



The Threshing Floor

August 2015

Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies

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Guild Vision: The Guild envisions a world in which the significance of each person's truth, authority, and inspired purpose finds fulfillment in life and community.

Guild Mission: Guild seminars offer a way of psychological and spiritual transformation that inspires individuals to live their purpose, expand consciousness, and discover and create meaning in their lives and community.

What the Guild Means to Me

By Susan Hartz

Two days before I was to attend this year's Nourishing the Soul Seminar, I fell down my garage steps and broke my elbow. Harboring hopes of getting a splint and being able to go anyway, I was crestfallen when the ER nurse told me I would need surgery. This meant I would miss a week I look forward to all year. All was not lost, however. I was included remotely by emails from George Stenger and later by receiving a book of well wishes all the participants had written, including ones who'd never met me. This reminded me of one of the things I value about the Guild, that is, even if I've never met someone, we are strangers in good company, being drawn by our mutual interest and appreciation of the work.

Like many, I came to the Guild in a round-about fashion. In my late thirties, having gone through a period of mourning after learning I was unable to bear children, I was left with the question, now what? I'd always assumed the focus of my life would be motherhood; with this lost, I experienced a period of restlessness and dissatisfaction that led me to enroll at San Jose State University to finish work on my B.A. As an English major, I was introduced to the work of C.G. Jung and met Nils Peterson. I loved (and still love) Nils' teaching and took as many classes as I could from him. Through Nils I met Judith and, when issues of childhood trauma surfaced, I went into therapy with her. This is how I came to attend my first Records seminar at Four Springs, in the fall of 1985.

That first 17-day seminar was rough. Later I realized I was fortunate: Joan Gibbons was one of the leaders, and all three founders were present and participated the whole time. But immersion in inner psychological work

for a prolonged and intense period of time was often too much and I felt I didn't really fit. When one night as I made my way to Adam and Eve I was sprayed by a startled skunk, it seemed appropriate. Looking back, I also now realize that first seminar gave me a metaphor of my life. On the second afternoon, I decided to walk Big Circle trail. Somehow I got hopelessly lost, but, panicked that I'd miss the afternoon session, I kept going, taking what I hoped were the next few steps as they appeared, though I could see no clear path ahead. I still don't know quite how, but somehow I came up out of a field and ahead of me was the road and parking lot, to my great relief. I've been a participant in Guild work ever since.

Thirty years later I am filled with gratitude and wonder. What makes the difference in a life? How was it I stumbled into work that has been challenging and disturbing yet deeply satisfying? I can't answer that; I'm just grateful I did. There have been other influences [along the way](#). But it all started with the Guild and the basic philosophies I gleaned: that we are co-creators with God, the Universe, Higher Power, Life Force – whatever name it's called; that we can choose to find meaning in whatever happens to us, though this is neither painless nor easy; that it may take years to understand, though sometimes it's instantly clear. And two concepts that hold especially profound value for me: an awareness and acceptance of opposites, and Synchronicity (meaningful chance). Best of all, being with many wonderful people even if we've not yet met, strangers and friends in good company.

The Face of Pluto

By Harry Henderson

When I was about ten years old, my attention was first drawn to astronomy and the cosmos. It was, like much of my voracious reading at the local public library, a form of escape from an uncertain family life and the bully-ridden schoolyard. More so, though, it was the pull of infinity and the lure of the unknown.

Back then, at the beginning of the 1960s, humanity's rockets had barely scraped the edge of space. It was great telescopes like the one at Mount Palomar and the imagination of artists such as Chesley Bonestell that brought the cosmos to me. And to fulfill my love of numbers, there was the survey of the solar system, with facts and figures about most of the planets. Most, but not all. There was always Pluto at the bottom of the table, with only its distance of 3 billion miles or so filled in. The rest—mass, diameter, atmosphere—were all question marks. Even the biggest telescopes barely made out Pluto to be a blurry disk.

As I grew older I then encountered the Pluto who ruled the Greek underworld. That Pluto also conveyed a compelling mystery, but this was not a mystery of distance, but of the frontiers of life itself. Just as I had learned that we lived on a tiny blue world in an infinite cold and mostly dark cosmos, I came to realize that life and consciousness—indeed the spark of “I”—lived on the edge of dreams, the unbounded unconscious with its many images and forms. Thus I began my studies of Jung, my encounters with the Records, and the work of the Guild.

I did not forget my first Pluto, however. This week we finally saw Pluto's face. It was simultaneously a thrill and a disappointment to the child in me who still drinks in the wonders of the universe. For that child, the mysteries and the frontier had already moved on to the planets being discovered circling other stars, particularly the potentially Earth-like planets. Even while the New Horizons spacecrafts had pursued its long journey, Pluto itself had been demoted from the Last World to one of an unknown number of “dwarf planets” on the dark frontiers of the solar system.

Of course the work of science never ends. But there is a third face of Pluto—not the planet that is out there, or the ruler of mystery inside “the unconscious.” In encountering the work of Wolfgang Giegerich I learned that:

The psychological difference that formerly existed between man and soul/ the natural world/ transcendence, now imparts itself on

man himself. It is now an internal difference. Man can now gain a distance to himself. He exists now as a difference, a duality, a tension: the difference between his more egoic, pragmatic orientation, on the one hand, and his potential of a soulful mode of experiencing and reacting. The soul, having lost its transcendent and substance quality, is now a mode or style in man.

(Wolfgang Giegerich, 2012, *What is Soul*, p. 279)

Consciousness now carries its own “Pluto”—its own Other. It is no longer enough for it to think about some object out there in the universe or within the self. When I say consciousness I don't say our consciousness, for we now belong to consciousness in the larger sense, rather than it belonging to us. Consciousness now seeks difference within itself. Two places where this can be seen today are SETI (the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) and the quest for true artificial intelligence. Both quests are now more than half a century old, and we don't know when or if either will be fulfilled. But if that happens consciousness will know itself, be able to speak of itself, from a new logical vantage point.



Islands of Wisdom

~by Elizabeth Bremer

15 Stories floating...

On, by turns, turbulent or calm waters...

Waters of experience, breath, sound, questions,
reflection,
sight, taste, texts, questions, touch, rest, reflection...

Jostling, gasping, grasping...

Carrying, containing...

Exploring, extracting, expanding...

Never retracting...

Finding and Moving their Anchors...

Each an Island of Wisdom, Growing into Itself...

In Reciprocities of Exchange Among them All...

Of Exchange with the Waters....

I feel such Gratitude for them All... and for the Waters...

The Inevitable Gravity of Beautiful Trouble - July 11-
19, 2015

What are the *Records*? Part II

By Hal Childs

At the end of last month's "What Are the Records? Part I," I said, "The Records...must obey the law of change (sublation), and become something that is unrecognizable to the prior form of consciousness. Only in this way can the 'Records' remain true to their essence, 'crucifixion and resurrection.'" We understand that the Records, as a book, are the Christian gospels, and that the essence of the gospels is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Last month I connected the "law of change" with the idea of "sublation," and then linked this notion with the idea that a new form of consciousness will be unrecognizable to a prior form of consciousness. I then suggested that these ideas are also embedded in the essence of Christianity, the gospel stories, which I claim is "crucifixion and resurrection." If we approach the mythological event of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Christ psychologically (that is, as soul phenomena) we can discern the process of the transformation of fundamental forms of consciousness, also known as "sublation."

The word *psychology* is composed of the words *psyche/soul* and *logos*, and thus it can mean, "soul speaking about itself." This is Jung's idea, not Wolfgang Giegerich's, when Jung says,

In myths and fairytales, as in dreams,
the soul speaks about itself..." (CW 9i
¶ 400)

This is why Jung's idea of soul as an "objective psyche" really does cut against the grain of all conventional humanistic thinking about soul. Jung's, and Giegerich's, soul-centered psychology actually contradicts the conventional notion that psychology is a science about the inner life of the human person. This does not mean that our inner life is not important, just that it, as our personal experience, stands in a different relationship with soul, which is an objective and impersonal dimension.

Sublation is a fascinating idea that the psychologist Wolfgang Giegerich borrows from the philosopher Hegel. It refers to the negation of one form while simultaneously preserving the essence of that form in a new, more inclusive, form. A concrete example is a sugar cube dissolving in water. The cube form of the sugar changes while its essence of sweetness remains and is brought into a new form. When we try to think of sublation in relation to forms of consciousness, things get more abstract. But we can see somewhat of a sublation process in human development (although this is also an imperfect analogy), when the child form of consciousness is "sublated" into adolescence, and the adolescent form of consciousness is "sublated" into an adult form of consciousness. The essence of the individual person is preserved and yet, each time, it is brought to a new level of consciousness.

At this point I am thinking of "consciousness" as a fundamental point of view and orientation to the world and oneself that is not necessarily conscious of itself; it is the background awareness that we live as and take for granted almost as absolute truth. For example, that the individual human person has dignity and rights is taken as an unquestioned truth. And the idea that science explains the creation of the cosmos and not theology is also an unquestioned truth (but even this has to be qualified by saying "within the world of liberal humanism.") But in the example of human development we can also see that the essence is not an unchanged essence, it is not something absolute or "eternal." The essence also changes, but we know there is a continuity of that essence that we think of as the core personality that remains throughout the transformations.

The mythological movement from crucifixion to resurrection is an example of sublation. In the context of the Christian myth, crucifixion happens to a physical body and resurrection is the sublation of that "body" into a new form, that is no less "substantial" and real, but is, nevertheless, not a literal body. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ was simply the resuscitation of a corpse, there would have been no Ascension, that is, there

would have been no myth of Christ at all, just the biological man Jesus walking around just as he had been before the crucifixion; it would not have been a soul phenomenon, just a biological empirical event.

The whole problem of Christianity for the ancient mind (we could say that the whole problem of Christianity for soul) was how to understand just what the “resurrection” (of the body) meant. It was a difficult problem and there were many competing points of view. It is easy to say, from body to spirit, but then what does that really mean? Historically, Christianity itself is the sublation of the Jewish myth and the Jewish God: the Jewish God becomes the Incarnation. From the point of view of Jewish consciousness, the transformation of the form of God into the Incarnation is unrecognizable. But, within the point of view of Christian consciousness, the entire Jewish myth is subordinated to and incorporated into the Christian form of consciousness. From the point of view of Christian consciousness, the Hebrew scripture became the “Old Testament,” and thus a sublated moment within the larger frame of meaning called Christianity. Christianity, and religion in general, has undergone its own sublation over the last five hundred years or so, into science and humanism. Now science and humanism are sublating themselves, since at least the year 1900, into something else, at least one manifestation of which is psychology. In our contemporary world, soul and consciousness are taking on yet newer forms, which are strange, bewildering and amazing.

I am struggling with the realization that I probably cannot recognize the new emergent form of consciousness that has subordinated and superseded the form of consciousness I grew up with, which I would call a strange mixture of a materialistic, scientific world view and a Christian humanism. Nevertheless, I do see that consciousness in general has become aware of itself, and how does that influence Records study?

I no longer have any historical illusions about the gospels or a man Jesus. My approach to the Records is psychological, which is a methodology that includes the historical and literary critical approaches to the texts, and, at the minimum, the idea or image of a historical-Jesus. The content of a so-called historical-Jesus, however, is generated and created by our modern historical consciousness, and our personal preferences. The conscious creation of an historical image of Jesus is important for the development of consciousness as it helps to work off unconscious remnants of Christianity. It is contemporary *religious* associations that still cling to the gospels and the figure of Jesus (the original mythological and soul depth has been long gone) and it is these religious associations that block a truly psychological understanding.

I have said that Christianity and religion died hundreds of years ago, but as a culture and as individuals we are

still catching up to this historical reality. Nevertheless, Christian influence, both positive and negative permeates our cultural psyche, and many who grew up in an explicitly Christian environment, and have subsequently rejected Christianity as an adult, still struggle with and suffer from what can only be called Christian trauma. The Records seminar, approached psychologically (that is, with soul in mind), is an excellent instrument for the working through and working off of outmoded, irrelevant, and oppressive Christian interpretations of its own story. To achieve a psychological understanding of the gospels is to undergo a revolution of consciousness.

Next month, I will explore the implications of Meister Eckhart’s statement, “I pray to God to get rid of God,” and how the psychological study of the gospels is a way to get rid of (work off) both Christianity and God for the sake of the revolution of consciousness.

August Birthdays

Marilyn Baldauf Cooney	Aug 7
Skip Light	Aug 8
David Mann	Aug 9
Susan Hartz	Aug 11
William Snorf	Aug 15
LynneAnne Forest	Aug 16
Manuel Costa	Aug 20
George Stenger	Aug 20
Bob Ridder	Aug 21
Richard Christensen	Aug 23
Raiford Gaffney	Aug 25
Susan Warner Smith	Aug 25
Patricia Calcagno Stenger	Aug 30



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Bob Ridder, Administrative Coordinator, is available for all inquiries by phone at (415) 561-2385, or by email at office@guildsf.org.

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Visit www.guildsf.org for information about seminars and events, and to register for seminars. The website also has general information about the Guild, past issues of the Threshing Floor, relevant news, and links to resources. If you would like to post information of interest to the Guild community, please email harryhenderson51@gmail.com, our web administrator.

Guild Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/guildsf>, launched in January! If you haven't yet, please "friend" and "like" us!

Newsletter

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Production & Layout Editor: Wilene Chang
Content Editors: Janet Boeth Jones, Sue Renfrew
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