



The Threshing Floor

January 2015

Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies

Web site: www.guildsf.org

Phone: (415) 561-2385

P.O. Box 29385, San Francisco, California 94129-0385

e-mail: office@guildsf.org

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.

Report from Berlin 2014: What is soul today?

The International Society for Psychology as the Discipline of Interiority (ISPDI) held its second international conference in Berlin during July. The theme was The Psychological Difference, a central concept in Wolfgang Giegerich's exploration of a psychology with soul.

Three Guild leaders attended the conference, Hal Childs, Harry Henderson and Faith Mason. Join us for a day exploring some of the central concepts and implications in a new understanding of a psychology that deepens and extends Jung's idea of the collective unconscious.

The day will include presentations with time for conversation and dialogue. We will also attempt an experiential group process exploring an ancient text from the *Gospel of Thomas* and a modern "text" from Marc Andreessen, co-founder of Netscape and the Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, from the point of view of soul.

Hal Childs: "The psychological difference in the light of a brief history of the psychological difference."

Harry Henderson: "The Psychological Difference as Perspective and Tool."

Faith Mason: "The Psychological Difference: So what? Why bother?"

Date: February 7, 2015 (Saturday)

Location: To be determined

Cost: \$50 plus \$15 with registration

For more information contact Hal Childs, 415-573-2469; halchilds@earthlink.net

Bleak Winter and the Colors of Darkness

By Harry Henderson

On the first weekend in December we gathered for "In Bleak Winter: A Solstice Meditation at Four Springs." Our seminar was led by Faith Mason and Hal Childs, with Patricia Colcagno Stenger and me as committee persons, and Jennie Larson serving as our resourceful cook (among other things). We had a good variety of participants ranging from "old timers" to some who were attending their first Guild seminar. After settling in the new lodge (which is beginning to feel like home), we were ready to embark on a sojourn into darkness.

For most of human history, darkness was the norm, and light a precious exception. This was particularly true at night, and even more true in winter when the nights were longest. In our industrial modern world, however, darkness seems to be fleeting, marginal, indeed almost banished. However darkness has not truly vanished from our modern world. Rather, it has changed its form and significance from the physical to the psychological. We may perceive it as meaninglessness and perhaps even despair.

From the ego point of view it is easy to see despair as something to be avoided, and meaninglessness as some kind of problem to be solved. As ego, "by our lights," darkness tends to be seen as something monolithic or formless. We needed a shift of perspective to see what darkness can really

offer. An unusual approach to working with art materials helped us do that. A variety of materials was offered--fabrics, papers, ribbons, even feathers. However all of the materials were black! We would work with the darkness we have encountered in our lives by beginning and staying with these materials. In doing so, we discovered that darkness has many textures. And like the greater part of the electromagnetic spectrum that is invisible to our eyes, darkness is its own spectrum of many colors.

When darkness is no longer "out there" but is incorporated into a new perspective or form of consciousness, we have the opportunity to let a larger reality express itself. At the same time, we may learn more about the authentic place of our humanity in that larger perspective.

As the seminar progressed, we introduced a single candle to the circle of dark forms that had emerged from our work and meditation. Even then, though, the story was not about the light overcoming the darkness, or casting it into shadows. Rather, the light helped the darkness define itself in new ways. Light and darkness wove themselves together. We then let clay form itself, and each of us carried a candle into this dialectic--the self-revelation of the colors of darkness, and an expression of the psychological difference.

**Stockings were hung by the hearth with care,
Anticipation was gathered everywhere,
But still, before dawn, only thoughts were
there...**

...a little impromptu Christmas dialogue:

Patrick: What does "Christmas" mean today in this time of the absence of myth?

Time: An emergence of "consciousness."

Patrick: But a consciousness of what?

Time: *Absence* itself.

Patrick: Consciousness of *Absence*?

Time: Yes.

Patrick: OK, I will give it a try. If I am consciousness of *Absence*, then what happens to "I"?

Time: You die.

Patrick: If I die as I, then am I a lie?

Time: "I" must think itself differently.

Patrick: *Absence* is different from itself, as it comes home to itself.

Time: Let *Absence* think its own thoughts, tell its own story.

Patrick: I dwell as *Absence* knowing itself, as insignificance.

Time: *Absence* is the rejected truth of our time (here and now).

Patrick: Turning around, I see *Absence* seeing me.

Time: The old once upon a time stable, where a world shaking birth took place, has vanished, has become the logical form of *Absence*.

Patrick: Then *Absence* and I will dwell in thought, thinking each other for a new truth; the hard work of soul-making; the labor of birth.

Anonymous

January Birthdays

Nancy Russell Stone	Jan 1
Alyzsa Van Til	Jan 3
Harry Henderson	Jan 5
Daniel Davis	Jan 7
James Preston	Jan 12
Selina Sweet	Jan 13
Kathy Nyhan	Jan 15
Al Braidwood	Jan 17
Pat Wroblewski	Jan 17
Coleen Higa	Jan 19
Robert Fletcher	Jan 25
Alice McHugh	Jan 25
Shirley Sullivan	Jan 26
Shirley Sait-Huneven	Jan 28

The Inevitable Gravity of Beautiful Trouble

Consciousness is a beautiful thing, and the soul of consciousness is trouble.

A seminar at Four Springs, July 11–19, 2015

Is it dangerous and foolhardy to offer a seminar on trouble? Should we beware of what we stir up? Who wakes up in the morning assuming trouble is something to look forward to?

We buy insurance; we make plans for disasters; we anticipate worst case scenarios; we learn to put on character armor as children to cope with angry parents, intrusive parents, absent ignoring parents; we are vigilant for psychological trouble. Our natural attitude is to keep trouble away.

Still, we must ask: What is the unknown presence that troubles us, and, to what end? What does trouble want? What does trouble need from us?

For Jesus the kingdom of God is trouble. For Jung the individuation impulse is trouble. Yet both these paths are a way to authenticity, to consciousness, to deep beauty.

Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All.

Gospel of Thomas, logia 2

The shadow troubles our self-image, and the trickster troubles our best-laid plans. It is said the truth will set you free, but first it will trouble you profoundly. How might trouble lead us to Beauty and open us to truth? We have a choice: to be victims of trouble, or to face the beauty of trouble—the difference is profound.

In this seminar we will seek to face the inevitable gravity of *trouble*, to learn its inner necessity and to know its hidden secrets for making what is beautiful of soul manifest.

Leaders: Hal Childs, PhD, MFT, Patricia Calcagno Stenger, MA, MFT, and the Casting Seeds Group.

Fee: To be determined

For more information contact Hal Childs, 415-573-2469 or halchilds@earthlink.net



[“The Eye of Time” by Lisa Yount]

WORLDS ENOUGH AND TIME

When “the world is too much with us, late and soon,” we can ease our anxiety a little by turning toward the many other worlds—some beautiful, some frightening (but in a safe way, like a good ghost story)—that the inner eyes of our imagination can discover. I use my art to reveal and explore some of those worlds.

Artists, particularly the Surrealists of the 1920s and 1930s (my favorite source of inspiration), developed many techniques for transforming random patterns into visionary art works that picture such hidden worlds. Max Ernst, for instance, used *frottage* (rubblings of textured surfaces such as old wooden floors) and decalcomania (putting paint on two pieces of paper or canvas, pressing them together, then separating them) to produce the raw material from which he constructed many of his paintings. My own favorite raw materials, in this digital age, are flame fractals: ethereal patterns of color and light generated by the computer (in particular, by a lovely free program called Apophysis). I use them as a kind of Rorschach test, seeking meaning in their designs, and then add photographs, vintage line art or paintings, or other materials to bring out what I see so that others can experience it as well.

I am happy to announce that I will have a one-woman show of my flame fractal art on display in the upper floor of the El Cerrito City Hall, 10900 San Pablo Avenue, from January 20 through the end of February. I will have a reception at the City Hall from 2 to 4 PM on Saturday, January 24.

My art also sometimes explores more solemn topics, including age and the passing of time—inevitably something I think about often these days, having had my 70th

birthday last July. Four of my (non-fractal) works on those subjects will be featured in a group show on the theme of the “Golden Years” at Expressions Gallery, 2035 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley (half a block from the Ashby BART station), from January 17 through April 10. A reception for this show will be held from 6 to 8 PM on Saturday, January 17.

I hope you will be able to join me at one or both of these receptions. If not, please stop by and view the art during business hours, or boot up your computer and visit me online at www.lionlight.com.

Lisa Yount is the wife of Guild leader Harry Henderson and a regular participant in the annual Nourishing the Soul seminar. She is also the creator of the photocollage *Rebirth of Four Springs*, featured in a recent issue of *The Threshing Floor*.



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Guild Contacts

In general:

Guild for Psychological Studies
P.O. Box 29385
San Francisco, CA 94129-0385

Bob Ridder
Administrative Coordinator
(415) 561-2385
office@guildsf.org

Guild Website:

www.guildsf.org

Fundraising:

Guild Office
(415)-561-2385
office@guildsf.org
www.guildsf.org

Publishing House sales – books and CDs

Carina Ravelly
Guild Publishing House
guildpublishing@yahoo.com



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