese internment camps, reservation schools, the eugenics movement, the horrific atrocities against immigrants, and homosexuals not to mention the excess of dominator motifs and language? Britzman (1998) asks,

How is it possible for education as a discourse and as a practice, as an institution and as an experience, to listen to its own exclusions, repressions, and silences? What could education be like if its interest began with Winnicott’s notion of ‘making elbow room for the experience of concern’ (p. 59).

Dream reading could make elbow room possible.

### **Dream Reading and the Body (ies) Language**

Dream reading provides for the possibility of alterity, that is, exchanging one’s own perspective for that of the “other”—a form of what Donald calls mindreading. Donald (2001) writes:

(T)he capacity to understand that other minds know things and that this knowledge predicts behavior. ... Cues that can help us understand another's mind ordinarily come from vision or hearing, but they may also originate in other modalities (p. 143).

If we work with the image of Danielle as Crone, we may experience the possible influence of the mother, the maternal, through the experience of dream reading as it brings forth desire, emotion, feeling, and bodily response through the symbol. Fantasy, active imagination and playfulness enable us to reconnect body-mind-spirit—the poetic language of the novel as read through a dream. Dream reading enables engagement with curriculum to bring forth feelings. Dream reading could provide teachers and students with opportunities to bring their multiples selves including body, attachments and feelings to the reading of text rather than blindly reproducing “my father’s business.” Dream reading asks, who is my version of myself? Will I recognize the bare room that is not empty? For as Grumet argues, “(T)here are no empty houses, only those houses our mother left us” and “the phantoms can’t be so easily routed, for they travel within us. The difference that Woolf resolves to understand is not the difference between but the difference within” (Grumet, 1988, p. 187). If I recognize the multiple inner versions of my self, will I be able to see, to recognize and to accept the “other”? I believe that dreams, and therefore dream reading, can show us that a room of our own needs to be furnished, decorated and shared.

Dream reading with its overtones of intimacy is to be greatly feared by the order, law, rights, power, control, and social obligations of canonical thought. I contend that dream reading, like art, has the potential to disturb the accepted order of things in the patriarchy—the potential to open us to be inconsolable and to think the intolerable, the not thought and the unthinkable. Dream reading could help bring the recognition and the return

of the repressed. It could aid in propelling teacher educators to heed Grumet's (1988) call to "escape over the wall."

Dreams are of the body. I prefer to think that curriculum needs to help students tap into their desires, inclinations and predispositions by invoking the "rich maternal semiotics of body subjectivity, imagination, recognition, and potential space, and by using the paternal figure in a function that supports this kind of maternal love" (Atwell-Vasey, 1998, p. 49). Dreams are attached to the body. Dreams come through the body bringing the sights, sounds, fluids, and history of body subjectivity through into the language of the dream reader. Dreams are part of the memories, intuitions, promptings, sounds, sights, and smells that create a life-world. There is no need to control, escape, separate, or repress the feminine as the canon espouses. Maturation does not require that we move out of the oceanic and illusory fusion of the maternal into the light of the rational reasoning father. We are born from a body into a body. We live in a body. The body dreams. Perhaps that is why dreams and bodies have been so seriously discounted for centuries.

### **Dream Reading and a Pedagogy of Discomfort**

Megan Boler (1999), author of a critical study of emotions and education, asks teachers to engage with students "in critical inquiry regarding values and cherished beliefs, and to examine ... how one has learned to perceive others" (p. 176). Boler issues a call for not only inquiry but also action in a pedagogy of discomfort. Achieving this requires teachers to question cherished beliefs and assumptions. Dream reading, like good teaching, interrupts, questions, shocks, horrifies, and ultimately grieves the death of old beliefs. Dream reading is the curriculum of encounter. It is a psychic<sup>22</sup> event. I can attest to the

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<sup>22</sup> Psychic space is not just an inner drama or psychological interior. Conceiving of the psyche as an open system brings social history into psychoanalysis. The psyche is a space of interaction and mobility between

“defensive anger, fear of change, and fears of losing our personal and cultural identities” that arise in the process. I can further attest to the discomfort and continuous work required to “willingly inhabit a more ambiguous and flexible sense of self” (Boler, 1999, p. 176). She insists that I must go beyond self-reflection, passive empathy, solipsistic self-critique, or confession. I must engage in collective witnessing in its relation to others and to personal and cultural histories and conditions. I must go beyond myself to a genealogy of my experience and my willingness to undergo and accept the transformation of my own self-identity in relation to others and to history (Boler, 1999).

I must ask myself, “What do I stand to gain from discomfort?” Boler outlines the answers given by Pratt (1984) in an essay about being born into privilege. Following Pratt, I stand to gain in emotion, ethics and epistemology. That is, I have learned to look at the world as far more nuanced, complex and multi-dimensional. I have learned that my fears are in proportion to my perceptions, that is, what my culture has taught me to “see” has limited my knowing. Self-transformation opens the eyes and ears and in the new hearing and in the new seeing lies the fear. I stand to gain in moving beyond fear. Learning that I am my own authority has provided a freedom to know, to feel, to stand at the edge of the cliff and to look down into the underworld knowing that if I must go, I know how to return with more knowing, seeing, hearing, and feeling. I have learned the so-called “under” world may simply be the “other” world. The most astonishing thing I have gained is the collapse of the pain, loneliness, despair, and depression distance between my world and the world of others. This crashing collapse creates the energy, the e-motion, to feel the fear and feed the creative forge. There is much to be gained and only fear to be lost.

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one’s body and one’s culture and language. ... Interpretation—imagining, finding, or creating meaning—requires an open space full of free-flowing drive energy interacting with language (Oliver, 2004, p. 217).

## **Dream Reading and the Imagination**

Dream reading invites imagination back into the work of education. Imagination was lost or at least misplaced when Descartes banished the psyche together with images, myths, totems, idols, devils, and saints in order to create a vision of reasoned, rational reality. Britzman (1998) explores the promise of imaginative possibilities through recursive response to stories such as Anne Frank and the murder of Matthew Shepherd in an attempt to uncover what we think we know and what we might know. By contentious history is meant to “unsettle the idea that the past—whether it goes under the name of development or history—can be laid to rest through a grasping of the proper order of events” (Britzman, 1998, p. 114). Imagination can infill the gaps of contentious history and be host to the difficult conversations rather than the safe discourse of the already known. Salvio (1999), Doll (1995, 2000), Sumara (2002a), and Greene (1995) promote literature, both writing and reading, as the art of cultivating, planting, greening, and releasing the imagination.

Delese Wear (2006) speaks to the importance of story reading as a means to collapsing the distance between the disparate worlds of doctor and patient. For Wear, shrinking the distance or collapsing worlds requires being able to imaginatively enter into the world of the “other.” She says, “Collapsing worlds is my challenge as a teacher.” Wear makes a case for the novel, poetry, and other literary forms that alter “seeing and experiencing and knowing” (Doll, Wear, & Whitaker, 2006, pp. 71 – 72). I would like to accept her case with the addition of dream reading. Wear states that through stories

(D)octors [would be able to] develop a profuse, complex, evolving bank of images to draw upon as they care for patients, a compendium of stories of sickness, recovery, coping, fear, uncertainty, and joy that increases empathy and understanding with each entry, bringing them closer to their patients” (Doll, Wear, & Whitaker, 2006, pp. 72 – 73).

Dream reading the novel could provide story images that would enable beginning teachers to live within their own lives and draw them closer to their students. As a teacher educator, can I read the novel as dream and learn to draw upon images that assist in knowing myself and by extension my students? What literary images can we dream read in novels that will inform teacher images? Rather than stories that frame success and accomplishment, that is, “white” and “light” images, can teachers find images of students becoming? Of children traveling into the underworld, the “other” world? Will we find images of the middle road where darkness and light weave together in the waiting time? We need images of inquiry as puzzlement together with the validation of not knowing. We need images of the teacher who is forever becoming so that teachers can give themselves permission not to know. These images are counter to the received role of the teacher.

Learning new story images is consistent with dream reading which is an exercise in “I don’t know” together with an image of “knowing” that I can play with the dream image of the bite on my right little finger or The Baby Shower Invitation for a very long time and later, many years later, I may come to deeper understanding. We need images of potential. Permission to play. Permission not to know. Permission to continually revisit and to interpret. Permission to create through my lived experience. Wear quotes Nussbaum (1997) saying that we need stories to help us see the insides of people because they are not available for view. I contend that reading the novel *as if it were a dream* could add images of the inside, that is, in coming to dream reading I can gather inside images of Norah, Reta,

Lois, and Danielle, their feelings, emotions and thoughts of the sort that I attribute to my self. Reading the novel as a dream enables the reader to create a deep relationship with the characters—to identify with the characters through memory and imagination. It also provides for the possibility of deeply questioning to enable the creation of radical change. Dream reading enables us to playfully create possibilities of meaning through interpretation and imagination. Dream reading provides for imaginary identification with characters and the examination of potentialities produced through the reading. “Conjuring up those images has the potential to reduce the distance between that doctor and his patient, invoking what Nussbaum calls ‘the habits of wonder’” (Doll, et al., 2006, pp. 73 – 74). I am enthralled with the words Wear uses when she writes of collapsing the distance. Spacious. Deep. Open heart. Open mind. Wonder. Compassion. Artistic form.

Dream reading adds to stories and images of learning and becoming for it requires the study of mythology that may bring more luster, depth, spirit, and lust for meaning into literary engagement. Throughout our lives, stories flow in, with, and through us telling us about who we are and about our family of origin, our community, and our world. Stories tell us acceptable ways of thinking, acting, feeling or not, as well as emotion, our place in family and culture. Stories can also tell us what we have tucked away outside of the accepted norms and beliefs of our experience. These “stories” are not written or spoken in the ordinary daily language but in symbolism that is open for interpretation. Dream reading, the study of fantasy-images, is part of the lifelong process of becoming conscious. Dream reading could help bring awareness of the fantasy that the ego defines as “reality.” “*Becoming conscious* would now mean becoming aware of fantasies and the recognition of them *everywhere* and not merely in a fantasy world separate from reality” (Hillman, 1989,



p. 33 emphasis in the original). Hillman also says that “(T)he polytheistic soul is richly textured and texted. It has many qualities of character and is the theater where many stories are enacted, many dreams mirrored” (1989, p. 38). How deeply do teacher educators absorb the images and values of poetry, novels and other literary works? How deeply do we absorb the images and values coming forth in dreams? How deeply do we value imagination? How intensely do we value soul and imagination?

### **Dream Reading and Mythology**

A hermeneutic, mythological and archetypal approach to dream reading focuses on the inner spirit of the image, its vitality and integrative force arising from the depths of the individual and the collective psyche. This approach privileges the significance of image, leaving words and philosophical concepts as secondary. Imagination and the unconscious combine to amplify dream motifs both through personal and collective associations. In a culture of the people, dreams are to the individual what myths are to society. Dreams with mythological and archetypal images definitely make our world appear strange. It is this strangeness that we must encounter with our students.

Metaphorically birth marks a beginning, a time where new potential is brought into being. In chapter three, I explored The Baby Shower Invitation as metaphor for the gift of new potential, new thoughts and ideas, the collective sharing of the joy of new birth. I link this invitation to that long ago collection of women whose first priority in the evolution of language was “to bond as a group, to learn to share attention and set up the social patterns that would sustain such sharing and bonding in the species” (Donald, 2001, p. 253).

Although Donald (2001) makes no mention of women per se, speaking rather of primates, I deeply desire that The Baby Shower metaphorically illustrate the collective and the idea

that new knowledge among women is a shared responsibility. Knowledge is the creation of the collective. Dream reading, anchored as it is in mythology and symbol, centres dreams as a social project resting on the knowledge created by the collective of women over time.

### **Dream Reading as Cultural Form**

Johnson (2005) points out that print culture rooted in the great literary canon evaluates game, video and internet culture using old expectations based on print culture. Can this argument apply to dreams and the resistance to acknowledging that dreams have value? According to Kress, “(L)anguage alone cannot give us access to the meaning of the multimodally constituted message; language and literacy now have to be seen as partial bearers of meaning only” (2003, p. 35). I am fairly certain Kress didn’t have the study of dreams or dream reading in mind when he wrote about the power of the image. Dream images are powerfully evocative, for they harbor many meanings. Dream images may hold their power to themselves for many days, months, and years before the dream reader comes across another image, a word, sound, sight, smell, or intuitive knowing which deepens and uncovers lingering assumptions and yet unarticulated insights at the borderlands of consciousness. The lingering dream image provokes, evokes, calls forth anew both the seen and the unseen into new creations as these images are re-created through the work of the imagination. According to Kress, the elements of image are “already filled with meaning.” Our engagement with image entails receiving the spatial rather than the temporal logic of language. “The *world narrated* is a different world to the *world depicted and displayed*” (2003, p. 2 emphasis in the original). The depiction and display of dream images is the work of the artist over centuries of time. These powerful evocative images live in teacher night dreams awaiting their re-creation in the day life-world.

## **Dream Reading in the Secondary Classroom**

“What is more self-empowering than knowing oneself, one’s inner life, one’s dreams, one’s potential?” (White-Lewis, 1993, p. 2). White-Lewis echoes the question I have asked myself ever since I was asked to introduce dream work to a French 20 class as part of their Lifelong Learning Conference in the mid-1990’s. The students were intensely interested, not a bit shy about sharing their dream stories. They asked questions on the history of dreams as well as many other dream-related topics. White-Lewis (1993) points out that humans love stories—listening to, telling and writing stories. Richardson (2001) writes about stories and healing while Estes (1993) calls stories our medicine. Our dialogic imagination and psyche love stories. But we leave all this wonderful humanness out of our classrooms or we include a bit of dream trivia in a textbook sidebar. Why? Poincaré, French mathematician. Kekulé, chemist. Descartes, French philosopher. Robert Louis Stevenson, author. George Washington and decisions about the American Revolution from inner visions and dreams. Industrialization and dreams. Howe, sewing machine. Einstein and the sunbeam daydreams. Aboriginal women’s visions in the moon lodge during menstruation informed decision making for the men of the tribe. All these are “revelations” from the unconscious. According to Jung, new thoughts, creative ideas, ancient history, psychic ideas may all be expressed through dreams—if we pay attention to and learn to interpret their sometimes archaic images and symbols. Lewis-White (1993), a Jungian analyst and psychotherapist working with inner city youth, describes four benefits to their personal dream study:

- ❖ learning from imaginal expressions and dream as metaphor enables the development of abstract, symbolic thinking;
- ❖ linking literature and creative expression to their own inner characters and inner stories;

- ❖ learning to know themselves better through understanding that aspects of the dream are aspects of the dreamer; and,
- ❖ increasing self-awareness.

Dream reading is different from personal dream interpretation; however, I think it is possible that the student and teacher benefits might be similar.

### **Dream Reading and the Self**

I believe that dream reading theory challenges the nature and privileged status of the prevailing view of the rational, reasoning subject in the Western literary canon.

Dream reading strongly supports the idea that the reasoning subject is not a unified, rational consciousness but rather a consciousness struggling to cohere. The dream reading subject goes beyond conscious reason to embrace both the unconscious and subconscious dimensions of the self and understands that there are continual contradictions. Dream reading theory opens up many new possibilities for the construction of self as the dream reader creates imaginary identifications with the literary characters. Meaning is always political. It is located in the social networks of power/knowledge relations which give society its current form.

[There is] widespread appeal in seeing ‘great’ literature as the receptacle of fixed universal meanings which enable us to understand the ‘truth’ of human nature which is itself fixed. ... It is part of the hegemony of liberal-humanist discourses of subjectivity, language and culture (Weedon, 1997, p. 135).

Dream reading is resistance to the notion of fixed truth. In using dream reading as literary engagement, I offer the absolute certainty of uncertainty and ceaseless interpretation together with curriculum that imagines “‘something more’ than staying put in the logic of official knowledge” (Britzman, 1998, p. 49). Dream reading involves initiation into the multiple perspectives needed for meaning-making.

### **Dream Reading and Knowledge Production**

Weedon (1997) argues that we need to transform both “the social relations of knowledge production and the type of knowledge produced” (p. 7). We must ask the essential questions of how, where, by whom, and what counts as knowledge. Dream work, even while generally discounted, assists in bringing internalized symbolic performances to conscious awareness. Dream reading as a strategy of literary engagement has the potential to contribute to knowledge production; however, it must be legitimized before it can be recognized as a knowledge source.

### **Dream Reading as Open Text**

The dream is an open text offering gaps in meaning and space where the dream can engage with the dreamer. “The gaps in the text create what Iser (1978) called an ‘element of indeterminacy’ that initiates a performance of meaning rather than formulating meaning itself [and] reveals human possibilities rather than settled certainties” (Luce-Kapler, 2004, p. 88). I believe that in feminist dream reading there is a “self ... clearly in process, and cohering [that] in no way suggests a necessary closure, or an absolutely fixed identity, but rather a basis from which to interact with one’s contexts” (Perreault, 1995, p. 17). Dream reading occurs within a liminal space that “can be ‘entered into’ or ‘used’ as that zone or site in which a ‘knowing self’ is experienced as knower and (un)known, engendered and ambivalent, embodied and imagined” (Perreault, 1995, p. 17). Dream writing is a form of autography through which dream reading invites the reader to “reconsider the imbrications of subjectivity, textuality, and community” (Perreault, 1995, p. 2). Dream reading could be like great works of imagination that could help us in our present trapped situation as women in a patriarchal

culture. Dream reading could provide the link between the open spaces in literary fiction and the closed ones where we live.

It is through dream work and dream reading that I learned the language to explore the “gap between the conceptual and the experiential” and found a discourse community adequate to explore my experience and feelings thus reframing from “feelings of craziness” to “political and open to feminist practice and analysis.” I found a new language that saved me and let me walk into a different world of self-authority. In writing about subjectivity, representation and identity politics, Perrault states:

The issues, problems, and possibilities that arise ... invite speculation about the intersection of experiences and discourses within the person. She who is feeling crazy is certainly (whatever else) feeling dislocated from her world. The discourse communities of which she is a part are inadequate to her “feeling” or “experience.” It is this gap between the conceptual and the experiential that feminist self-writers (and theorists) explore as the zone most available for modification (1995, p. 6).

Dream reading great works of fiction forces us to question what we took for granted. It questions traditions and expectations. Dream reading is a work of the imagination that could make one feel like a stranger in one’s own home and invite us to explore with new eyes.

In order for dream reading to become a significant process in the field of curriculum and teacher education, one must temper one’s beliefs in the rational, linear, logical world of the Western literary canon with its right answers. There are no literary “Truth Notes,” no recipe files, no structured precise answers from the authorities in school, church or province. I believe we must risk. As educators, we must invite the imagination and fantasy images back into education. Educators must learn a pedagogy of discomfort as it works to shift and transform consciousness. Educators must become aware of themselves, seek to understand their shadow and learn the freedom of emotional expression and body intimacy.

Imaginary identifications with story characters in novels presents the possibility of imaginary identifications with students and curriculum. I believe that dream reading enables me to create a deep relationship with my self and through this creation, a deeper relationship with curriculum and student teachers.

In chapter 8, I share what I have learned on this dissertation journey.

## 8.

### Worlds Without End—

The reader who encounters this work must recreate it in terms of *his* (sic) consciousness.  
(Greene, 1971, p. 254 emphasis in the original)

The women kept silent, for they were afraid.  
The Gospel of Mark 16: 8

In a period of human history when all available energy is spent in the investigation of nature, very little attention is paid to the essence of man, which is his psyche, although many researches are made into its conscious functions. But the really complex and unfamiliar part of the mind, from which symbols are produced, is still virtually unexplored. It seems almost incredible that though we receive signals from it every night, deciphering these communications seems too tedious for any but a very few people to be bothered with it. Man's greatest instrument, his psyche, is little thought of, and it is often directly mistrusted and despised.

(Jung & Franz, 1964, p. 93)

**November 9, 1992**

#### **Layers of consciousness**

*In my dream, my colleagues and I are monitoring in a school. I meet with three people one of whom is a priest wearing a clerical black suit and Roman collar. I am going through the sections of the monitoring binder. The priest seems faintly amused. I am confused. I can't seem to find the real question I am searching for. The priest gives me the name of the school—Sainté Lucia. A consultant colleague is there. He is comforting me with jokes and laughing. The place or room where I meet with them is unfamiliar. The priest sits across from me at the square table. I watch. Then, I am hung upside down. The layers of my head are stripped away piece by piece. I am dimly aware of what is happening. I think to myself, "Perhaps this is the real test. I wonder if I must encounter the true blackness of evil and test my resistance." I am aware in the dream of having read/heard that part of the journey is encountering death.*

*There is seemingly no emotion in the dream. I awake feeling "normal" if I ever was such a thing. I am at a loss to explain the dream.*

Death. This dream has an overwhelming number of possible meanings. Sixteen years after the dream, I am no longer at a loss to explain it. I think about the Hang Man in the tarot cards. I think about the many new religious interpretations I have generated through dreams. I know that dream images of physical death or injury are seldom, if ever, prophetic. I know that the superego sees change as death. Though the image may be



grotesque, I feel sure that I am changing consciousness. Old layers of fear of surveillance by the Roman clerical authorities are stripped away.

This is a non-concluding conclusion for as Carol Shields said, endings “are just there for the shape of the book” (Ellen, 2002). Akin to the cycle of birth, life, death, and re-birth. Akin to the generations of women upon whom I stand. Akin to the familial, generative relation of women birthing new consciousness through the mythological apple of consciousness, the knowledge bite. This chapter marks the end of this dissertation.

I come in from a walk through the cattle yards where the first spring calves lie sleeping in the straw. The yard is half and half. Brown and white. The seasons are changing. Winter officially ends tomorrow. There is no writing on my life calendar to indicate so definitively where the autumn of my life turns into winter or back to spring. Learning isn’t ever definitive but I must say something of what I have learned in the process of this dissertation. I have learned quite a few things.

I am learning more about myself by studying the fictional character Reta *as if* she were a dream image. The autobiographical work included in this dissertation enables me to study my consciousness experiences by studying those that emerge from my personal and the collective unconscious as my dreams. In effect I have learned that together with the women in *Unless*, I too am a fictive self

Reta with Norah, Danielle, Lois, The Baby Shower Invitation, The Burning Muslim Woman, and all the other images are one and the same originating out of the psychic space of the polyphrenic “you” of Reta Summers Winters as she enters into the embrace of Crone Space. Reta flows into this embrace carried on the words she writes as she writes her selves. As she flows through spring thyme, summer thyme, autumn thyme,

and into winter thyme, she continues to transform through her shared stories and shared writing. Reta knows the power of the subjunctive. She writes *as if*. She moves into her fears of knowing. She is afraid to know the betrayal of the world, her feelings of abandonment, rejection, discrimination and subtle intimidation. She emerges out of the girdled 50's into the outspoken Crone Thyme of her own life.

I have learned that dream reading, like dream interpretation, remains open. Literary anthropology with its inclusion of hermeneutic interpretation allows, if not demands, the genuine question and juxtaposition of fiction and theory. We need the dream and dream text to indicate the risk of knowing.

Like Eve, I now know that I have been expelled from the paradise of unconsciousness, of not knowing. I understand that I am birthed with free will. That awareness of freedom and the power to choose is affirming because it excites the sense of possibility and potential. Such awareness is also terrifying. Suddenly I am fully responsible, that is, fully able-to-respond. I can no longer explain my situation as a relic neither of the past nor as an object of the present. I have finally fully realized that I am also inextricably bound into the lives of my ancestors, most particularly my female lineage time without end. There is no boundary between us. There is no separate constructed "I." *As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

The reliance on the subjunctive *as if* throughout this dissertation is both a bridge and a challenge to how I see the world in curriculum and teacher education. The personal dreams I have used throughout this dissertation stand as mute but deliberate questions. They are an affront to the rational logic of the Western literary canon. The four fictive women characters in *Unless* are one. They serve as metaphors for the integration of the

seasons of a woman's life resulting in the winter-spring birth of the crone. These Reta selves are not separate approaches to curriculum or separate ways of seeing curriculum, but rather they form an holistic image of a new way of being in the world. The dream stories created from the life of each character in the novel form the data for creating an approach to literary engagement through dream reading *as if* the novel's fictive images were dreams. The imaginary dreams serve as windows into the consciousness as well as the personal and collective unconscious of Reta Winters. Britzman (1998) points out that Shoshana Felman (1991) identified reading as a tool of revolutions and liberation. Further, reading is a "rather risky business whose outcome and full consequences can never be known in advance. Does not reading involve one risk that, precisely, cannot be resisted: that of finding in the text something one does not expect" (Britzman, 1998, p. 54)? Literary anthropology with its discursive iterations seeks unending possibilities and interpretations.

Through literary anthropology, I learned that *Unless* is a timorous beginning to new consciousness. Dream reading *Unless* helped me to unpack deeply buried subtleties of the patriarchal code. One reading yielded only a brief glimpse, a feeling about the four generations of women whose unrest simmers just below consciousness finally pushing up like a Canada thistle through Reta's composed calm surface. The character Lois was pretty much invisible to me on first reading. I didn't notice, or if I did, didn't remember the apple dessert in the Pyrex baking dish. After a few more readings, I recognized Reta's somewhat dismissive attitude toward Lois, but I still discounted it. It was probably the fifth or sixth reading before I noticed that Reta remained unaware that Lois knew the first name of Mrs. Lyle McGinn, the recipient of The Baby Shower Invitation. It was several more readings before I saw that the quaternity of female characters included Danielle as the soul's

movement through disintegration and dissolution back to integration. Changing one's scripted consciousness requires many readings. As a culturally conditioned creature, that is a "normalized" subject, it is very difficult to see the structures of my creation.

The space between my first feminist dream reading paper and the end of this writing has deeply impacted the way I read and respond to reading. Re-reading and re-responding no longer feel like punishment for not getting the "right interpretation" the first time. Every reading is filled with dream symbols and a search for underlying possibilities. It is possible I will never again be able to read without considering both the structure of the narration and what it is that structures its "modes of intelligibility." It is possible I will forever be asking what "interpretive glance" I am guilty of (Britzman, 2003, p. 243). Questions about to what degree I am an "invention of the educational apparatus" or "a problem population" will continue to haunt me (Britzman, 2003).

I have been fascinated with reading since I learned how. In the fall of 1951, the superintendent of schools visited our small log school in the community of Clarkson Valley, Alberta. I was the only student in grade one. In my memory, he plunks a book down on my desk and says, "Read." It's a green book, *All Sails Set*. It's the grade six reader. I read. The teacher smiles and that night a note goes home with my oldest brother to my parents. The next day I join a cousin and another boy in grade two. Many years later, my mother gives me the note.

Reading. Stories. Literature. When I asked my mother how I learned to read before going to school, she looked puzzled. "I don't know. I certainly didn't teach you. Your three younger brothers were in diapers!" It really doesn't matter how I learned to read. Years later, I found that through reading and writing I could heal a life. I learned that reading

theory and stories forms, informs, and reforms a life. Studies can open doors to understanding and infinite questions and interpretations about the lives of women and fears of knowing, consciousness, dreams, feminism, and literary anthropology. Three images appear in my imagination.

*I am ten and in grade six when I nail together four wooden apple boxes to make bookshelves. I envisioned these shelves filled with many books. I got a subscription to a children's book club for my birthday. It's just the beginning.*

*I am in grade ten. I am fourteen. I make a desk for my bedroom out of Mom's old sewing machine cabinet. Years and years later, I have a real desk.*

*I am 44. Bill makes "a writing desk" to fit over the arms of the big chair in the living room where I read, write, and meditate hour after hour every evening and every other chance I get. I buy literally hundreds of dollars worth of books that fill every bookshelf in the house.*

These images tell their own story of the centrality of stories, studying, reading, and writing. They are evoked within, beyond or beneath the rational. Now, I sit in the silence writing this dissertation surrounded by images of grandchildren. I read and write outside in summer and on warm days. I read and write at the kitchen table, in my office, or at the "writing desk" that sits on the big armchair in the sunroom.

I have learned that "Terrible vulnerability accompanies aesthetic practice" (Grumet, 1988, p. 93). I have a whole house of my own and although I pursue doctoral studies as a way to reinvent my self as a widowed woman learning to be not-wife, I find the vulnerability is deepened. I have learned that more years of study do not quell the fear of ridicule. I am simply more adept at ignoring the fear. Behar (1996) expresses so clearly the wonderful, terrible, torturous journey of writing. My advisor says, "Teach. You have much to teach us. Teach. I have seen you teach. Teach." I want to scream. He gives me another copy of Behar (1996) and when I am home in my study, I find my own copy with the following words underlined and dated June 2007. The margin notation

says, “This surely explains why I want to quit. Whatever made me think I could do this doctorate?”

Loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sense of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something, are the stopping places along the way (Behar, 1996, p. 3).

Where and how can I find the courage to be vulnerable? I have learned something of the art of teaching as an aesthetic experience. I have participated in the examination of that which falls inside/outside the boundary that draws the line between teaching and life and the allegiances and manners of those who identify with the territory inside/outside. I have asked, “How can I be an artist in a concrete box?”

I have become an embodied, radical feminist since the patriarchal aspect of received-self was a discourse no longer adequate to the task of living. Akin to Norah in *Unless*, I have found that “received models of self are too narrow and too uniform.” I have learned that “self-invention” [is] an imperative (Perreault, 1995, p. 7). I have learned to challenge ditto sheets, textbook design, history as written, discipline codes, and the patriarchal control of teaching. I have learned that Lois and Danielle may also represent my own midlife psyche and my struggle to balance Eros (feelings and relationship) with Logos (laws and principles). I learned with Reta that it is better if I do not project my own masculine attributes outside myself thus giving men like her editors or magazine publishers the authority and value of gods. With Reta, I am going to Crone School and learning to live with my own soul. Through my identifications with Reta, I have learned. Our relationship continues to be a productive learning space.

Throughout this dissertation I have lived with the specter of continuing as an agent of patriarchy. How will I know when I am living out the hypocrisy of socially constructed expectations of woman, transferring those expectations into my role as mother, teacher, grandmother, farmer? And when I do recognize these behaviors, will I be able to struggle through the fear and “the strident cadence that sometimes accompanies utterance” (Miller, 2005, p. 61)? Grumet explains the alienation of teachers through hypocrisy. We celebrate the maternal gifts of the teacher (subjectivity) while we require the denial of maternal nurturance in the schools (objectivity). As Grumet (1988) says,

We have burdened the teaching profession with contradictions and betrayals that have alienated teachers from our own experience, from our bodies, our memories, our dreams, from each other, from children, and from our sisters who are mothers to those children (p. 57).

I have learned the importance of bodies, memories, dreams, and relationships among students, teacher and learning. I refuse to die in the vise grip of rationalist logic characterized by domination.

Through the years between 1988 and 2008 I have come to see the world and everything in it as “alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance” (Starhawk, 1988, p. 9). The world is filled with potentials and possibilities arising from each season of living. Coming to understand fictive characters *as if* they were a dream deeply shifts my thought. Through dream reading, the impact of interconnectedness and context becomes a fundamentally different way of seeing and approaching curriculum and teacher education. Everything is nested. Through dream reading, curriculum and teaching become focused on seeing, noticing, feeling, experiencing. I have learned to question taken-for-granted roles. I have learned that reflexivity is potentially “politically and socially disruptive” (Bolton, 2006, p. 204).

In 1998, when I wrote my first paper using the title, *The Apple and the Talking Snake*, I was trying to understand my years of gender blindness. “That at the time I asked no questions about this situation should not be a particular surprise. ... (T)he questions we ask are both limited by and in turn limit the situations we live out” (Lewis, 1993, p. 119). Naomi Wolf puts it differently: “The right to ask questions is the chief jewel in the treasury of rights assumed by men and withheld from women” (Wolf, 1993, p. 118). I believe I have learned to ask subversive questions, to see differently, to wonder and to dig beneath in the darkness. I read *Unless We Ask Questions* (Shields, 2002, p. 316).

Conversation is meant to be a starting point for opening up insight and for the consideration of many ideas. Reinharz (1992) suggests that a conversation format demonstrates how “knowledge is socially constructed, tentative, and emergent” (p. 229 quoting Raven and Iskin). She gives the example of how philosopher Jane Martin shaped a conversation to present ideas from the time frame of Plato, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Beecher, Perkins, Gilman, and herself about the education of women. The following conversation is meant to shape further thinking about dreams, women’s fears of knowing, and recognition of the feminine as contained in and containing the masculine.

I first used conversation method as a presentation for a graduate class in action research. I searched for an authentic feminine way to share the ideas I was working with and came to a conversation between Sophia and myself. Sophia came to class with me. Her presence was inspiring. The conversation with Sophia represents the vitality of the “living aspect” of literary anthropology. These depths are layered with centuries of patriarchy enabling only brief whispered learnings from the mostly unacknowledged Old Testament figure of Sophia representing the feminine aspect of the divine and found in



the Book of Wisdom. I dream of a time when the mythology of the ancient mysteries of the goddess becomes a familiar part of education. As Richardson notes, we “get stuck in a particularly strong metanarrative, often operate within contradictory implied narratives, and sometimes seek stories that transgress the culturally condoned ones (Richardson, 2001, p. 171). As a teacher educator, I believe that I might safely say that conversation with the goddess of wisdom transgresses culturally condoned conversation. You might even call this a conversation with a blind trilobite for I have learned that the feminine is alive even if temporarily buried in the primeval mud.

### **A conversation with Sophia**

**Pearl:** Sophia, would you say a few things as an introduction to those readers who may not know you very well?

**Sophia:** Remember, I am not literal! I am mythological! There are arresting differences among mythological stories of the serpent. Snake symbolism has a close link to Dionysos and the “other,” that is, the unknown which presents a threat to the customary cultural mind-set. Certainly my version of this story is not culturally condoned! “Indeed, the part the serpent plays in humanity’s dramatic exit from the Garden of Eden only begins to make sense in the context of the earlier reality, a reality in which the serpent was one of the main symbols of the Goddess” (Eisler, 1987, p. 86). There are the “many killings of serpents. ... Zeus slays the serpent Syphon; Apollo kills the serpent Python; and Hercules kills the serpent Ladon, guardian of the sacred fruit tree of the Goddess Hera, said to have been given her by the Goddess Gaia at the time of her marriage to Zeus” (Eisler, 1987, p. 87). Remember, in Hebrew, I represent knowledge. So, Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden attest to the potential development of the understanding of human consciousness through reading fiction as dream.

If I showed up in a novel *as if* I were in your dream, I might be interpreted as representative of low thought, that is, thought that slithers in the dirt. Others might interpret me as representative of wisdom, and yet others might understand me as an aspect of the Hippocratic Oath which is a healing vow to the gods and goddesses such as Apollo, Asklepios, Hygeia and Panacea. Those supposedly rational Greeks carried on with the Oath of Hippocrates. Asklepios carried a serpent-entwined staff although it was really the caduceus of Hermes. A serpent might mean transformation, healing, and change depending on the circumstances of your life and the configuration of the novel (Moss, 1999). Need I go on?

You will find yet another interpretation of serpent in the Indian yogic spiritual development associated with raising the kundalini energy through the chakras from the root to the head (Clift & Clift, 1985). You are familiar with the kundalini energy through your yoga practice.

**Pearl:** Sophia, writing this dissertation has been very solitary work. I am definitely changed and changing. What can I do that might actually make a difference beyond myself?

**Sophia:** You must continue to stand firmly on the ground of political resistance, ready to offer your understanding of the ancient ways of seeing and theorizing, of making culture, of moving toward that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing and where transformation is possible. You can offer your ideas to your student teachers. You can offer your ideas in workshops. You could create a course outline and offer to teach dream reading in the Faculty of Education. Like Crone Danielle, you can hold up images of old womanhood and offer rebuttals to patriarchal consciousness. You have shown how Reta dreamed images that she could use to grow through her midlife years becoming more and more the resilience and strength of the crone. Remember, crone energy includes the Destroyer of illusions.

**Pearl:** Sophia, other cultures have known that there are many layers of consciousness. I have tried to construct and reconstruct my experiences and I think this writing includes vestiges of “an archive of *resistance*” (Sumara, et al., 2006). I need to tell you, though, that although I may be a crone, I still have a good deal of resistance to making public some of the thoughts that are written here. You asked me in 1992 and you continued asking that I go public and share my thoughts with others. Worse still, others at a university. I still think it’s too hard. I think that talking about mythology, patriarchy, and radical feminism, not to mention all this personal “stuff” will just get me all kinds of trouble. My heart pounded hard enough when a participant in a Dream Workshop at Grant McEwan College asked if I was worried that the Minister would learn about my activities. “You do work for the Department, don’t you?” she asked. Then there are the comments from a colleague at the Red Deer Teacher’s Convention where I was doing a Wellness and Dreams session. “I thought there had to be another Pearl Gregor. What will the Deputy Minister say about this?”

**Sophia:** Pearl, the problem for education is changing what Foucault called regimes of the production of truth. You face strong resistance. Even your dictionaries define myth as primitive, story, fictitious, imaginary while defining theology as doctrine, the study of religion, and religious truth. It was just last week that one of your EDSE students took deep exception to even the mention of the goddess, claiming that you had caused her “deep discomfort.” How often have your students told you that they believe that religion MUST be kept separate from the state and that religion is too personal, too subjective, to be discussed in public education? Yet as you have found, the education system rests on the bedrock of patriarchal religious beliefs.

The Alberta social studies program proclaims that it will work with controversial issues, but as you found, student teachers are uncomfortable with conflict. You are intellectually aware of the pedagogy of discomfort. You are simply experiencing it!

**Pearl:** Sophia, how can I teach student teachers that feminism is about *both* women and men?

**Sophia:** Student teachers must experience their own inner energies. Dream reading and dream work support that. You will find the contradictory narratives and those that transgress the culturally condoned ones through dream reading. Despite Jung's misunderstanding, you will find there is no polarity between male and female as there is in culturally conditioned images. While male and female represent difference, they are not different but rather the "same force flowing in opposite, but not opposed, directions. ... Neither is "active" or "passive," dark or light, dry or moist—instead, each partakes of all those qualities. The Female is seen as the life-giving force, the power of manifestation, of energy flowing into the world to become form. The Male is seen as the death force in a positive not a negative sense: the force of limitation that is the necessary balance to unbridled creation, the force of dissolution, of return to formlessness. Each principle contains the other: Life breeds death, feeds on death; death sustains life, makes possible evolution and new creation. They are part of the cycle, each dependent on the other" (Starhawk, 1988, p. 41).

**Pearl:** Sophia, you know that Starhawk has been condemned by the Pope as a witch! I am really not that comfortable quoting Starhawk! I recognize the privilege of age and financial security. I feel the privilege of independence. Yet, I am still afraid. I tell myself *wyrrd* is Old English for wise-woman, for crone. I tell myself that colleagues at the University of Alberta won't read this dissertation anyway. I tell myself I should be used to discomfiting truths. Still, I am not comfortable. I tell myself that if I am afraid to know, I am perpetuating the issue of domination.

But never mind. Tell me, Sophia, would you agree that literature constitutes a depth of wisdom about consciousness (Lodge, 2002)?

**Sophia:** Most definitely. Remember what you read in Jung's *Answer to Job* where he interprets the violence, agony, and vengeance of Revelations as a signal that I, Sophia, the feminine deity-companion, must rejoin the male Trinity (I never left!) returning wisdom, compassion, and completion (Noddings, 1989, pp. 25 – 26). It would seem that education really could learn something from Jung. It is time for women to revisit and rework Jung's notion of feminine consciousness. You are doing that through dream reading. You are doing that through revisiting the old mythologies. It is also time for the creation of a new myth. Dreams are mythmakers. Consciousness can be studied through the dream imagery of literature. Come now, you are aware that newness emerges from the fluctuations or perturbations of consciousness created through the insertion of even the tiniest seed of new information arising from the collective unconscious. That is learning!

**Pearl:** Sophia, would you speak further about this problem of women, how they are dismissed and excluded from the most primary of entitlements (Shields, p. 99)! The patriarchy is very limiting to both men and women. Linear, sequential solutions, rock logic, simplistic rational cause and effect. These must all give way to fluid logic and the polytheistic gestalt. How can we come to see constellations of ideas, multiple selves rather than the monotonous monogamy of literal, discrete and limiting facts?

**Sophia:** Think about dream reading. You found that even in the midst of massive confusion and resistance from within, your dreams still emerge with deep complexity and always speak to your life! Your dreams are never “outside” your life! Teach dream reading. Insert dream reading into the Western theory of knowledge. Insert dream reading into education as a way that generates new knowledge and coming to know that what emerges from within is real! It is time to bring feminine wisdom to consciousness. Literary engagement with dream reading and interpretation can do that.

**Pearl:** Sophia, let’s be real. One person. One dissertation. I can’t imagine much change!

**Sophia:** Remember, we are all connected. You have only to do your small part.

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Through this dissertation, I have found a place for my inner experiences. I am grateful to Doll (2000) and Sumara (1996) for reminding me of Jung’s focus on alchemy, the affirmation of Mary as the Bride united with the Son, and Sophia (Wisdom) united with the Godhead. As well, Jung’s (1989) memoirs explain his search for an historical basis for his inner experiences (pp. 200 - 222). This search led him to understand Freud’s focus on the primal myth of Yahweh and the father who created a world of “disappointments, illusions, and suffering” while ignoring the

other essential aspect of Gnosticism: the primordial image of the spirit as another, higher god who gave to mankind the *krater* (mixing vessel), the vessel of spiritual transformation. The *krater* is a feminine principle which could find no place in Freud’s patriarchal world (Jung, 1989, p. 201).

Those seeking higher consciousness might be baptized in the *krater*, a kind of uterus of spiritual renewal and rebirth corresponding to the alchemical *vas* where the transformation

of substances took place. Both Doll and Sumara follow Jung's notion of renewal and rebirth of consciousness through unskinning or unpeeling. The snake sheds its skin perpetuating a new beginning. The apple metaphor speaks to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the need to become consciously aware of the Self. The peeling, shedding, cyclical changes of the snake speak to the uncanny forces of change in consciousness.

### **What are further transformation possibilities?**

Reproductive thought is death to human consciousness which thrives on imaginative thought. In the search for beauty and justice, education has failed to provide a space for its children—a soul space more profound, more necessary, more human than the mundane practicality of learning how to be a worker in the economic cogs of Western rational society. The soul yearns for the creativity of both the imagination and the Imaginary—the release of soul capacity for Goodness.

Literary engagement, like dream reading, “participates in the ongoing development of the reader's self identity” (Sumara, 2002a, p. 29). Change in personal identity is a personal and ultimately internal process which for me has led to changes in pedagogical choice. These personal changes impact content selection and the amount of time and emphasis placed on what knowledge is taught in my classroom. It changes the planning, instruction, and evaluation of learning. It changes how I deal with classroom controversy as well as with ethics. I have come to better understand how to bring to conscious awareness prior values and beliefs about teaching and curriculum. I have also come to recognize that it is critical that I recognize and reflect on the extent of external

influences such as government policy, administrative practices, and community values on my classroom decisions.

Working with dream reading a novel has opened me up to barriers, obstacles and vulnerabilities. Dreams offer us an opportunity to notice our own blindness in particular points of view. Many people dismiss dreams, as Reta Winters did, as meaningless.

However, for those who have lived in close touch with their dreams for many years, they offer truth far beyond the facts. Dream reading has brought new perspectives and new understandings to my past and present experiences. Dream reading, like dreams, is a learning laboratory within me. Dream reading using literary anthropology method helps me and the world to evolve. Dream reading “(I)mplicate[s] oneself in one’s own narratives of learning and teaching [and this] means turning habituated knowledge back on itself, and examining its most unflattering—for many, its most devastating—features. It also means exploring how even this most unflattering moment may offer insight into making significance.” (Britzman, 2000, p. 7).

At the end of this dissertation, I make no pretense of truth or answers. What is true? Salvio makes clear that writing is “always vulnerable to being unfaithful.” Salvio might call the personal dreams included in this dissertation “writing as detour,” that is, articulating areas of my life that our culture wishes to keep private through “images that cast indirect rays of light on the barely audible but deeply felt emotions” (Salvio, 2007, p. 5). Prior to this writing, I certainly never thought to ask, as Salvio (2007) does,

What pedagogic possibilities are made available when the teacher ... falls into depression. ... What possibilities are made available by the disequilibrium that is brought about by such losses of mastery, particularly when these sensations create the change of scenes that Freud attributes to the uncanny, changes that create confusion about who students and teachers are to one another (p. 7)?

What would I teach differently now if I were again faced with the suggestion given to me by one grade nine class during one of my worst bouts of depression that I was “sick and should probably go home” (Appendix XIV)? Upon my return to the classroom, I would be much more open, perhaps finding fictional representations of depression and working through using literary anthropology so that students gain deeper understanding of life.

Dreams ask us to pay attention. Dreams create possibilities for the dreamer to become involved with the ongoing project of learning about her inner world and underworld. The dream does its work well and invites the dreamer to take the time, to make the space for wondering, and to make a relationship with the dreams. In this way, dreams could be likened to excellent literary text which also invites us into its world, its characters and to see anew the possibilities for deepening our learning. Reading, re-reading, contemplating, and thinking with Reta in *Unless* creates a commonplace, an archive of feeling which can be subjected to critical interpretation. This commonplace invited me to revisit the details of my life through dreams during midlife. I have visited my dream journal often and like a good friend or spouse, it challenges me to re-think, to re-create, and to spend time attending to and learning about its many details and to see my relationship to fiction as intimate parts of my life. This deep practice of literary engagement has thrust alien ideas from many fields into juxtaposition with the indigenous structures of my psyche.

I have re-discovered the world of the archetype of the Great Mother, the Triple Goddess and discovered that my soul is not and never was empty. I too live the archetypes—many and one and I realize that the students I teach are likewise living an

archetypal constellation that must be seen through and disrupted to avoid single-minded literality. I am still learning to consider and examine my ideas in terms of archetypes, finding the cages in which I sit and the concrete boxes that protect me against the invasion of alien ideas, the world of the gods and goddesses. I see, for instance, that Springer might be considered as Apollonic, that is, through the eyes of rational masculine consciousness, he sees inferiority when he sees the female character of a novel making rice casseroles and doing yoga.

Dream reading insists that we must make space in curriculum for stories because as Donald (2001) says, “On a cultural level, language is not about inventing words. It is about telling stories in groups” (p. 294). Literary anthropological research methods enable the juxtaposition of stories and ideas, “so that their meanings collide, [and] shift focus to new semantic spaces” (Donald, 2001, p. 294). Dream reading helps open the space of the possible.

What happens when you “know”? Or, how has Eve made out since offering Adam that apple? Is it possible that teachers, given the sacred responsibility and trust to preserve the status quo, and thus the illusion of truth, have a tendency to assert their authority against the search for intolerable truths? And is it also possible that in resisting children’s potential to shatter illusions of truth, teachers resist it for themselves? What myths have been shattered in my own search—reading Campbell (1973), Black Elk, Woodman, Houston, Starhawk, Fox, Berry and Eisler to name a few—and of course, dreams. I discovered that the Aztec beliefs are similar to the Christian Bible; that legends of virgins giving birth and heroes who die and are resurrected are found in several other cultures. Given this experience and the monumentally difficult task of creating my own sustainable



life-giving illusion, why would I invite others to join me in risking the dissolution of their illusions? As Campbell (1976) says, "... there is no Chosen People of God in this multi-racial world, no Found Truth to which we all must bow, no One and Only True Church." It becomes my task "... to identify, analyze and interpret the symbolized 'facts of the mind,' [and] "... to evolve techniques for retaining these in health and, as the old traditions of the fading past dissolve," [develop] "... a knowledge and appreciation of [my] own inward ... orders of fact" (p. 11).

**Concluding thoughts while—recoiling as we all do from what we know, discovering and then repudiating ...** (Shields, 2002, p. 310).

The space of the possible. Dream reading. Jungian theory and archetypal psychology. Feminist theory. Autobiography. Dreams. Transformation. Consciousness. Curriculum. Teacher education. Our lives are loaded with multiple interpretations and grounded in cultural complexity. Through writing our dreams, playing with dreams, interpreting fiction as dream, I believe women can "dig up the dandelions" (Chambers, 1998) and re-name the world into a different place—a human place. Women can come to understand better how they shape and are shaped by culture and how we are living with multiple uninterrogated assumptions around traditions, theories, and authoritative discourses.

These transformative practices require breaking the code of the Symbolic Order. Dream work and dream reading provide us with new symbolic tools from the inside, tools with which to crack, break, and fragment the patriarchal codes inscribed through culture. Women must create many more new stories to add their cultural consciousness to the distributive networks through which collective human mind is created. Seeing, experiencing, noticing and feeling must become equal to thinking, argument, analysis, and received knowledge.

Why unsettle my life? I have concluded that the 2006 Alberta social studies program remains relentlessly patriarchal. Thus, teaching the program, which I am legally mandated as teacher educator to do, I must move the curriculum *as taught* from the inquiry of truth finding and received knowledge to the inquiry of meaning-making, interconnectedness and relationship. This encounter produces fear. My concern for a transformative shift in curriculum leads to my personal involvement in curriculum inquiry and theory to attempt to uncover and transform the logic of domination. That is my intention. Therefore, it is my responsibility to do whatever I can to continue to transform and to re-construct my self and the curriculum I teach.

*I don't know where I am going, but I sure ain't lost*<sup>23</sup> suggests the breaking up of the embedded prefabricated narratives of patriarchal culture through opening the space of doubt. I believe that dream reading has the potential to open the space of doubt into which teachers may move. What if teachers became interpreters of curriculum in the sense of dream reading and literary engagement? What if curriculum meaning were revealed through multiple interpretations? What if we found or created new stories that transgress those culturally condoned in the Western Canon? And, so I ask myself, what would happen if women teachers rebirthed the pre-oedipal symbolic order and brought forth a world that accepts women as human? What if we lived

- ❖ *As if* we are willing to make a spectacle of ourselves in order to shift consciousness.
- ❖ *As if* the novel is the most authoritative description we have of consciousness.
- ❖ *As if* dream reading transformed consciousness.
- ❖ *As if* changing consciousness, subjectivity and shifting identities enabled re-interpreting curriculum.
- ❖ *As if* re-interpreting curriculum leads to transformative practices of teaching and leading.

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<sup>23</sup> (Lair, 1975)

- ❖ *As if* we uncover, recognize and re-interpret fear of knowing and thus become aware we are complicit in our own colonization through patriarchal cultural structures.
- ❖ *As if* every thought and action contributes to the distributive cultural network resulting in shifts in consciousness in, with and through culture.

In this dissertation, I have traveled back and forth between the lives of the women in *Unless* as dream and autobiographical episodes. Woven into this travel are theories of feminism, consciousness and archetypal psychology. Finally, I have linked these ideas to issues of contemporary education. I have put forward ideas for how we might create an ethos of curriculum and teaching that is dedicated to bringing forth, transforming and becoming. It is my hope that this work may impact at least one teacher to reclaim her self and her teaching from fundamentalist notions of the past inculcated into students in the name of Truth. This work offers an introduction to dream reading theory. There is far more work to be done to flesh out specific practical approaches and illustrations of dream reading. I have offered my own dreams and my dream reading of *Unless*.

I am not a poet. Yet, I find that words sometimes arrive in different forms churning to be spat upon the page.

### **Croning**

In this winter season, birth the old woman in me.  
 Come out and dance our hag dance  
 Withered fresh.  
 Ancient ageless crone.  
 Iridescent green, new mould from old  
 The immaculate soul of woman  
 Love container  
 Burst forth our children  
 Taught by goddess to rejoice.  
 Constrained within this flesh  
 Wounds of children, heal  
 Wounds of children, burn  
 Wounds of children, scarred  
 and cracked, burnt in fires, leap  
 forth from the valley of old bones.

Soot and ashes.  
You will teach the world  
Shimmer into gold  
Pierce the hardened walls.  
Refined by fire.  
Spring up and dance.

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## Appendix I (a)



**May 19, 1993**

Five images drawn in my journal after a reiki treatment in Banff, Alberta.  
Praying hands joined over my head bringing light to consciousness.

## Appendix I (b)



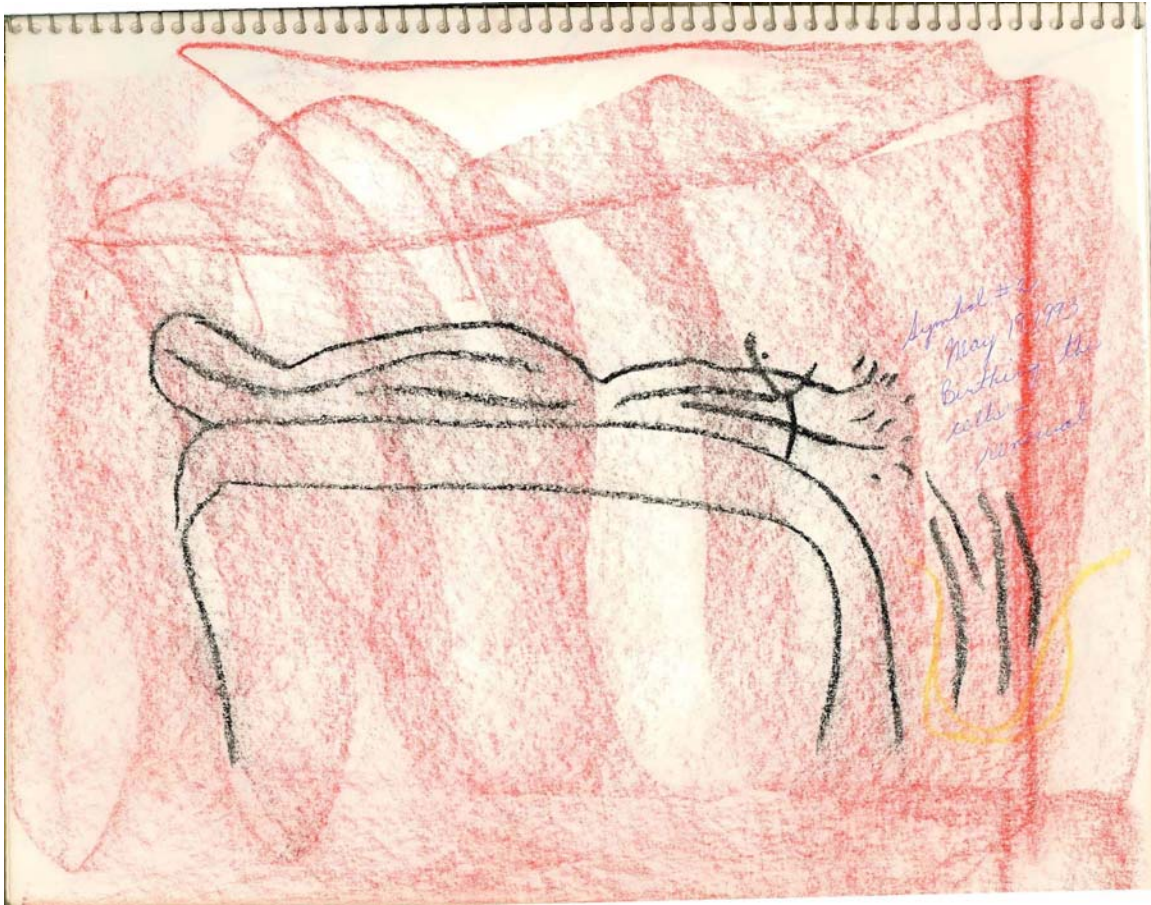
### The Terrible Mother Goddess

The dark wing of the vulture, sometimes a crow, is associated, on a transpersonal level, with death and destructiveness. "It is sacred to the Black Crone who sometimes appears in its shape. ... On a transpersonal level, this suggests that the Death Goddess sometimes functions as that aspect of the Self that aggressively stands against inauthentic living and will actively destroy what the ego has falsely taken on as its way of being in the world" (Carlson, 1989, p. 83 and 109).

Merlin Stone in *When God was a Woman* explains both the Vulture and Owl as goddess symbols. In Goddess mythology, the Owl is linked with Lilith. "(A)rchaologists have found accounts of the sacred women in the earliest records of Sumer. ... The Queen of Heaven was most reverently esteemed by the sacred women, who in turn were especially protected by Her. ... One interesting fragment recorded the name of Lilith, described as a young maiden, as the 'hand of Inanna.' We read on this sacred tablet that Lilith was sent by Inanna to gather men from the street, to bring them to the temple. ... Lilith later appeared in Hebrew mythology as the first wife of Adam, who refused to be sexually submissive ... later as the name of the demon who hovered about, waiting to find spilled sperm, of which to make her illegitimate demon children" (Stone, 1984, p. 158).

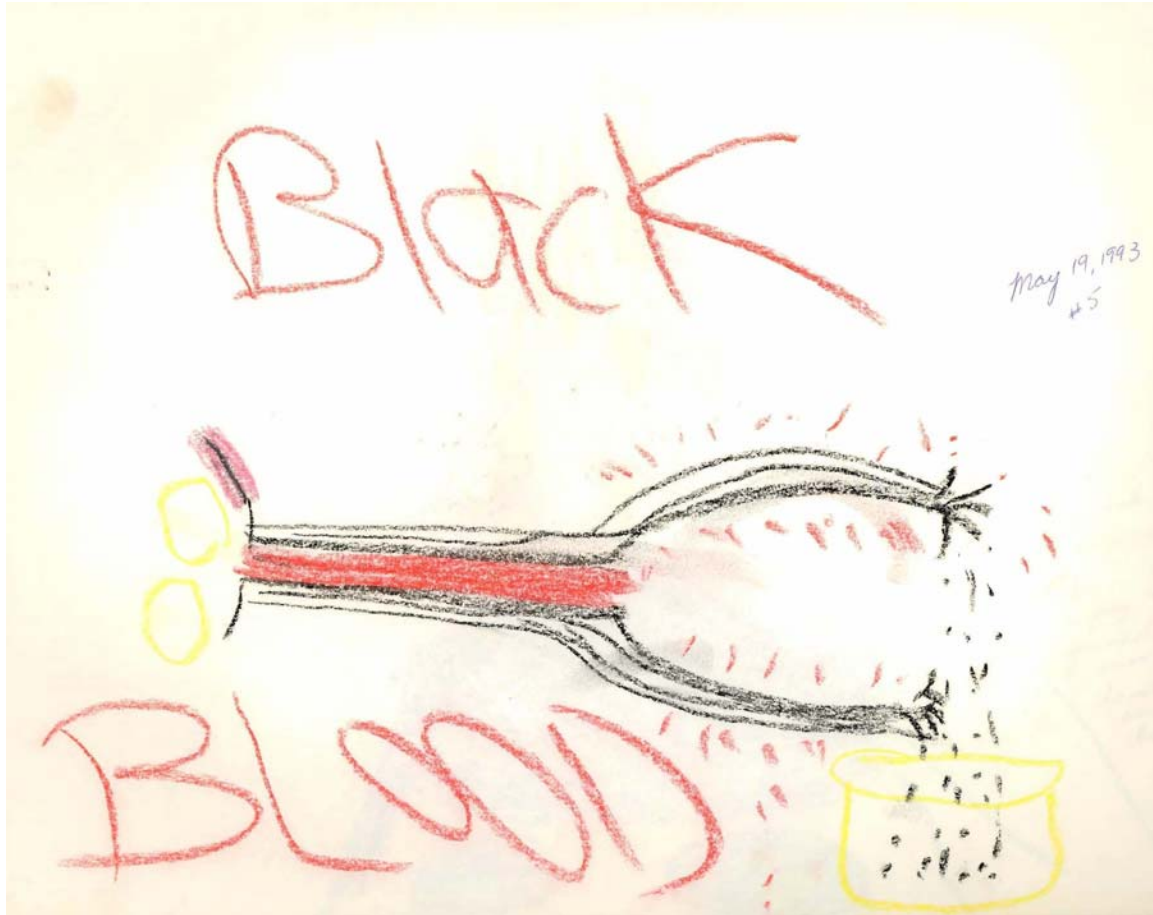


## Appendix I (c)



Reiki image. The black represents the imaginary “goup” that poured from my body during the reiki treatment.

Appendix I (d)



Images during reiki treatment. The red represents the energy that flowed while the black represents the negative energy, blood, that poured out of my body into the bucket at my feet.

Appendix 1 (e)



This is the final image that appeared during the reiki treatment. For me, it represents Sophia, the mythical Goddess of wisdom.

## **Appendix II**

### **Journal Excerpts**

**February 1990**

I am my own authority. Maybe.

Emancipatory research increases awareness of the contradictions distorted or hidden by every day understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation inherent in the present configuration of social processes (Lather, 1991). Does five years of personal dream work, meditation, inner healing, bibliotherapy of over 150 titles, leading dream workshops in my “spare” time, and finally, culminating in psychotherapy and the first hot flash of midlife count as “emancipatory research”? Today I asked Dr. Chamberlain why critical theory researchers stick to Freudian psychoanalysis rather than moving on to the work of Jung. He says it has to do with a psychologic focus on the individual while critical theory focuses on collective action. At first, I thought this was an explanation. As I re-read some of my notes and reflect on my experiences, I’m not so sure. My individual emancipation ripples out in circles and touches my daughter, my sons, my husband, birth family, friends and those who come to the dream workshops and journey with me. I have a file folder full of notes, letters and comments from women who have written to me from Innisfail, Alberta to San Diego, California after reading an article I had written on healing. I have a choice to leave my experience at the individual level or to share it with others. To tell them my story and listen to theirs and through the telling and the listening we will free each other. Well, this ends with more questions again. Are there other reasons, more reasons, for ignoring Jung?

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I am constantly thinking about possible research designs as I take this independent reading course with Dr. Chamberlain.

- (1) submission of the preliminary description of the data to the scrutiny of the researched (I hate this clinical word) for further dialogue. Moral dialogue? Noddings refers to moral dialogue as an authentic attempt to listen to each other, to see from within the other’s experience.
- (2) life histories of the researched, if relevant. In dream work, life history and life issues contextualizing is critical. This may enable their inner transition to understand and change their own repressive or oppressive realities. School superintendents appeared often in my early dreams (1989-90). Representing my intellect and how it was that the intellect kept putting up obstacles to change. The intellect or probably superego, in my experience, often plays games by bringing up all the negative reasons for not changing the inner belief system. I wonder if teachers generally have figures of superintendents appearing in their dreams. How would it be possible for the life experience of anyone to be “not relevant”?



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Father John Rich [Psychosynthesis workshop, New York, 1991] said, "Becoming spiritually mature means becoming your own authority." Scared the ... out of me. I wrote pages and pages on that in the summer of 1991. I repeated, "I am my own authority," like a mantra for months and more months just to keep the fear down.

I am 45 years old. This process, perhaps too late, has enabled me to re-define my ideals and see that I am my own authority. It has necessitated a declaration of my right to self-determination in the face of challenges of family and social expectations. Not without pain. I am continually working to accept the awakening understanding of my connection to earth and nature; other women (I didn't used to associate much with women except my Mom, and two very close friends, rejecting the cookie baking routine at 15); and the most difficult—acceptance of my physical body as part of me. I am one of the majority of humanity—not another minority. My God is not an anthropomorphic God but pure uncreated energy manifest in All. I have redefined the leadership problem as problematic male leadership. This seems appropriate to me since Christ reportedly claimed "The first shall be last," thereby turning the hierarchical model upside down. Not that anyone listened. "Not servants but friends," pushes the patriarchal nonsense radically aside and makes a mockery of the fundamentalism so rampant in Alberta.

"What does this sentence or statement reveal about the experience being described?" (Van Manen, p. 21 – 22), the example about hope. What would I say about midlife? To be immersed in midlife is to come to know. And the knowing is deeper. It is a coming to Sacred Know. In early life, one sees expectation and feels expected to do certain things. To join this or that, to bake for the children's school, to clean the Church. At midlife, one comes to say NO clearly and firmly and to say YES equally clearly and firmly. One comes to a deeper Knowing of one's own power to be in the world as do-er for others or as be-er of Self. And, one begins to say a clear NO without defensive explanation. "No, I am not going to do that. It sounds interesting. Have a good time." Or, "Yes. I want to commit to that."

### **Re-collecting - Linguistic Transformations and the Language of Midlife**

I know that, Saying Yes; Saying No, develops a sense of being in control of my own wants and desires. The, "I am my own authority," notion of earlier writing and being comfortable in that knowing of self-authority. Or, when I learned I was cooking because of my upbringing—women bake and cook and clean and—not because I needed to or wanted to or that my children needed me to. This knowing came clearly in the pain of Christmas 1989 through yet another episode with the deep dark despair of depression.

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**August 23, 1993**

Self-reflection on the experience of the Myers-Briggs Certification Workshop

**Listening for Wholeness: Dialogue with an Introvert.**

Dear N. (workshop leader):

The first major insight emerged once I was out on the open highway. I am having an imaginary conversation with Mom.

"Mom, I need to explain something. You just pretend I'm a priest or bishop or someone way UP there and then maybe you'll be able to hear me. Not long ago you asked, "Why do you have to question everything about faith and religion? I just have faith. That's how it is." I didn't give you much of an answer then, but now a year later, here is my answer. That's how it is with introverts like me. It sometimes takes a long time to formulate an answer that gets at the depth of the idea. So, here it is. When I meet God face-to-face, which I doubt, since I don't believe God exists in personal form, I imagine S/he will ask, "Why **didn't** you use the mind and body and soul I gave you? I am pretty certain S/he won't ask, "Why **did** you use the mind, body and soul I gave you!" Now, you see, as Bishop, I get to be a real thinker in the service of humanity. As a Bishop I would be male. I would get to ask the tough questions which may blow open old rigid rules and structures. Institutions must serve humanity. I suppose I would be excommunicated like Teilhard de Chardin (they let him back in when they actually figured out what he was talking about), or Matthew Fox. They probably won't let him back in ever because he consorts, are you ready for this? With witches! Yes, witches right here and now! Tsk. Sorry, that's a bit sarcastic. But have you read Fox's work? You might want to.

The people must use institutions. Institutions and systems are ministers to and with and for the people. Not vice versa. I know that now. Christ served humanity. He did not come, build an inflexible institution, an idol, and command the people to follow the idol! So, Mom, the Bishop has spoken her truth. That's why I have to question. It's real simple. I have to use the gifts given as best I know how.

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And, now back to Mom. This is the Bishop again. I was born quiet, introverted, very much joyous, gentle little soul. For 11 months my world revolved around an adoring Mother and Dad; a proud mother who desperately wanted a daughter after three sons; and an adoring, quiet, reserved, musician, trucker father, who rocked the cradle with one foot and tapped the other in time with his banjo. Three brothers. 5, 6, 7. And aging, beloved grandparents. Securely nestled on grandmother's breast as she rocked me in the twilight of her life. I just had Grandma's ring made new, Mom. Then, the death of my grandmother. And a year later, assault by an unseen neighbor, and another year later the death of my grandfather. "Will Grandpa get up and play?" "No, Grandpa won't get up, Elaine. He's gone to be with God." That's Auntie Anne speaking. (I was Elaine until I was 10. It's a teacher story. I became Pearl. Auntie Anne never changed like most others).

Yuck! God? Who is this guy God? First, he takes my grandmother, then let's me be assaulted and then he takes my grandfather. I don't like him; he's mean and awful. What

did I ever do to him? Well, Mom, I suppose I did what any self-preserving kid would do. I conformed over the years to the structure and confines of family, church and school. I turned my feeling self inside out, stomped down hard with both feet and to prove my right to exist, I pleased everyone. God, I was good. And, about the time I learned to read, I read about Saint Maria Goretti and I conformed even more to increasingly rigid inner standards and, I'll bet you didn't know this, I fantasized for days the spring I had mumps about doing penance on beds of nails and even imagined how to make a belt of nails to wear under my blue jeans. You see, Mom, in those days I was confessing to the sin of impurity. Yup. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 years old and certain I was bound for hell because often on nights I had nightmares, I awoke in the morning with blood on my hands and under my finger nails. I had scratched and dug at my vagina until it was bleeding and raw. I know now why. I surely didn't then. A good doctor would search for reasons such as child molestation. I didn't tell you about the nightmares or the bleeding. I was surely a private child. I thought I could atone for all my sins by suffering. You know, like Fatima? And, so, I existed. And now, you know the story from my first journal about the inner healing. I want *out* of the institutional rigidity and that's where I am headed. I am my own authority. Father John Rich told me that the true sign of wisdom and maturity was to be able to live in accordance with one's own inner life.

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So, N., by now you're wondering, "What the hell has this all got to do with Type and Organizational (read institutional) Transition? Let me explain. When Dorothy, INFJ, and I, the reluctant INTJ, were doing the exercise on endings and neutral zones, I mentioned, quietly, that I felt betrayed and that institutional transition opens old wounds. And, as I drove, I knew what I really wanted to say to the group. I am an F. The T wants to say F... U... but the feeling introvert says nothing. Wouldn't want to hurt anyone. Wouldn't want to make trouble. And I know why the EI SN TF JP exercise at the Myers Briggs workshop irritated me. I am **NOT** one letter. I am a whole, real, authentic, feeling, connected being. I am a bit of stained glass in the cathedral of the Universe. Don't label, categorize, analyze or reduce me to a letter even if it is a capital.

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And now, N., imagine this. Another image. This time from a dream in Calgary this past week. The world is shifting on its axis. In my dream, a weird child, a childhood acquaintance with a weird mother, is explaining. "I am glad that bizarre person came to live with us because that shifted my mother's attention off me!" And the next night's dream, the wise native family, strong feminine leading wise mother, wise Chief father, and guiding son. And a weird, white-eyed child who "focuses" her weird "I" on me. And they feed the community from a large, solid, oaken, decorative, beautiful wooden cupboard. Nourishing, nurturing, wisdom, native to my being. Midlife. My world shifting on its axis. Feed yourself and serve the community.

I imagine going home to Bill. He's in the kitchen. I am drained. I have written this all down. And I'm scared as hell. Bill. Listen. Remember once, five years ago, February 7, 1989, I asked you to listen. Not move. Not speak. Not ask any questions until I finished? Can you do it again?

Let's go out on the swing after I shower and change my clothes. So, showered and dressed in a light blue butterfly dressing gown, we go out to the swing. And I read my Journal to him. Acting out all the parts. I call it, "Dialogue with an Introvert," because it reminds me of the monologue I did in grade seven. Attired as an aging gray-haired lady, which I am now, I sat in my rocking chair on stage and delivered a monologue in the Christmas play in the Crooked Creek hall with Darryl Trottier. And now, when I finish, Bill, true to his word, says nothing and gently hugs me. We go quietly into the house. The kids are gone. Later, we go out to the garden to plant the Virginia Creeper that I brought home from the grotto at the Midnapore school. We decide to build a grotto in the back yard so the creeper can cover it like the Grotto of my sixteenth year. I put a cow's skull beside the statue of Mary, the white cow, symbol of the Goddess. I am my own authority.

### Appendix III Journal Excerpt—Sent Letter

**January 13, 1999**

Letter actually sent and published in *The Western Catholic Reporter*

I too have read the letters to the editor and the commentary directed toward those of us, Roman Catholic by birth and as adults by choice, who support the ordination of women (Benoiton letter January 11, 1999).

“Who in hell do they think that they are?” Well, let me explain. Who do you think that I am? I am woman. Somewhat in excess of half the human beings on the planet. I am created in the image and likeness of God. I am among those who went to the tomb on that long ago Easter morning and those who proclaimed, ‘the Lord has been raised’ even though the men present did not believe them. I am among those who walked with Christ to his Crucifixion. I am a radical feminist following in the best way I know in the footsteps of The Christ, who was first among radical feminists. I am following The Christ who healed Peter’s mother-in-law, healed the woman with the hemorrhage, raised the daughter of Jairus and conversed with the Syrophoenician woman. Against all the Jewish laws of the day, he touched the woman, allowed himself to be served by the woman. He went against the righteous who were filled with their own self-importance. As a radical feminist, I seek to eradicate the root of patriarchal society.

I am questioning the traditions of the Church to ordain only men. And to those who claim that I am not entitled to my own thoughts, I simply have a smile. I will take full responsibility for my own thoughts and words and deeds having been created by The Creator who is far more than male or female. I fear sometimes for the anthropomorphic nature of the argument. To reduce God, Mother or Father, to the attributes of humans is truly amazing. To reduce the decision to refuse to nurture the vocation of woman to the priesthood to one of tradition is also amazing. How can tradition be the source when women have been excluded from creating the tradition? And when that ‘tradition’ is based on scripture written during a time when Paul, so often quoted in a most superficial manner, admonished the Galatian community: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ, Jesus. My question is simple: When do we take up the model which Christ left us and live it out in all its fullness?

So, I say to the gentleman, I am neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, but one in Christ Jesus, together with many other Christian men and women. And so, I will speak out even in the face of the anger of those who seek power over rather than power with and through.

Pearl Gregor  
New Sarepta



## **Appendix V**

### **Journal Excerpts**

**May 12, 1989**

#### **Dream #3 The Inner Room**

In the dream I come home to find that the living room has been renovated and is filled with beautiful new furniture. The color scheme revolves around rich shades of blue. Royal Blue and lighter shades of pastel blue. I am surprised and very peaceful. The dream ends.

**March 15, 1991**

#### **Dream #56 Renovations**

Act I

I am in the living room of Mom and Dad's house on the farm where I grew up. It is quite a mess. My cousin, K., walks by the picture window, smiles, waves and comes in the front door to the right of me. It is summer outside but the Christmas tree is still in the corner where it holds the place of honor at Christmas time. I am horrified that company would come and see the tree still up in summer. K. comes through the door which pushes the tree behind it. The tree is bedraggled, brownish and dead looking. She picks up an ornament from the top of a shelf or television, looks at it, smiles, puts it back. I am mortified—the dust and grime are clearly visible on the ornament. Kathy is here visiting from Vancouver. B., her husband, stands behind her, says nothing at all.

Act II

The scene changes. I am still in the house but now the gyproc is hanging loose from the walls. It is too big for the walls and hangs about a foot too long. The edges are cracked several inches up. I am in another room of the house on the left side. I have a hacksaw. I pull the gyproc out toward me and cut off the broken edges. The gyproc is attached at the top but not on the edges or bottom. I cut off at least a foot. Around the window, which is also covered with gyproc, I can see a crack of light. I trim the left side by the wall. I do not cut the gyproc out of the window but I am pleased to see the crack of light.

Act III

The scene shifts once again. Two brothers, B. and J. are hauling hay, I think. As we head around the corner by the driveway B. says, "The big guy isn't gonna make it this time. He's going too fast." The tractor and trailer swerve as we fly around the corner. J., B. and I fly off the trailer bed into a huge ditch filled with water. B. climbs out first, very fast, the water is very deep. Just as he stands up on the edge, I think he may fall backward and then we will be in 12 feet of water. He stands clear. I grab his leg and get out. J. follows.

Act IV

The scene shifts again. I am back in the house. I have the messy, left side room, pretty much cleaned up. The gyproc fits smoothly. I am somewhat concerned at my craftsmanship. Some 'kids,' seemingly Colin and Jason, are busy cleaning up the other parts of the room. Brother B. comes in and says something like, "The house is dirtier than it has ever been." I am upset and think, "It would be clean if everyone helped out." I say nothing out loud. K. appears and also my cousin, R.. I ask R. if he is on holiday. K. picks up the same ornament, a dog figurine, now clean and shiny. The dream ends.

## **Appendix VI**

### **Journal Excerpt**

**December 11, 1988**

**Dream #1 The Landing.**

I am in an elevator in the Harley Court building where my office is on the seventh floor. (three years later I realize that my “real” office is on the eighth floor). There are several other people, mostly women, with me but I do not recognize any of them. The door closes and the elevator begins to fall. It falls and falls endlessly and everyone begins to scream and yell in panic. Silently I pray over and over, "Jesus, make it safe," while out loud I repeatedly assure the others that everything will be fine. After what seems like hours, the elevator gently lands. The landing is the clearest aspect of the dream. Ever gentle, softly, the elevator came to a halt bouncing like a child in huge feather pillows.



## **Appendix VII**

### **Journal Excerpts**

**April 1, 1991**

#### **Dream #64 The Presence**

The dream begins in our bedroom. ... Someone comes and opens our bedroom door. Bill gets up, against my wishes, to lock the door. He gets into bed and a small boy, Lucas, comes out of the closet. I am becoming very angry at the interruptions. There are several, at least three, more interruptions. Bill is not responsive to my passion and whereas I want to ignore the interruptions, he continues to get up to attend to each problem. I try all manner of inventions. Finally, he gets up and leaves. I am devastated.

The dream scene changes. I am not sure how to describe it. Seemingly, I leave my body, off the bed and around not exactly but sort of on the floor in a circular movement, then back to the bed. I know my body is on the bed but I am not in it. Again I leave my body. There is a dark, hissing, sinister presence in the room. I “fly” around the room, hands extended like claws and hissing or spitting at the unseen presence. I am then in the kitchen at ceiling height and notice that the three pictures on the dining room wall, the peasant man with his loaf of bread, Jesus standing knocking at the door and the crucifix over the hallway door are not actually there. Only the yellowed image of where they once hung remains. I begin a one-way dialogue with the presence,

"Let's be friends."

Hiss, spat.

"Let's be friends."

Hiss, spat.

"Jesus, you come."

"Let's be friends."

Somewhere during all this I realize I am dealing with an extremely angry part of myself. I continue to repeat, "Let's be friends." "Jesus, you come." The dream ends.

The above dream scares the hell out of me and essentially stops me from meditating for many months. I am afraid of the “evil” presence that may take me away from my religious roots. If this isn’t ridiculous nothing is. But that’s the truth of it.

## **Appendix VIII**

### **Mythology of the Cosmic Egg**

- ❖ Represents stages of a long process of development.
- ❖ Considered very old because of its 'primeval' character.
- ❖ Actual record of this primordial stage of creation myths is limited since not all prehistoric cultures created images.
- ❖ "Ethnological parallels from fishing and hunting societies indirectly prove the Palaeolithic origin of the cosmogonical ideas centering around water, water bird, egg, doe, and woman" (Marija Gimbutas, 1982, p. 101).
- ❖ Primal element of the universe conceived as water.
- ❖ "The abstract paintings on Cucuteni vases further reveal the formation of the world and the beginning of life from an egg in the midst of which a germ resided" (Marija Gimbutas, 1982, p. 101).
- ❖ The snake—symbol of life energy—winds across or around the cosmic egg.
- ❖ Mythologies of Egyptian, Babylonian, Hindu, Greek include "universe as cosmic egg from which gods arise and which was created by a cosmic snake or bird" (Marija Gimbutas, 1982, p. 102).
- ❖ May also be laid by mythical water bird.
- ❖ "The two large eggs or circles on the back of the body of the Great Goddess represent her potential. They stand for the source of subsequent development and thus could be called symbols of 'becoming' (Marija Gimbutas, 1982, p. 166).

## **Appendix IX**

### **Journal Excerpts**

#### **July/August 1988**

Throughout the summer I spent time each morning and sometimes several times a day sitting and thinking, contemplating and meditating. Strange things began to occur. Whenever I needed energy, I simply breathed in great breaths of energy and breathed out exhaustion. My energy level rose. I was able to do more than I had for years. My depression lifted somewhat. I repeated over and over again the same mantra. All spring I kept a tape in my car and listened on the 30 minutes drive to and from work. I kept a paper copy under the blotter on my desk.

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On July 24 I was admitted to hospital with what appeared to be food poisoning. I was terribly ill for several days and finally on Sunday morning, succumbed to Bill's urging that I needed a doctor's care. Years of going to doctors had never produced much in the way of results and I was not too enamored of going one more time. Bill insisted. A trip to the nearby Medi-clinic resulted in immediate hospitalization. I was dehydrated and bleeding from the bowel.

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I came home from the hospital July 28, weak, feeling sorry for myself, and unable to regain my strength. I learned later that sometimes as we move from one level of consciousness to another we manifest symptoms of physical illness. The doctors were intent on food poisoning although where I would have eaten this food no one knew. They simply refused to hear what I told them. I had eaten nothing different than the rest of my family. And, I do the majority of the cooking. Yes, I know about the proper way to cook hamburger and anyway we hadn't eaten hamburger for many days prior to my illness. The doctors didn't listen. Not only religious literalism but medical literalism. I hate it.

Positive things did come out of the five days in the hospital. I read at least six books. A former grade nine student brought me three books on the life and work of various consciousness writers. The theme of the books was vast power of inner consciousness.

## Appendix X

### Journal Excerpts

#### Maryknoll Center, New York Transpersonal Dream Intensive August 4, 1991

We practise deep breathing exercises. Ha. Ha. Ha. Nine times, hands on knees. Breathing in the gift of life—receiving. Breathing out—surrender into Infinite Life. Amazingly, the tightness lifts away. The purpose of wholeness must include physical wholeness and well being. S. speaks of "Holy Shit" or the changes in bodily energy that may well result in strong, bodily changes, diarrhea, or other physical disturbances during the healing process. I now have confirmation of my suspicions about my hospital stay in July 1988. Food poisoning the doctors insisted. I had no explanation I could give to the medical profession. I knew it was not food poisoning simply because no one else in the family was sick and we had all eaten at home. We hadn't eaten hamburger, the home of the dreaded e-coli bacteria. I experienced intense diarrhea, intestinal spasms, severe abdominal pain and resultant bleeding from the bowel. By the time I gave in and went to the hospital, I was severely dehydrated and too weak to stand. I spent five days on intravenous.

In April I had begun intense meditation using the *Teachings of the Inner Christ* as my guideline. Many people who undertake healing with others need to understand these physical processes in the body which must release its long held inner toxicity. S. continues with Jungian explanations of sub-personality. All the information is included in the handbook given to each participant and I do not write it all down.

One or two seem most significant to me. The Seducer/Seductress is created by unhealthy emotional relationships with others or by unhealthy injunctions against healthy sexuality. Dreams showing a need for intimacy as in union/oneness give inner messages that the transformation can be into healthy introvert as well since I was seemingly born an introvert. Maybe I learned to be one. Whatever. I have spent too many years trying to be what everybody else around me seems to expect—extroverted. My Dad is probably the extreme introvert as are several members of my family. Why extroversion is the preference I have no idea. However those 25% of us who are introverts have a tough time convincing those around us that we are normal.

The shamed child is one more sub-personality of interest to me. There is not much written in this area. When Margaret, a lady I have only met once, told me in June 1990 that the extreme kidney pain I was experiencing was related to shame, I went on a search for reading material on shame. Not too much exists. Shame is not a word used in our society. We focus on guilt which is not shame. Shame has to do with the soul, the very essence of our being. Guilt has to do with doing. Shame has to do with being and therefore is much more toxic. The shamed child sub-personality believes it has no right to exist. One characteristic of shame is the seeming triviality of its source. In sexual abuse, the blaming of the victim prevalent in our society, by implication and innuendo, if not by outright statement, may lead to shame. Shame rots away the central core of our

beingness. The high degree of emphasis on sexual purity promulgated by the Catholic Church in such acts as the canonization of St. Maria Goretti for resisting rape even unto death, imprinted shame on my mind as a young child even though I was consciously unaware of molestation. I had a coloring book about St. Maria Goretti! In the mind of a child, perhaps it would seem better to be dead because to live is to be impure and to realize that one did not resist unto death. I struggle to understand how this incident became such a horrific force within. The answer seems to lie in the formation of the shadow in Jungian terms. The cut off parts of the personality become the inferior part, the sum of all the psychic elements incompatible with chosen conscious aspects, denied expression and therefore coalesce into sub-personality, or S.'s "critters." Unless healed and integrated, the sub-personality takes on a life of its own. Hence, the "voices" heard in 1983. The shamed child is formed through abuse, through family secrets or dysfunctional families who live life as a lie.

What has taken me so damn long to find the roots of this depression is that my family is pretty much "normal" whatever that means. No big secrets or massive issues. I had nothing to link to my definitions of depression. However, religious hypocrisy or misunderstanding is particularly apt at forming the shamed inner child. Shame has tentacles like an octopus and strangles the soul unto death. Shame causes the soul to leak its psychic energy and leaves the personality feeling drugged, energyless, abused and lifeless.

John Bradshaw's book, *Healing the Shame that Binds*, helped me immensely. Dreamwork and a trip to Lethbridge to participate in the healing workshop with Aboriginal people experiencing the shame of the residential school experience assisted me in coming to some bit of transformation of the inner shame. I have no wish to repeat the burning heat, the gut-wrenching, spasmodic, convulsing pain. The sweat lodges were wonderful. This is a necessary passage along the journey for those of us who are survivors if we want to thrive. I intend to. What does it matter? Can insanity be worse than depression?

Harold teaches Gestalt or empty chair therapy. I am to project an image or sub-personality into an empty chair and verbalize feelings. Then move to the empty chair and verbalize the sub-personality since it is really part of me. For years I wondered what Gestalt therapy was all about. Fritz Perls, the creator, tended to reject the concept of transpersonal psychology and seemed to believe that all is projection.

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I go into my room fully intending not to do this thing. I feel ridiculous and embarrassed. Oh well. Feeling like a total idiot, I place two chairs next to the bed and sit down on one.

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I give up the Gestalt therapy having learned perhaps more than I really want to know about myself. I am angry now. How much more crap? How toxic can one personality be? Of course, it makes ultimate good sense. How many times have I stopped breathing in my life? Dr. Z. told me in February I have not breathed properly for a very very long time and that I would have to learn. She also told me my whole central nervous system wants

to shut down having been traumatized for 40 years. That is the root cause of the “iron chains that bind” around my chest. And I really have worked hard on that this summer. Now, smoking is related to the assault and some part of my unconscious self figures the best way out is death. I don’t tell anyone about the nonstop suicide thoughts. Sinful.

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**August 4, 1991**

**Dream #77 Symbols**

A book which has compartments and is cloth bound. The Book of Symbols.

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Later, at 9:30 a.m. Father J., who is also a practicing Jungian psychotherapist, says Mass in the small chapel. It is the 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The gospel speaks of Moses and Aaron and brings back memories of the first time I heard what I felt to be my own “Inner Christ self,” at that time, calling himself, Aaron, telling me to read Matthew 13-23. My first conscious experience of the Voiceless Voice. Even now when this voiceless inner communication occurs, I have an urge to look around and see who is speaking to me. The voice comes from somewhere within. Intuition. Perhaps I really should be committed.

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**August 5, 1991**

I choose to move through my inner conflict shown in imagery and dreams as a wall, a barricade, a door, a cloudy, dark meadow. S. says it is important to remember to make friends with my shadow so as not to project unconscious aspects of sub-personality onto others. The stronger the persona the stronger the shadow and thus the injunction to “Know thyself.” The distance between the persona and the shadow shortens as I retract my projections and reclaim the repressed aspects of personality from the personal unconscious.

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**Guided Imagery 9:05 p.m.**

We begin on the warm beach beside the ocean. A palm tree and a vast expanse of white sand appear. As I walk into the ocean and submerge I swim past some kind of large ocean animal. A piranha comes by. I simply think, “Forget it!” A swordfish comes to guide me. Once on the ocean floor, I enter a cave with the golden-haired child. The walls of the cave are etched with very fine carving. A plaque hangs on the cave wall. On it is etched the figure of a fish. I am given a gift—a ring with fine jewels. And I am given a message for all time. “This is a message for all time—There is more truth than your heart can hold. Even on the ocean floor are written the records of creation. I am the monster of the depths. I am friendly only to those who love me.”

**Sunday, 10:15**

Spent time with J. today. Sharing common experiential elements on the healing journey. She is trying to come to grips with incest. We share a common Roman Catholic background and a common obsession with purity and the story of St. Maria Goretti and

Our Lady and the Children at Fatima. The whole area around New York has many historic centres of Roman Catholic origin. I am impressed with the grottos of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima. Stories read in childhood. Peace. I am enthralled with the feelings of risk. I climb up, down, over and around rocks. I feel free to look over the edge. To walk on the ledge without fear. This is far different than the incredible fear of falling over the edge experienced in Minneapolis and Thunder Bay area on our a family holiday in 1983. I returned from that holiday and went into one of the deepest depressions I had ever known. Now, the horror has lost its hold. At least for now.

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A trust betrayed must be rebuilt. It is critical to remember that forgiveness is a gift. Forgiveness is not something we can do on our own particularly since it is caught up in forgiving ourselves. I can choose self-awareness. There are two excellent books on the subject which I must remember to find when I return home: *The Taboo Against Knowing*, Alan Watts and *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware*, Alice Miller. The rational, scientific, positivistic world pretty much works to keep me ignorant. That way I am easier to control and mold into the woman image the culture wants.

## Appendix XI





## Appendix XII

### Journal Excerpts from EDSE 690

**November 6, 1993**

Re-collecting - Linguistic Transformations  
Language of Midlife

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Phenomenological Writing

Attending to the Speaking of Language

Sensitive, undertones, language speaking, things speaking. Like speaking to an old tree. If one sits quietly beneath a tree, one can hear her speak. I have experienced the depth of trees speaking through gnarled rootedness, sap, bark, and in summer, fullness of life. In winter, emptiness of life; in autumn, returning life to life through death. The language of a tree is deep listening. Listening to the things speak in the life world of woman.

Varying Example

--using examples to help make visible the essence of the experience

--every phenomenological description is really only an example, Van Manen says, "an icon."

Icon. I remember the experience of the *Theotokos* icon in New York, Maryknoll Seminary, July 1991. Powerful energy emanated and touched the core of my being, causing warmth and tears to flood every cell of my being. I was knocked almost to my knees by the strong flood of energy. Divine essence. The *Theotokos* "spoke" across centuries of woman's experience. Known in our male-dominated world as the "Holy Spirit," the third person of the Trinity, and to mystics as the feminine "Shekhinah," for me it is the feminine rootedness of God. Roughly translated Theotokos means, "The God bearer".

An example composed of examples. The ancient garden, the maid, the crone and the bounteous fruit which is offered to me by the Crone and frowned on by the younger woman. It has taken over three years to recognize this as a powerful midlife dream—the fruit of midlife is available to those women who are willing to choose to drink from the chalice of the womb and recognize the harvest of depth within. But I must struggle through the misty, dense fog of convention and normal before I truly drink. The dream can now be harvested as one more example and it can be rooted in the Celtic well symbols of flower, fruit and seed. Do women decorate their offices differently at midlife? Different from what? Are the offices wiser?

### Appendix XIII Journal Excerpt

Sunday afternoon, June 23, 1991

#### **Dream #71 The Spirit of the Inner Garden**

I am at a rodeo/fair grounds with my horse—one like Dunfor. I have no place to tie her up so just leave her outside the trailer. I am a bit worried she might wander off but there are lots of horses around. I assume I will find her.

Some time later I realize the horse has indeed wandered away and I go looking for her. I have a small child with me, 8 or 10 years old. As we search the area, many people are changing tack, grooming and exercising their horses. One young man has a sulky and is working his horse practicing turns. We cannot see my horse anywhere so return and go in another direction along a lane of some kind. At one point an older woman stops me to ask for a cigarette. As I give her one, I comment about not giving too many cigarettes away these days. The expression on her face is indescribable. There is a store somewhere close by. I am unsure if I went there or not. Then we head off along another lane, which seems to have a lot of very nice houses but also an open field. Suddenly I am in an intensely beautiful back garden filled with fruit trees and flowers. I am so surprised to find this beautiful garden. There are large peaches and other fruits with gorgeous colors. Two women, one older and one younger, about 30, are in the back patio separated from the garden of fruit and flowers by a fence. I speak to them over the fence. "This is a very beautiful garden. We can't grow fruit like this in Alberta." The older woman offers me some of the flowers and fruit. I sense that the younger woman is reluctant, almost angry. Immediately I say something like, "Oh, no thank you, that's not why I stopped. I just wanted to tell you how lovely this garden is."

What is the dream telling me? Am I looking for my intuition which I have let roam too freely? Searching for my self leads to the beautiful garden but I do not accept the fruits even when offered. One part of me is fruitful, one rejects the fruit. Robert Bly writes that if a man or woman has been sexually molested in childhood they will eventually need a "heaven haven," a garden walled off within to cultivate precious plants, flowers, vines, trees and a fountain. I must learn to preserve my own boundaries within my own comfort zone. The world doesn't much like introverts, or so it seems. Peach tree flowering—ancient Chinese symbol for wholeness and completeness.

It seems that anxiety has stunted the plants and shame has stopped me from cultivating my own inner garden. I have searched for such a garden on the outside not recognizing the need within. Gardening has been my peace for all these years. The peace in the garden at Midnapore where we said the rosary at dusk. The grottoes I have longed to build. The pictures I have of beautiful gardens. My flowers. The weeping, sobbing and sleeping on the black open soil on the farm in the years we lived in Leduc and I was certain I was going crazy. The final decision that I must return to the farm whether my family came with me or not. The dream holds wonder and awe. The longing for a boundaried place, the nun's cloister where my inner voice said I went at 16 to escape the competitive world of masculinity. The meditation room, study, university. *Hortus conclusus*, the walled garden. My fascination with seeds, seasons, leaves, bulbs and all

growing things. Yellow swamp daffodils behind the pasture at home where I grew up. I have been wanting and wanting to go and find them this year and bring some plants home. Bringing masses of them to my mother. Bly also says that within the walled garden where we go to encounter the wealth of the inner world there are especial riches of grief. Yes. Self-honesty is imperative in order to unlock the tears. To search in lies will not lead to changes in inner consciousness. Somehow I must cut out the remnants of enmeshed self-pity, resentment, depression, low self-esteem, passivity and rage. Bly suggests the spiritual sword. Emotional honesty is imperative also in that prayer must come from the heart.

Horses were my first love throughout childhood and teenage years. I learned to ride long before I went to school. Before having my own children, no matter how wild the horse, I rode without fear. Horses represent beauty, grace, power, agility, speed, intelligence, and nobility. In addition, they symbolize everything that is good, and desirable, and laudable, and commendable about life and living things. They are the dearest, most loyal, most courageous, most intelligent, most beautiful, most powerful, fastest, sleekest, and most graceful of our domesticated animals. My horses have served me and other humans with honor, integrity, courage, loyalty, devotion, unfaltering generosity, unquestioning obedience, and cheerful disregard for their own well being, for thousands of years. A horse will easily give up its life for its master. And thousands of them have certainly done so, down through the ages.

Reading through all manner of writing about symbols, I find that the horse, depending on many factors, can mean a variety of things when used as a symbol. When looked at biblically the horse shows wisdom and intelligence. This has been carried over into many fictional stories where the horse is looked to for knowledge, or support in some way. Depending on the colour of the horse, the part it plays in art or literature varies. A red, or reddish brown horse symbolizes destruction or war. A white horse is seen as many things, goodness, purity, or an omen of death or victory. For example, Napoleon was always painted on a white horse, showing his victorious reign. A black horse symbolizes death, destruction, evil or famine. A gray horse represents the devil.

I see horse symbolism in many of my favorite stories. The headless horseman was a terrifying creature and therefore rode a black horse. Prince Charming always rides a white horse.

How horses are placed or shown, is also a factor as to what they symbolize. Two horses harnessed together represent intellect. A winged horse shows freedom and poetic relations, and a grazing horse shows peace.

When used to describe a human, horses can represent fertility, fidelity, sensitivity, strength, vanity, selfishness, and especially stubbornness.

If used as a statue to remember a war hero or leader, the horse could mean many things depending on its position. For example, if it has all four legs on the ground, it means that the person died of natural causes not related to their battles. A horse with one hoof raised

is said to mean that the person was wounded in battle, and may have died of those wounds. A third stance is both front hooves in the air—this means that the person definitely died in battle. The horse, being a diverse and special creature, is able to serve many purposes when looked upon as symbolism

In Celtic lore, horses are sacred to the Goddesses Epona and Rhiannon and symbolize energy, fertility, freedom and power. They are often associated with the powers of the ocean and also Lunar energies due to the crescent shaped marks left by their hooves. Horses are also sacred to Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea.

**Note September 2007:** These notes come from my dream journal. Unfortunately, I can find no record of the exact sources of all of this information. I can hazard a guess that I pieced it together from both memory and a dozen different written sources. The Peach Fruit dream had a deep and profound impact.

## **Appendix XIV**

### **Journal Excerpts**

#### **Midlife sequence**

**August 4, 1993**

##### **Dream #239 War Within**

In my dream, I am involved in a long war-like battle against unknown enemies. The whole dream takes place in the semi-darkness. The territory is unknown. The dream is very real, very long and I seem to enjoy the struggle. There is no sense of fear. Then, in a very large room, we mount the last offensive. Bill is there. Colin is beating someone away with a long broomstick which he wields like a sword. I am in the bushes behind the chesterfield making sure I am ready when the enemy arrives. Bill lies down on the chesterfield and prepares to have something to eat. "Don't worry," he says, "we have them beaten anyway." I am amazed and dumfounded by his nonchalance. I awaken and laugh. Major energy seems released. The dream seems so paradoxical. The laughter bubbles up as I review the dream.

**August 8, 1993**

##### **Dream #240 New Beginnings**

In my dream, I am at an unknown doctor's office. I am 3-4 months pregnant, my belly round and beginning to grow. "How old are you?" asks the doctor. "48," I say. I will have this baby. I considered abortion once before and I couldn't do that. This dream is all "thoughts." There are no pictures or images.

**August 10, 1993 2:20 a.m.**

##### **Dream #241**

In my dream, I am in a church pew. I leave and go outside or to the back. Four times I leave, speak with someone, and return. The fourth time, I notice that there is an unknown masculine figure asleep in a pew. To the left of the sleeping figure is a pile of belongings including my purse and S.'s gray sheepskin jacket. I feel like an intruder the fourth time I go back to the pew.

**August 12, 1993 2:30 a.m.**

##### **Dream #242 Who am I NOW?**

In my dream is one unknown blonde woman figure, quite large and heavy around the waist and stomach. She places her hands on her expansive stomach and breathes a sigh of relief, "It is a relief to let go. I don't have to suck in all the time.

**Saturday, August 14, 1993**

##### **Dream #243 Confusion**

In my dream, Mom is here. We are in my house. I am mopping the hallway floor on hands and knees when two brothers come in. Mom doesn't greet them. I am thinking, "We haven't seen M. in a long time. Isn't anyone going to say hello?" Then, I see that the bedroom floor is flooded. The linoleum is in a wavy shape with water lying in the low areas.

**August 15, 1993**

My mother has told me just this past summer, that this date, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven, is the anniversary of my conception.

I go to breakfast in the hotel in Calgary. The room turns black. Begins to twirl in an intense rush of heat and blackness. I think, "I'm going to faint." I sit and try to still the swirling heat. Breathe. Breathe. Finally, I get up and make my way back to the front desk where I sit on the curb with my head down. The waitress rushes over. "Are you all right?" "Perhaps some fresh air and a glass of water," I say.

**August 18, 1993****Dream #244**

In my dream, I am in an unknown place. There are several people. There is a lot of "dream talk" and several figures suggest one man is "flirting" and seeing other women his wife doesn't know about. This man is very attentive to me and leans over to suggest I send copies of my dream manual to his wife. I tell him I don't have any copies with me.

**August 19, 1993****Dream #245 Shifting the Axis at Midlife**

In my dream, we are waiting for massive changes. The world is ending. A massive shift. Someone asks if I need a cigarette. It is 12:02. The shift is happening. "No, she won't want one. NOT NOW!" One of the girls is explaining how someone stayed with her family and did bizarre, out of character things that enabled her to get out from under her mother's rules, out of the house so she didn't mind that the bizarre person stayed there. Verna. I am waiting for Verna to appear. I am uneasy. Will she arrive before the end? In the room, there is a map on very ancient parchment paper. There are other "clues" on the floor. An unknown, small child sits on the floor beside the paper. "Do you have what you need," I ask. "Yes." I am amazed. In all this turmoil, the unknown child is calmly making a map. I am concerned about Bill. Will we all survive? There is much more in the dream. Big, conceptual, intuitive chunks but hard to capture in words.

I get up. Write down the dream. Return to sleep.

In my dream, I am at a wedding and a wedding reception. Three times the bride and the groom leave and come back in different outfits. On the third time they leave, the guests all come in the reception area because they are tired of being in the cold. I ask an unknown figure, "Why are we doing this?" "Because that's what the bride wants." I shake my head in amazement. Who would want to change so often?

Then, I am greeting many people. G. S. and D. E. are there. Then I rush to hug my son, Colin. He is dressed as a lumberjack! I throw my arms around him. "Hi! son of mine! I haven't seen you in a long time." He hugs me close and grins. I can see he thinks I am in my "weird" phase. I am never this loquacious. Laughing and joyful, filled with enthusiasm for the gathering, I greet more people all known to me.

Then, I am in a car and J. M., my friend who converted from Christian to Hindu, is in the car next to me. I indicate I am displeased with him, "Why weren't you at the wedding!" "I am really busy," he says indicating a carload of children. One blond child, his son, looks out a car window. He looks sick and tired. "O.K." I motion to J., "I understand."

**August 20, 1993**

**Dream #246 Eucharist**

In my dream, I am at a Native settlement. A young teenage boy offers to show me around, introduce me to his mother and father, the Chief. His mother is busy and his father greets us very pleased and very solemn.

We walk around the settlement. At one point, a young native girl sits and plays on my lap. She is two or three years old. Her eyes do not focus and the right eye shows mostly white, without a clear pupil. We laugh and talk and she is very pleased, not shy at all. The beams of sunlight shine directly on her.

Then, the camp is busy making a meal. From a large communal oven come huge loaves of bread in which many different grains are clearly visible. The old women and young girls work together. I take large bags of breads and buns and set them in another room. One bag comes open and several dogs appear to grab the bread. Laughingly, the dogs are shooed away. Young girls go to and fro taking items of food from a large, ornate, oaken cupboard. Two women are discussing a teacher whom they consider very poor in the classroom. They ask me how come she isn't a better teacher. We discuss how rote memory and worksheets are so unappealing and the students don't learn well in this way. "These teachers we hire from outside, so many of them have poor discipline. And they discipline through power and screaming. We finally had to let her go," they say. I defend the young teachers as not knowing any better and explain how I might work with the teacher to help her to improve her understanding of differences in student learning. The young teenager's mother, obviously an elder, is in on the discussion now. Then, she says she must pay me. She gives me some bills. Then she says, "No, there isn't enough there for the taxes." Then the Chief comes too. He also wants to pay me. There is great warmth and intimacy between the Chief, his wife and the teenage son.

Then I see Bill and the kids. The students have learned that my birthday is in a few days. They want a party! A celebration. There is great activity. Two children carry in a long box about 6' x 2' x 3' with some kind of exercise equipment and another present. I wonder, rather annoyed, why Bill would haul these gifts all this way and note there will be no gifts for my birthday party at home. The party takes place in a large room with counters in the middle, a divider. I notice that JR, special education consultant from my office, has arrived for the party.

## **Appendix XV**

### **Journal Excerpt**

**September 20, 1989**

**Dream #7**

#### **The Seed of Change Sprouts**

In my dream, I am in my mother's house, which seems to actually be my own farmhouse. One brother and my parents are here. We have a meal of watery broth with old, unskinned potatoes and what looks like prunes or plums in it. It might also be lumps of dirt. The house is horrifically messy, dirty, and chaotic. A man, his wife and child come to rent the house. The child and Rachel or another child spill milk all over and throw milk around. I don't notice. I go to the sink where the lady is getting a drink. She rinses the cup and throws the water on the floor. Then she laughs. I yell at the children to come. I berate them and then go back to the table when I notice a pile of dirty old boots under a cupboard. I grab Rachel, shouting at her to clean up. I twist her arm and sit on her. She says, "NO." The man comes by from somewhere and says, "We can have it." He (meaning my brother) made a phone call and we can have it. I say, "You will be very lonely here." My mother tells the woman she will stay with her a couple days until she gets used to it. I insist, "Others have been lonely but they got used to it."



## Appendix XVI

### Journal Excerpts

**November 10, 1998**

#### **The Apple and the Talking-Snake**

Deborah P. Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning*.

The introduction to this book is the most exciting piece of work I have read in a great long while. Why? Because it draws me back to where I left off writing about my own personal journey of learning a couple of years ago. Splatted face first. Nose pressed against an ego wall. Stopped by some nagging fear that were I to actually write about my experiences, I would be written off as a total nut case. My personal journey has been called, “too intimate.” It is not something about which I normally speak. Why? Same reason. Fear of ridicule. My own fear. Nothing has ever happened to me. But mention dream workshops and you get funny looks. Or are they imagined funny looks because the superego wants more control for awhile and some inner striving needs to re-gather its strength to push past yet one more piece of resistance? Medical doctor, psychotherapist listen in awe to the journey. It is the world of education that wants to negate the unconscious. And yet, I know that educators hunger for this knowledge. How do I know?

I was invited by a friend, a member of the planning committee, to do a session at Teachers’ Convention on Dreams and Wellness. An Alberta Education colleague was present the evening before as I checked into the hotel. “I couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw the program. I thought there must be another Pearl Gregor, not OUR Pearl talking about something as flaky as dreams! What are you planning to tell Reno?” (Reno Bossetti, the DM\* then, had a bit of a reputation. Actually my experiences with him were very positive.) I had prepared myself for this kind of question. “Well, I guess I’ll tell him he has a wacko employee on his hands but one who knows enough to take a holiday to make this presentation!” Even the thought of speaking to the DM about such a matter brought rapidly racing pulse and heart beat.

The room was filled. Standing room only. The session went far over time because I could not get out of the room—devoured by hungry questions. The next session was mathematics. There were two people.

Where is the hunger? To understand ourselves and in understanding ourselves to understand our students? Our families? To be better people? I don’t know. I didn’t ask the participants why they came. They came. I was asked to return to give a number of other workshops outside of the “education” milieu. Many of the participants were concerned about “personal” discussions in such a public place. It reminded me of the psychiatrist’s question when I told him in 1983 or 1984 that I was hearing voices. “Are you telling anybody?” “No,” I said, “I may be mentally ill; I’m not stupid.” He changed the medication in order to dim the voices. But I had to go cold turkey for 10 days or two weeks first. During that time of major stress, I was approached by several of my grade

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\* Deputy Minister of Education

nine students at the end of one LA/SS class. “Mrs. Gregor, we think you should go home. We think you are not well. You usually make sense. Today, you weren’t really even here and you made no sense whatsoever.” And they rushed from the room.

I went home. And stayed there until the new medication could be taken and begin to work. But medication simply masks the symptoms and prolongs the control of the superego which has precious little desire to face the reality of painful events that might upset its social conventions.

Or the session at Grant McEwan College. A young woman, married to an education psychologist in a nearby jurisdiction, wanted to know, “Do you REALLY work for Alberta Education? I thought you looked familiar. Aren’t you afraid that someone will see your name on the program? Isn’t dream work and interpretation pretty alternative? My husband doesn’t believe in any of this stuff.”

So, what in the unconscious prompts us finally to learn? How is it that we can hold memories from the conscious mind for 40 years? What happens? I have asked myself these questions. I have read literally hundreds of books, travelled to Montreal, New York and to major workshops in Alberta with a transpersonal psychologist, attended Women’s Circles for four years, participated in sweat lodges, Native healing circles, charismatic healing circles and whatever. And I have kept notes, dreams, sketches and written thousands of pages of narrative and poetry. And through it all I have learned amazing things. About myself. My religion. My family. My work. And I have read Jung. Books and books from Jung, about Jung, based on the work of Jung. I recognize his anti-feminine biases and still I read his work. It speaks volumes about the experiences in my life. Never mind the biases. His work has much to say. And I have read volumes about quantum physics whether I understand it or not. The realm of intuition, the shadow side, dreams. And, my birth family does not want to hear, see, or acknowledge that anything could have disrupted their “only” sister’s idyllic life! And I discovered feminism through the eyes of a Catholic nun feed up with the authority and control issues in the Church and Catholic schools.

And I recognize in the introduction of Britzman why I became a teacher in the first place. We teach what we need to learn. And, so as a teacher I could satisfy somewhat my insatiable curiosity. I could see why it was that whereas I had zero patience with myself, I had unlimited patience with so-called “rebellious” students, wounded students. I was “teaching myself.” There was nothing great about it. Just the unconscious striving to break through the defense of the superego.

I recognize myself in the introduction to Britzman. With almost every sentence, I could stop and relate a story, an event, a dream, a picture, an experience. How can this experience, given me by some incredible Source, be given back to children such that they or their teachers might recognize and understand a child’s curiosity and a child’s plea for knowledge and understanding inside/outside? Not on the engineered timetables of the classroom or the school but on the timetable of the unconscious—which is no timetable at all.

But, how to do this without sufficient knowledge of psychoanalytic theory? I haven't got enough years left to study psychoanalytic theory in depth. And, quite frankly, I abhor Freud which is all they teach here. He has zero conception of the connection between the creativity of sexuality and the creativity of spirituality. He is about as hung up about it as the Catholic Church or maybe even the more mainline Protestant churches whose hang ups about the feminine and physicality are monumental. I investigated the courses in psychology at the U of A. 50 years behind the times and damn proud of it. Not a course which touches Jung. Have to go to Denver, Colorado. Zurich, Switzerland. Well, not possible. In the introduction, I discern that Anna Freud and later writers are perhaps more open and the work does have much to offer. Need to explore my own aversion to Freudian theory but I know from previous readings that his notion of women is significantly more repressed even than Jung's.

So, I content myself with trying to learn action research, relating some of my experiences to curriculum, figure out a project which arises out of my lived experience with learning. The question is how to bring it all together into some coherent picture which benefits some child. Or, do I do it all for my own soul-searching?

## Appendix XVII

It wasn't hard to locate my 1959 grade ten social studies text in the University of Alberta Archive. The cover is permanently etched on my mind. According to the records, the text was provincially authorized (New & Phillips, 1941).

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The teaching method in my social studies classroom revolved around the teacher reading the text aloud to our class of 17 students. Our role was to underline the words she read (she always left out the subordinate and coordinate conjunctions). Then, we were to copy those underlined words into our notebooks. Sometime during the year, I quit copying. Eventually, the teacher made a visit to our home. Mom explained that I was refusing to write any more directly from the text. As I recall, Mom asked the teacher if my marks were an indication that I should be copying the textbook. The teacher was highly insulted at the not-so-subtle comment. Mom continued to support my decision.

What did I “learn” from this text? I had no idea so I went to the archive and pulled some ideas relevant to this dissertation. New & Phillips (1941) say that

- ❖ The god Osiris preceded Christ. There is no mention of a goddess and Osiris is given the role of Persephone, goddess of the greening fields of springtime (p. 33).
- ❖ There is no mention of women in education. There is reference to the influence of the feminine on body and on home fashion.
- ❖ The biblical stories of Abraham and Joseph are written as true historical accounts.
- ❖ The Hebrew people, while dismissed as relatively insignificant, are accorded the honor of “true greatness to be found in the contemplative life of those whose minds were opening to a new and truer conception of God. Yahweh, or Jehovah, was worshipped as an unseen or spiritual Power, not a thing of brass or stone in human or animal form” (p. 49).
- ❖ Historical events are often explained as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. For example, with respect to the biblical siege of Nineveh, “And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and the descent of his arm to be seen, with the indignation of his anger (p. 50).
- ❖ “Thieves and honest business men alike sacrificed to Hermes to ensure the success of their ventures” (p. 107). There is no mention of Hermes as the bringer of dreams.
- ❖ Sappho is mentioned as the best-known poetess in the world and is credited with The Hymn to Aphrodite.
- ❖ The authors explain that Zeus was God over all the gods and king over all. He is described as an avenging god who has great and terrible power. Athene is represented as springing living from the head of Zeus. There is no doubt that Zeus, as a male God, has the intellectual power to create life.
- ❖ Sophia is Greek meaning knowledge.

It seems that some of the history of the Christian religion was included as part of the mandated social studies program in 1959.