

THE PEARL WITHIN
DISCOVERING THE RICHES
OF THE UNDERWORLD

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Chapter Three

Up and Down, In and Out: Why the Ego Doesn't Want to Awaken

For the ego is not the whole psyche, only one member of a commune. Therapy works through the paradox of admitting that all figures and feelings of the psyche are wholly 'mine,' while at the same time recognizing that these figures and feelings are free of my control and identity, not 'mine' at all.¹

ACCORDING TO MANY WISDOM TRADITIONS, the wheel of life can be particularly unconscious and habitual until we awaken. Eventually the natural process of life brings us the opportunity, often through shock, to “wake up” to the person we truly are, beneath the façade of social expectations, pleasing behavior to win approval, and—for most of us—many defensive strategies to keep the ego’s rulership and image intact by fostering the illusion of invulnerability and specialness.

It is our “sleeping” habitual state that is responsible for the mess we are in. It was adequate for a while, until our technological know-how entailed a level of responsibility beyond the capacity of the defensive shallow ego. Now old-fashioned human/animal greed and aggression carry too big a price with our nuclear and biological weapons, cloning, and the destruction of the fragile environment for profit. Continuing to sleep—to remain unaware—is destroying the world we leave for our children.

How do we begin (or continue) to awaken—to free ourselves from the “wheel” of life and its inertia? It is generally agreed that the first step requires simply stopping our compulsive habitual behavior to observe ourselves without judgment. But if you’ve ever tried—say stopping smoking, over-eating, over-working or any of countless addictions—you know it is not easy. This is, however, how we begin to recognize the “other” in us, the forerunner of the One we need as our Companion if we are to survive, the One Who can guide us and sustain us. At first this “other” can appear to oppose your will, even your well-being.

One result of this self-observation can be the discovery that “I” seem to have originated in some kind of act of splitting or separation from the unified though disorganized chaos of unconsciousness. Arising from the womb of this original “mother” like a new island from the sea, we are divided into a subjective “I” and the objective “not-I”—the world around and outside of us.

Only by emerging from our identification with unconscious or womb or mother can we establish a separate sense of identity. Yet what follows from this separation is the illusion that we ourselves are a unity, a well-organized and freely choosing self, an "I." This makes it necessary, sooner or later, to face up to and admit that we are indeed fragmented and multiple, that we consist of opposites, which brings the encounter with our "shadow" which we will return to shortly. Beyond this recognition of our internal opposition and division lies the potential realization of a deeper, more inclusive Self, an identity which is not the same as "I" but includes the "I"—a true Unity.

So observing ourselves honestly and then admitting our addictions compels us to experience our powerlessness, our inability to control our own lives, shattering the ego's illusion that we ARE in control. The ego tries to control everything, and where it can't, it pretends it can or dismisses what it cannot control as unimportant. Awakening is felt to be a defeat by the ego, by our personality. Or to put it conversely, not getting what we want, feeling defeated or powerless is the opportunity to awaken to who we really are.

No wonder we feel resistance to looking too deeply or seeing ourselves too clearly. The ego prefers "up," but our waking comes from going down. Winning, being successful, meeting your expectations does not awaken you to a deeper awareness of yourself (unless you have always seen yourself as a "loser"). Losing, rejection and disappointment do (or at least can). The ego wants to be "in," but self-realization makes one an outsider.

Of course, who among us seeks out such experiences? Typically the only person who seeks defeating experiences is the one whose ego defense is to be the "victim" or "loser." In this case, the failure only feeds and reinforces the defense; it does not awaken. Awakening requires a gentle or shocking shattering of the ego shell. We are often in need of repeated disappointments before we stop and think that maybe something is not as we imagined it to be. The first line of defense in failure is to seek someone or something to blame. Then we don't have to examine our own imperfections and weakness.

The devious strategies we devise as egos are quite remarkable, and if we are able to examine them with any objectivity (not easy) we can see they are designed to keep us from looking at ourselves and seeing ourselves as we truly are. We may even avoid seeing our goodness and strength, our gifts and loveableness. The issue does not seem to be whether the things we avoid seeing in ourselves are flattering or demeaning, only that they do not fit with the image we have built for ourselves (largely through parental and social conditioning) and therefore threaten to break down that image. This is about survival, but the problem is that it's the survival of the ego/self-image. If this is partial (it almost always is) or false, then the survival of the ego may mean the destruction of ourselves—our total personality.

Imagine being lost in the desert and having no water. As thirst drives you mad and your craving for water becomes the only thing that matters, you come upon a spring. Drinking from this water which saves your life, it is certainly understandable if at that moment you make water your ultimate Value, the God to be worshipped. Yet if you do, you will drown.

Or imagine starving for love because of a harsh and cold family upbringing, the first time someone showers you with attention, warmth and affection, that person becomes your God, someone you worship. And you become obsessed with being with that person. Or perhaps in a life devoid of spirit and meaning, you discover a book that reaches you, convinces you that your life does indeed have a purpose. So you dedicate yourself to absorbing the ideas of the author and preaching their system. And your mind closes.

When a great need is filled, at least for the moment, it is human nature to attach with full force to whatever has nourished you. But to do so in the long term is disastrous, because what is needed is the absorption and integration of this experience into the totality of your being. If instead you run away from the hunger and toward the nourishment, you abandon yourself and your hunger, substituting one type of starvation for another. This is how we often proceed.

As a result, many people are not addicted to cigarettes, sex, alcohol or drugs, but to light, height, certainty, community. These do not sound like addictive substances that can be abused, but if you attach yourself and your well-being to the need for the constant presence of these and other sources of nourishment, then you simply prolong the imbalance and the need for healing in your personality.

Are there groups to help addicts who believe that the world and everything in it has to be light, who refuse to accept the dark? They see darkness only as something to be converted to light. What about someone who lives addicted to meaning, unable to accept that life contains random chaos and meaninglessness? What about addiction to happiness, depression, a positive attitude? Everything belongs; everything counts. There is a "time for everything under the sun." Anything less is partial and therefore less than the truth. It is easy to say "holistic" without realizing what "whole" means.

Life is light and dark, high and low, certain and a mystery, togetherness and solitude. If after a life lived in darkness or depression, confusion or loneliness, we may feel fortunate to encounter the cherished (and possibly feared) opposite, we are taking the next step in the recognition of the opposites. To become extremely attached to the new pole as if it can eliminate the old one may feel better, but it still is to remain under the spell of splitting what is whole, and we remain split in ourselves.

As we said about the emergence of the ego: our origin as a conscious being was a splitting of that which was whole, but undifferentiated, chaotic and unmanifest. Maybe this reflects the symbolism of the myths of the separation of heaven and earth. Or maybe it's a genetic memory of the cell-splitting that began our own organism. The ego arrives eventually with the false belief in its own authority and autonomy, omitting the splitting and inner divisions that brought it to power. Any continuation of splitting, in which part of the psyche is allowed to be conscious and part is banished into the dark world of the unconscious, only works against the spiritual goal of recovering your whole personality, of being whole.

Remember, our point is that we have lost our way, that we are living falsely and dangerously on the edge and moving in the wrong direction. Wrong not according to my beliefs or yours, to this religion or that philosophy, but wrong in light of what is occurring all around us. Increasing mental illness and medication of all, especially children, lack of respect between individuals and groups, loss of central values and integrity can be seen anywhere and anytime. These are the signs that we are losing our chance, missing our opportunity to live life in any enriching and rewarding way.

So we see that the first step toward reversing this momentum towards destruction is to awaken to the state we are actually and truly in. Open the eyes and see what IS. Our realization of the prominence of addictive behaviors has provided just such an opportunity in the past two decades. And hitting a wall, being smacked by life, experiencing defeat, failure and disappointment may be the only way to awaken in a world which does not value self-discovery for its own sake or teach us anything about who we really are other than to be consumers. The time is ripe, with our

growing recognition of the prevalence of addiction. It used to be the alcoholic or drug addict who was singled out. But in the last few decades it has become more and more apparent that almost all behaviors—when compulsive and out of control—can be seen as addictions.

Addiction is on our collective minds. Sex addiction, workaholism, gambling, chocaholism, addiction to power and control, shopping madness (especially obvious during the “holiday” season), tv, video games, sports, pornography—obsession is everywhere. And wherever it is we are not in control. There is a reason why the first of the Twelve Steps originally articulated in Alcoholics Anonymous is “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.” We see what IS after evasion and denial of the truth.



Do you have the courage to stop right now and list your top two or three addictions? Even the first one? And if you can, can you take some time to actually reflect on it and its consequences in your life for you and those around you?

It's not easy. Most people don't do it. And that's a major reason why we are where we are. But we have come a long way in that regard from the time when people were so ashamed to enter rehabilitation programs or support groups. Now groups are everywhere, and the question has changed from “do you have an addiction problem?” to “what addictions do you have?”

To return to where we started: the ego guards its image, false or partial as it may be, with great ingenuity and tenacity. If you were only your ego, then any troubling addiction would be gone with the simple choice to let it go. If you were only your ego, as prevailing cultural attitudes and education believe, there would be no one in you to observe the ego's defenses or to choose to try to do anything to change it. But people do, and there is someone or something inside of you who can observe and make choices, even when they go against the ego and lead to painful transformation.

Who is this? Really—WHO IS THIS? This is not a language trick or clever reasoning. Any of us can glimpse this real fact that **THERE IS SOMEONE INSIDE OF US CAPABLE OF SEEING OURSELVES IN A TRUER AND DEEPER WAY THAN THE WAY WE HABITUALLY PRESENT OURSELVES OR ENVISION OURSELVES.**



How can such a remarkable fact remain so hidden, rarely brought up or discussed?

Put down the book, and think about it: who or what is it that is inside you that does observe and is observing your behaviors and thoughts, and can recognize when they are defensive and deceptive (though not always immediately)?

Perhaps there is a silent “conspiracy” (call me paranoid) among all of us egos to continue the shallow and false ways we live, even when it hurts us, because we fear facing our True Natures. If so, is the reason—as many believe—because our True Natures are so awful? Freud seemed to think so. Or is it that we fear the “death” which we will have to go through if we see ourselves truly and need to change? Or could it be that many believe we are unable to change who we are and so it would only be painful to imagine a more ideal True Nature and to try?

Maybe you cannot change your True Nature because that is a given and fundamental foundation, but that doesn't mean you cannot change your surface ego and your personality. It does, however, often hurt to do so. It can hurt you, and often hurts those you love as well. In any revolution, old idols are smashed, previously beloved leaders are exposed, corruption must be rooted out and purged. The euphoria of the “new era” can only take us so far. A superficial cleaning that does not

get to the heart of the matter cannot do much. The idols of your beliefs, the favored faces of the personality, the covered up dirt of the shadow—all must be faced honestly and courageously.

How much of addiction, disease and depression is the direct result of a personality incongruent with the True Self? How much unconscious guilt with resultant alcoholism and drug abuse stems from refusing to live authentically?

Thus again, here we are: we—in avoiding this necessary task of facing ourselves, our responsibility as human beings—cannot do other than create and protect an increasingly shallow and false world. And living in a meaningless shallow world based on entertainment, consumption and distraction will sooner or later take its toll in driving us all mad. And so it is, and so we are.

If this were our only option—to live as we have been—then to face its inevitability would lead many to depression, suicidal behavior or the random destruction of values and each other. And it is. Are we being taught any other possibility? The spiritual teachers of the world do teach that there are alternatives, but our culture marginalizes them and their message, portraying them as eccentric and highlighting their oddness, thus justifying our giving them little consideration.

Eccentric is a word derived from “out of the center,” someone who does not follow the straight line of normality. But in our culture, normal is not good. At one time, normal seemed to mean healthy, but in a sick culture, normal simply means being like the majority, even when it is ill.

Anyone who has the potential to help liberate us from our bad habits and false selves will, by definition, be outside the mainstream. Why do we believe that being like most people is a good thing? Because it feeds the ego's need for approval. Once again the villain seems to be the ego. This is not to say that the ego is evil per se, only that when evolution persists in the stage it has appropriately reached (growth of an ego) and something resists its natural future development (beyond the ego), that may perhaps be as good a definition of “evil” as any other.

All of evolution, as discussed earlier, appears to have had the development of the ego as its ultimate goal. That is what we collectively believe. Those teachers who have lived before or are among us now that say otherwise are usually distrusted or ridiculed, or at least overlooked. And if you are at the ego level and life is good—you have your money and your sex and your car and your entertainment center and your cell phone and your computer—why care or look for ways to change?

But if you have these things and you are not happy or fulfilled, even if you once were, then this is a sign that it is time to move on, to seek the next stage of your evolution, whatever we choose to call it. But as things stand today, your unhappiness will be a cause for alarm (and it is for the ego), will probably lead you to seek help (because you believe you SHOULD be happy, and once were) and in our world, the help you'll get is a prescription for a drug that will either suppress your depression or unhappiness, or sedate you, or help bring you feelings of elation.

The ego will win, the drug company will win, and you will lose. You will lose yourself as so many are, and you will not even know it is happening.

Not that many years ago we were brought up by parents and teachers who believed that the proper way to raise children was to break our wills, and to do it at an early enough age that we would never even realize it had happened.² Now decades of psychotherapy have revealed how destructive and foolish that attitude was. Some day, if we live that long, a similar realization may occur

with regard to the diagnosing and medicating of the natural desire to transcend the very limited world of the ego.

Awakening to our True Nature requires an “ego death.” This death-rebirth experience is a theme of Part Two. The ego will suffer from the loss of its self-image and its fantasy of control. There may be anxiety, fear, depression, or grief, in small or large doses. It is all right to experience painful or unpleasant feelings. It is not necessary to run to the doctor or pharmacist every time. Sometimes it may be necessary, but now it has become the normal thing to do. Women have known since time began that birth can be extremely uncomfortable. There is a time for all things, even discomfort.

Pause for a moment and ask yourself: you might be willing to give up certain pleasures in the moment in order to afford a two week vacation next year. You may be willing to drive an older car for a few more years so your daughter can go to college in 10 years. Would you be willing to suffer emotionally, to hurt, to be uncomfortable for a year if it meant you could live the remaining years of your life with a deep sense of fulfillment and peace? Would you suffer voluntarily for 5 years to end up with the feeling that you had authentically lived your deepest true self? Why do we cling to the fantasy of a pain-free life in the face of all the unavoidable suffering that simply IS a part of life?

Repeating—after seeing what IS, going beyond the ego requires stopping your compulsive habitual behavior. But the mind wants to know what to do instead, so how to stop? Just breathe. Initially you need to recognize when and how you are functioning automatically and unconsciously. If you need a goal to focus on, then make it learning to observe while you breathe and to suspend judgment. Be still and be quiet, inside and out. Practice regularly.

If you were sent to a foreign country on assignment and you were unfamiliar with their language and social customs, the wisest course would be to hold back and to observe so as to learn their ways. The same metaphor applies to movement into the underworld and the trans-ego realm. By breathing, observing and withholding judgment, witnessing not to assign value as “good” or “bad,” you will open a “space” not filled with desire and activity. As you become more familiar with the ways of the inner world, you will encounter an increasingly vital universe of imagery and fantasy revealed by stopping. It was always there, but masked.

To follow such a personal and solitary path requires commitment and courage. We often seem to need a group of supporters as we take the plunge into facing ourselves. And this can be quite helpful as you expose hidden areas to the light of day. Support groups have multiplied everywhere for countless topics. But there is also a darker side to group work, because it may prolong dependence on others for approval. Support groups often resemble dysfunctional families, and even though their focus is on health and recovery, if all the members come from wounding backgrounds, it is only natural that some of the interpersonal dynamics will serve to enable or to cover defenses. A group may have an unspoken taboo around anger or confrontation. Another may turn everything into conflict.

The question is when does a group help to foster the emergence of the True Self, and when does it hinder? If you cannot be your authentic self and still be accepted, if outsiders are mistrusted or considered inferior, then you may not be in the right group.

The striking frequency of cult-like behavior in so many groups that are organized for the purpose of growth and healing should certainly raise questions. In a cult—which most of us tend to think of as religious fanatics or young people following Hindu gurus, but which can in fact include a

Catholic Church, a fitness center, a therapy group or a graduate school—the members become devoted to an idea or a leader, and develop a mistrust of anyone outside the cult. There are the believers and the non-believers. This group approach is the opposite of what is being described here. The power of your healing and expanding consciousness does not rest on any school of thought or any individual. It is inside you and comes from you, though not only from the ego but the greater “You” which is largely unconscious. Thus the responsibility for following and for the outcome is largely your own. And sometimes you need to seek help.

Once the armor of the ego has been pierced by defeat, then the opportunity arises to see through it. But we have to be looking, and listening. Up to this point, we have seen that our evolution has brought us to the state of being an ego, with ego goals (separateness, comfort, uniqueness, popularity, immortality). A world that evolves no further would look much like the one we live in today. But pressure is building from our own developmental process, which is natural but largely not understood, for many of us to begin to transcend and grow beyond this state.

If that is the case, then lacking any education in this matter or examples from public life—except spiritual teachers considered as flakes or on some kind of self-serving mission (many certainly are, which means they are still about ego and only ego)—we are really on our own. This brings us to our critical situation today. Almost like an underground conspiracy, we must educate each other about territory discovered within and hope that it resonates with enough peoples’ intuition and experience to bring about further movement into humanity’s future.

We have mentioned briefly the idea of the Companion, of Someone or Something that lives inside of each of us waiting for us to listen, to be open and receptive to the possibility that inner guidance beyond the ego and its goals exists. The word “Companion” (“someone that shares your bread with you”) does not really serve as any kind of definition or description, other than to say that Whatever It is, It proceeds alongside us as we live what appears to be our solitary individual life.

In trying to understand and build a relationship with this Force, Being, Entity, Spirit, or whatever word we try to use, we must particularly beware of our mind’s tendency to think that anything with a name is something we understand. That is why we are emphasizing the idea of Mystery here. It is one word that still resists any penetration of its meaning, other than that it represents an enigma, an Unknown.

As people through the ages have made the journey described here as “returning to our Home,” they have applied names to this Mystery, and in doing so made it easier to discuss. But they have also prejudiced our understanding by calling It “Christ” or “Buddha” or “Angel”, or something established in the mind as being recognizable. It must remain a Mystery, at least until we have joined with It as One. Certainly one of the most confusing and misleading names for this Mystery is “God”.

Listen to a modern politician or cleric speaking about “God’s will” or “God’s Plan” and ask yourself what they are really talking about. We are told we must have “faith in God.” What does that mean? Who even asks anymore? People talk as if they know what they are talking about, and everyone listens and joins right in the illusion. It is a Mystery. Unknown. Unknowable. A Coundrum. A Puzzle. Only by allowing this Mystery to retain its unknowableness will we find the necessary curiosity and humility to truly follow.

The names we have given to this Mystery only serve to reduce its vast openness and in the end cost us the innocence which we need if we are to grow beyond ourselves. But as we said, without

reverence for or recognition of this Mystery we are addicted to certainty and explanations, unable to open up the inner “space” in which to float in a kind of free-fall until we land on the bedrock of that which truly holds and supports us.

When the ego defenses crack by sustaining a failure or defeat, a compulsion, symptom or catastrophe that breaks through our illusion of being in control, the opportunity arises to become aware of the Companion. Psychology has coined the term “unconscious” as a way to acknowledge that forces impinge on us and drive us of which we have no awareness. These forces are only seen by their impact upon us, how they move us, the shock that pushes the ego aside. When this happens, unless we are completely debilitated, the ego quickly sets out to repair the damage. We mentioned earlier the favorite strategy of blame or scapegoating in order to avoid having to admit powerlessness or responsibility.

This dynamic of ego defense and its cracking, potentially opening the door to realization of the presence of forces (gods, demons, God, unconscious, Mystery—you name it), can be observed as well on the collective level in nations, communities and organizations as it can in the individual. If you look for it, you will see it everywhere, since control is an illusion and is constantly being challenged by something that seems “outside.” But you often have to look quickly because the defensive avoidance of realizing loss of control is so prevalent and practiced. Start watching closely what happens when you or others sustain a shock or disillusionment.

If you are seeking your way out of the illusionary box created by the ego and are tired of its games and toys, then you must take the opportunity created by defeat, symptom and addiction and really hold onto it and work with it. Otherwise it will be lost just as quickly as a dream when you awaken in the morning. Spiritual teachers have often used the metaphor of dreaming and sleeping to describe what we take as our natural waking life. The real awakening comes when we are shocked out of our trance and realize how vulnerable, powerless and mortal we truly are.

If our first goal is to realize the Presence of the Mystery in our lives—both as individuals and collectively—then we must practice patient and diligent observation of ourselves, above all with courageous honesty. This requires for most of us the development of something like a new “muscle” in our minds, because at first we are quite weak in our persistence.

So lacking teachers and an understanding of the process, how are we to proceed? The Mystery has left tracks for us in the past, and also speaks to us almost every day. We must pay attention. The “tracks” can be found in the quaint and strange stories left to us from antiquity, when people were able to devote themselves to Mystery. We have largely left these in the trash bin of history as we have soared like Icarus, inflated by our new knowledge and technological expertise. They are still there to be reclaimed and used to educate us in a whole new language and attitude.

For example, the largely discredited art of what was called “alchemy” contains a wealth of images and strange ideas full of Mystery. Biblical and other scriptural stories, myths, Jesus’ parables, and even “superstitious” rituals and beliefs reveal much about the way the Mystery works. But we have to believe these things might possess intrinsic value and not come to them with our modern prejudices which have been instilled into us since childhood.

In addition to these older revelations that have been waiting like buried treasure for rediscovery, there are also important tools for establishing contact with your Companion. The process of doing so—let no one take this lightly—risks danger, confusion, and the possibility of becoming lost. To repeat an earlier analogy: if you wanted to learn more about a foreign country, say China,

and undertook to do so by being parachuted to the ground in the middle of the country, with no knowledge of customs, language or surroundings, how many wasted efforts, foolish mistakes and dead ends do you think it would take before you learned even the equivalent of a five-year-old Chinese child?

So be armed with the beginner's mind. The beginner does not know. The beginner is empty of preconceptions, inexperienced, ready to learn.

You probably do not know what you are doing. Even the people around us who claim they do know, don't always really know. It is just when you think that you DO know, that you are at great risk. The road to the Companion and back to your Home is paved largely with humility. There is great wisdom in the saying attributed to Jesus about the "kingdom of heaven" (which is another term for what we are calling "Home", like the Tao): "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."³ Like little children: innocent. But most of us as children imagined the kingdom of heaven to be a place with castles in the sky, thus polluting our potential for hearing this expression with openness, curiosity, and fresh innocence.

Think about it now: what is the "kingdom of heaven?"

Take this moment to observe your reaction to having a biblical quotation in front of you. This may show how our prejudices can interfere with a real open willingness to absorb "as children" the wisdom that has been around us all along. If you were raised as a Christian, studying the Bible, then you have memories—good or bad—stirred by such a quotation. If you were taught in a harsh dogmatic fashion then you may either feel turned off or reassured. This writing becomes either more convincing and inviting or just another belief system.

If you were raised Jewish, then you may feel this is not for you, because you were taught that Christian teaching was for Christians, not Jews. But perhaps if you were brought up as a Native American or a Buddhist, you can entertain this saying with fewer prejudices. No matter what the source, it is important for us to hear the teachings of all wisdom with new ears, without prejudging. We can be poisoned by the attitudes of our teachers, perhaps making us swallow gullibly or reject unthinkingly the treasures that have been left along the way by the Mystery.

Sometimes it is easier to appreciate the gold buried in the teaching with which you are least familiar. But it can be found just as well in all of them, even the ones you learned by heart years ago, when seen with new eyes. For an example of Jung's interpretation of an alchemical allegory, please see the Appendix.

Jung emphasizes that one must foster a personal relationship with the unconscious and its mysteries by paying attention to the dreams and fantasies coming from it, rather than chasing the desires of the masses: comfort, possessions, fame, etc. This does not mean that you have to sit in a cave in a loincloth contemplating your navel, only that you have priorities and know which is truly the source of your life and well-being.

It is in just such a dry and lifeless desert that we find ourselves today. The mass desires are relentlessly emphasized and stimulated for us by advertising and marketing. But for those who feel the emptiness of a life based on having things and looking young, the fountain of the soul offers a path through its images and fantasies, if only we will give it our devoted attention.

Beside the gems to be found in religious writings and alchemy, many recognize mythology not as fairy tales, but as containing revelations of the Mystery. It seems that where we are ignorant

and blind, like the alchemists trying to explain the strange behaviors of the substances in their laboratories or the ancients wanting to understand nature and its events, the void of not knowing is the ideal place for the Mystery to appear as myth, fantasy and “explanation.” We may find these quaint and technically incorrect in light of scientific knowledge, but we are foolish to toss these stories aside as having no value. We need not take them literally but as symbols of the deeper interior of the psyche in us.

This is why we must cultivate reverence for the Mystery, because it opens the “space” inside of us into which Mystery can pour Its disclosures. It “moistens the dry earth.” We can see this in as simple a situation as when we are surprised that someone has not contacted us. Into the void created by the surprise and lost expectation of how it WOULD be, we find our imagination begins to create reasons, stories, fantasies as to WHY this is so. Sometimes they are right, but often they are more revealing of what floats unconsciously inside of us. So the simple thought “it’s because she doesn’t like me,” if not true, reveals an inner fantasy that is probably always lurking just beneath the surface.

Rather than dismiss it, our opportunity is to go with it, to want to know why it is there, to let it take us to its source, which may be a humiliation as a child, a loss of a friend years earlier, or some other forgotten memory of rejection. Into the empty space flowing like water comes the revealing fantasy, like the water into the parched earth in the alchemical tale of the Fountain of Treviso.

So after eons of development in which the primal atoms of star-matter have cooked themselves into complex organisms—whether by chemistry or divine intention—capable of the most perverted behaviors and grotesque crimes, the time has come for humanity to take responsibility for our situation.

To do so, our first step is to honestly acknowledge where things stand: we are lost, heading in the direction of chaos and breakdown.

We are not without resources, but relying solely on our materialistic science and rational intellect has brought about our crisis. These are not necessarily the direct cause, but are largely responsible for the way things are because they are not balanced by the other side of human nature: the irrational, intuitive and mysterious.

We have too much:

Rational Logic

Objectivity

Materialism

Literalism

Outer Appearance

Physical Science

Ego

Conscious

We need more:

Irrational Intuition

Subjectivity

Soul

Symbolism

Inner Quality

Depth Psychology

Deeper/Higher Self

Unconscious

Things are out of balance. Sickness bears witness. Talk radio is the sound. Corruption is the smell. Emptiness is the Way.

Our Ariadne's thread to find our way out of our maze is the Mystery—to restore Its Presence at the center of our lives.

We begin by acknowledging our orphan state, lost and in the dark, yearning for our parents and a real home.

Our story is the tale of the "Hymn of the Pearl." In it are contained our forgetting and our awakening, our mission and its Pearl, and particularly, our return to our Home.

What follows in Part Two is a sort of travel guide. On your journey in and down you will gain recognition of the desire process, the pairs of opposites, the shadow, projections, and much more.

We will also briefly cover the possibility of "outside" assistance on your path. The use of oracles and divination (like tarot, I Ching, runes or astrology) to open dialog with the unconscious is often helpful. It is highly recommended that you use a journal as a private "space" in which to ponder your dreams, observations, and anything else that helps you to "contain" this process. Remember, the first opening is often a symptom, catastrophe, compulsion, addiction or defeat. "Talking to yourself" in a writing process in a journal will often, over a period of time, develop into a sense that you are now talking to someone or something else, something other than "yourself." This means you have progressed into a relationship with the mysterious "Companion" Who accompanies you on your journey.

Notes

1 James Hillman, *Re-visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 31.

2 See for example, Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*(1990)

3 Matthew 18:3