

II. The Human Mind: Analysis and Synthesis

Good afternoon, Sir. In the last two days I have reviewed my journals for the last six weeks, and I have been startled to find many, many paragraphs about this project and the various topics it might include. I'm excited and intrigued, and I also realize this could be several years in the making, a long and complicated piece of work. And that might be just fine. It also raises lots of questions for me, such as how our work together would shape and form the rest, what your role would be and mine, whether my own long journey in search of the dark feminine will become part of this piece, and how explicitly we will want to show the linkages with the terrifying imbalances and crises on earth at this moment. It seems there might be at least three voices here, yours, Kwan Yin's, and mine. And conceivably, more.

I am very happy to trust your guidance here, and for us to continue as we had started out, with daily teaching addressing various aspects of the dark feminine and its many intersections with the human creation of gender and gender systems. It is probably the very best use of the spaciousness of my days here at Madeline, as the deep focus and concentration are easiest for me here.

Yes, hello, Good afternoon. What you have done these last two days is very helpful. You have opened up your mind considerably, and now there is much more room for something new and for your own creative and imaginative energies to come into play. If you can match this with deeper surrender, you will find this an immensely easier process.

(Interruption for an hour long conference call with the college.)

You are quite distracted now. Please come back later.
Happily. I need to process all that. Thank you.

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Good morning, Sir. I hope I am more clear and receptive today. It has been an extremely tumultuous several days. This seems to be a major clearing underway.

Yes, indeed, and it will significantly shape and deepen our work today. Do not be distressed about our time table or schedule here. Everything is proceeding just as it should. What is opening up now, both your personal unconscious and some larger obstacles common in your culture, will release your creative mind, your deeper understanding of reality, and expand your view. Your mind, totally occupied with work, had become essentially claustrophobic. It enabled you to bring tremendous focus and intelligence to work, but it left you exhausted and unnourished. The root of this situation was your single minded focus on work, necessary to keep your life functioning. Now, it will be possible to rearrange and restructure your mind; only that will allow you to change your work. We will talk about that with you when you return.

Meanwhile, clearing out your mind dissolves the claustrophobia, which in turn frees you to explore new ideas, new viewpoints, and new insights. This will energize and delight you. And it will come with ease.

So, you have many ideas flitting about in your mind about this project, which continues to expand. This is excellent. Do not fear that this will somehow offend or challenge our work. Not in the least. We welcome this. The more fully available your mind is, the easier and more powerful our work is. Remember, we can only stimulate and seed your language, even as you sense your task is to “take it down.” Well, yes, you do indeed do that. But you also give it significant shape and depth, by the richness of the images and your vocabulary. This is truly a partnership, and you are not simply a dictaphone. The more you can bring to this work, the better – for the project, for your growth, and for our partnership. Do not in any way hold back, censor, or silence yourself. This is extremely important. I repeat: do not hold back. That is the ancient practice of smart women in patriarchal societies. Clear that out! This will be a strenuous practice for you, and quite illuminating. Push against that impulse. Become acutely aware of it, and drench it with attention. The more skillful you are at this, the more our work will develop.

Yes, there will be three voices in this text: mine, Kwan Yin’s, and yours. We will weave together our different viewpoints, our different ways to tell the story of the dark feminine. I will teach about Mind. Kwan Yin will teach about suffering and compassion. And you will tell your story about your search for the divine feminine and your many travels into the darkness. The form for this will emerge much later. Please do not think about that now.

Rather, use this precious time to take down as much of our teaching as you can, while you keep making notes in your journal about your own experiences and realizations. This will be a critical part of the project, because other students must be able to see concretely how all this manifests in a person's life and how one can work with it in all its complexity to become more conscious and free. This will be "your song at dusk," but it will not be your only or last song, truly.

With all that said, let us proceed with at least a brief introduction to the question of mind, more specifically, mental functioning.

One more thing first: please do start some files in your computer with your thinking and notes from your journal. You must do this while you are here, so there is a framework for you when you return to work. This is very important.

Mental functioning. The central idea here is very simple, on the surface, and easy to describe. But it will turn out to be very complicated as we pursue its pathway into human society. More on that later. Here is the first idea: the masculine mind (and I will use "masculine" to describe this, as women too have and use this aspect of mental functioning. It both is and is not gendered, in quite subtle ways. And when it seems to be an aspect of human functioning, and thus not gendered, if you look more deeply you often find otherwise; that the women is actually performing masculinity for some other purpose when she uses her mind in that particular way.)

So, the masculine mind separates and names. A huge range of cognitive processes flow from this, such as discrimination, conceptualization, categorization, and fundamentally, analysis. You remember that analysis means simply "taking a complex item apart into its constituent pieces." This allows complexity to be broken down into less complex pieces or processes, and opens the way to investigation. The scientific method is the jewel of these mental processes, with its careful rules for purposeful study and investigation of complex phenomena. All humans walk; some run; some run well; some become skillful athletes; and some can run a marathon. Similarly, all humans can think; some can work with categories and concepts; some can create new concepts and categories; and some practice science – the marathon runners. What we have to say about masculine mental functioning is not in any way to disparage scientific work. But it will remind you that science is only one way to understand reality; its very power and success

derives from its disciplined focus on its method of investigation. Yet that method, intentionally and unintentionally, leaves a very great deal out of its purview. A very important purpose of this work here is to increase the acceptable ways to investigate reality, and in that, to shift the understanding of what is actually included in that concept.

The first tool the masculine mind picks up is dichotomy. And his first knowledge of dichotomy is gender. Old Noah invited pairs of animals on to the ark, each pair a male and female. That is where this story begins, unless one wishes to repair to the Garden of Eden, before there is any differentiation. That is, of course, a story about the primal differentiation (“male and female he created them,” but they don’t seem to notice for some time) from the original unity. And human life is “simply” the long road back to a profound recognition of that primal unity, but through consciousness. The human story is the slow, painful development of human consciousness. All the rest is side pieces and sub plots.

We will stop now so you can go for a walk. This is much easier for you, isn’t it?

Yes, amazingly so. What has changed?

Some of your habitual self restraint with your own language and insights has been dissolved, through the triangle work. Much more of you is available now. This will continue. At our next session we will turn to the feminine

Saturday, July 17, 2010

I feel some strong push to sit with you before I go out to kayak this afternoon. I would be very grateful for a brief teaching, so I feel I have “touched base” with you. It has been a tumultuous several days, in my interior life.

Good afternoon. Yes. The struggles to clear the inner obstacles are very difficult, and they serve our purposes in very important ways. It will make it easier and easier to receive our energy, as there will be fewer blockages in your own systems. It will also make it easier for us to give you energy, when you need it to come into balance.

Feminine mental functioning can be described in several ways that underline the differences from masculine mental functioning. Please remember, when we use either of those phrases, that we are referring to a quality of mind, not the thinking of any particular man or woman. These are more “models” or “ideal types,” than truly descriptors of any one’s thinking. We could just as accurately name it X thinking and Y thinking, but we would find, empirically, that X was largely distributed in those of one sex and Y in those of the other. Why that is so is a huge and very complex subject, which we will not go into here. It rests upon the work of evolutionary biologists, neuroscientists, and behavior psychologists, among others.

Our purpose here is to discuss the implications of those two kinds of thinking, and more importantly, the consequences that one came to dominate the other, in modern human life. And then we hope we can lay out some paths to recover some of that subordinated style of mental functioning, because only that can begin the healing, on so many levels, of the human psyche and human societies, and then, by extension, create a much more sustainable relationship with the earth. We are looking forward, and we wish to facilitate your ability to do the same. Only this will give you courage and hope, and without that, no one can do the hard work of moving towards a saner human existence.

And why do we care about all of this, beings outside of time and space, beings unafflicted by the limitations of living in body, of being born and dying, over and over? The simple answer is consciousness. We too long for humans to expand their consciousness, to become fully aware of their interdependent existence with all living beings. As pure consciousness ourselves, it is our “nature” to include humans and all beings within our awareness. We constantly send prods to increased consciousness to many students. This is a part of that natural, limitless expanse of consciousness. Since all is enfolded within “that,” the correct outcome (oh, these words are difficult to find) is for all thus enfolded to know, to be aware, of that enfoldment. It is really very simple.

So, feminine mental functioning differs from masculine mental functioning in several ways: first, it does not divide. It does not impose a dichotomy upon every factor, experience, object, or feeling. It does not even necessarily or instantly judge such an object of perception, naming it good or bad. Feminine mental life recognizes gestalts, entire settings or situations, grasping (though not necessarily naming) parts in their complex

interrelationships, the web of their connections. This mind does not separate first, and then conceptualize, put into categories, evaluate, or analyze. Rather, this mind perceives first a totality, a whole situation, catching even its feeling tones and underlying disturbances. This is an intuitive capability, seeing deeply into or beyond what is immediately visible. We aren't referring to those highly developed and very special skilled seers, who can see at great distances or see the etheric body of a person or such. We are describing a natural vision available to all human beings, but usually more dominant in women. It requires no special training or giftedness to develop, unless one has become an extremely developed masculine knower/mental functioner. Then it might take some significant practice to develop the other kind.

We will stop now, but next time we will describe the connection between this kind of mental processing and the heart-center. Not simple.

OK. Thank you very much.

Monday, July 19, 2010

Good morning, Honored Sir. I have cleaned up and named properly all these files. And later I will start typing all the notes scattered throughout my journals, so those are in one place. But I would be grateful to receive at least a short piece before I begin that task.

Fine. We said we would teach you about the connections between feminine mental functioning and the heart center. Let us begin by reminding you that every culture locates thinking and feeling in a particular place in the body, and that there is remarkable disagreement about where those centers are. Some locate thinking in the head, and some in the heart center, and some in the abdomen. Some locate the soul or the non-perishable part of a human being in the gut or the heart center. Some understand it to not be located at all within a particular organ or spot, but to float about with some careful lines of connection which dissolve at death. And there are many other versions, many other answers to the ancient questions about mind, body, and soul.

This is what we "see." Masculine mental functioning arises in a very particular part of the human brain; it is the most recent, in evolutionary terms, and where one sees the enormous accomplishments of human beings

in the realm of knowledge of the world. That part of the brain continues to develop, becoming increasingly complex, in terms of its neurological structure, and increasingly specialized. This is where vast amounts of learning occur, during a modern life time. This is widely understood to be the area of the highest cognitive functioning, not shared at all with other animals. This is what many believe separates humans from the rest of the primates, for example, and for some, what justifies human control of all other resources on the planet. One might name it, “human exceptionalism.” We will say much more about this later, but this is the ground of the self-justification of patriarchal culture and practices.

Feminine mental functioning is also located in the brain, but it arises from complex communication networks in the brain, which link multiple centers of perception and interpretation. This is the neurological base for more integrated mental processing. Neuroscientists now understand that the hemispheres of the female brain have significantly more connective links than the male brain, whose hemispheres are more sharply autonomous and independent of each other.

It is an error to think that feelings are heart-based. Not so. Feelings too are interpretations of more primary experiences, and thus, are so “interpreted” and named in the human brain, male and female. Nevertheless, there is a very significant relationship between brain and heart-center that is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for highly functioning feminine mental functioning.

The heart-center must be open to what is before it, what is in its presence. The heart-center is a highly sensitive organ, which opens and closes at the slightest stimulus. In that, it resembles a light sensitive flower or a delicate mollusk. The most careful, accurate feminine perception is only possible when the heart center is open. If not, a critical range of evidence is shut out, and the feminine mind is reduced to a far more limited range of information. Crucial areas of the brain wired together to make possible feminine mental functioning receive no “data” if the heart center is closed or otherwise shut down. The resulting “gestalt” then is partial, inaccurate, superficial, or clouded over with other and often extraneous material. It is actually that kind of feminine thinking that is mocked and dismissed in many parts of your society.

Some of you are aware of these problems. You work with projections, transference, stereotype, prejudice, and many other habits of mind which all describe forms of blockage as a consequence of a shut down or partially closed heart center. Removing these blockages sums up much spiritual and psychological practice around the world. It is a major and urgent and continuing human task.

Let's probe this a little more deeply. If the feminine mind "specializes" in perceiving connections or connectivity, then anything that reduces the horizons of perception, blocks information, or shuts out complexity is going to undermine those perceptions significantly. Masculine mind requires meticulous practice of rigorous mental procedures to achieve its best knowledge. Feminine mind requires not only both hemispheres of the brain to be well connected and well communicating, but also that brain and heart center also be well connected and well communicating. To accomplish this at a high level is much more difficult, not only for men, but also for women. And if you add to that that most of you live in societies that do not value this kind of mind and mental functioning, it is easy to understand why there is so little of it visible in your culture and your public discourse. We will return to that huge topic later.

We will end this session here. At our next session we will discuss the heart center more fully, to explain better what we mean when we say it must be connected and communicating with the brain.

OK. Thank you very much.

Thursday, July 22, 2010

Good morning. We could, of course, give you an extended teaching on the heart center, as a worthy topic of its own. Instead, we will do a brief piece now, and then expand it as necessary, remembering that our main topic is to understand more deeply the dark side of compassion.

The heart center is not a physical organ, in the usual sense. It cannot be harmed by a heart attack, for example, nor does it weaken with injury or old age. It is an energetic center, one which receives, processes or interprets, and sends energy. It is a highly sensitive communications center; its capacities can be extended and refined through certain practices. It can also be dulled and even shrouded by certain life choices or even karmic issues. We need

not discuss those here. We recognize athletes by their strong physical bodies, which they train daily over many years. They practice their sport, build their physique, and nourish the development of their muscles and their coordination. Similarly, we can recognize a bodhisattva by his or her highly trained and developed heart center, her skill at perceiving and responding to others, and her sensitivities to others' suffering and needs. There are many practices in the traditions of Tibetan Buddhism whose purpose is to "bulk up" the heart center and increase its sensitivity and responsiveness.

Every human is born with a functioning heart center, those as a young child it mostly is a receptive organ. It is possible, though infrequent, to completely shut it down, through a very badly lived life. Even SS guards at the concentration camps were known to respond to classical music and lovingly tend their families.

One might ask, what goes awry to cause someone's heart center to atrophy? Most often it begins as poor treatment of a child. His needs and fears are not met by a sympathetic adult, and he learns he must push all that way down, below the level of awareness, if he is to manage. That process, of learning how to ignore, repress, or deny those difficult feelings, creates a deep split in him between his natural experience of his life and an immediate response, meant to enhance his stability and survival, of self-judgment and self-repression. Every human learns to do this in some degree; this process is otherwise named socialization, civilization, and maturation. But too much denial and self repression prevents the young person from exercising compassion towards himself and his difficulties. And as we will see later, without the foundation of self compassion, the capacity to extend kindness to oneself, it is very unlikely that a person will be able to extend compassion, effective compassion, to another.

Self repression and self criticism block the development of compassion because they starve the heart center. On the other hand, without some emotional and psychological maturity, a person finds it difficult to find the right balance between his or her own needs and the needs of others. The spiritual path in most long-lived religious traditions is centrally focused on this issue: how to encourage compassion for others, which requires a certain level of self-care, while reinforcing fundamental understandings that in the end, there is no conflict between self and other, no zero sum relationship, one might say. And it is that "project" which gives rise to the multitude of

images and theories about community. (yet another topic we will hold off for another moment.)

How does all this connect with the heart center? The heart center is the organ of compassion, the complex organ which perceives suffering, in both self and other, and which chooses to respond. To function in an optimal way it must be closely linked to the human brain, for the brain's perceptual skills are essential (more on that later). The decision to act, (and now we enter the complicated topic of "will") also requires both mental functioning joined to the sensitive perceptiveness of the heart center.

To say it differently: if a person cannot experience her own suffering, and then respond kindly to herself, she will eventually build up such a callous on her heart center, such a thick wall of denial, she will lose her ability to sense another person's suffering or her ability to recognize its reality or acuteness. She will surely then be unable to respond effectively to the other person's suffering. Unable to respond compassionately, her life becomes ever more constricted, superficial, and unsatisfying.

What is the medicine for this? One must learn to recognize and experience one's own suffering, in order to recognize and respond to the suffering of others. One must exercise one's own heart center, day after day, building up its scope and strength and tracing ever more connections with the brain and its mental functioning.

We will continue with this at our next session, returning to our initial discussion of how this kind of mental functioning differs from the more dominant analytic functioning of the masculine mind.

Sunday, July 25, 2010

The major difference, then, between these two kinds of mental functioning is fundamentally, its complexity. Even complexity at an organic or biological level. The masculine mind works out of highly specialized centers in the brain, which allow it to focus, analyze, differentiate, and investigate. This is where reason and logic are most centrally "housed." The feminine mind, on the other hand, not only uses the multitude of connections between the two hemispheres of the brain, but it also requires strong connectivity with the heart center, an organ of a different kind of perception. These two kinds of mental functioning, then, and I must remind you and our readers that a

person can develop both kinds, are very different in the breadth and depth and quality of their perception. It is almost analogous to different “eyes” being able to recognize different parts of the whole spectrum of radiation.

These two very different forms of perception support similarly different forms of awareness or consciousness. The one is highly focused on the visible world, and the other gathers in less specific information about a much wider and less materially defined reality. Humans have the quite remarkable potential to develop both kinds of perception, both dimensions of consciousness, and then, ultimately, develop the capacity to integrate those multiple forms of intelligence and consciousness.

Throughout human history there have been exceptionally gifted individuals who have accomplished this, despite the limitations of their own society and culture. And in most pre-modern societies there was cultural “room” for such people to develop, often even a valued role such as shaman or healer or prophet or oracle. The boundaries between these two kinds of mental functioning were less rigid and more porous. Nor were they completely gendered in a rigid and institutionalized way. But with the great explosion of science and scientific thinking in the early modern period, several things shifted, to bring you to the state you all are in now.

Analytic thinking made an enormous leap, both in power and breadth. The twin projects of mathematics and physical science fed each other’s gathering analytic power and discoveries, some useful and some deeply intriguing. And because it required years of education and further training to participate in scientific inquiry, and formal education was only available to boys, the gendering of this kind of thinking was unavoidable.

Those without access to that kind of education were left to develop their own native forms of perception and insight. Some absorbed and reproduced the knowledge of that particular culture; some were able to “tune in” to less obvious parts of the spectrum of human perception; and some intensified their own “natural” ability to include the wide horizon of their daily world and respond with sensitivity. But their mental functioning retained its rootedness in the perceptiveness of the heart center, and so we can say, it is synthetic and inclusive (where masculine thinking is analytic and discriminating) and feeling-toned or value-sensitive (where masculine thinking prides itself on its rigorous search for “objectivity.”) And this is what we are calling, the perception of Noah’s wife.

(We could say much more about the premises of scientific thinking, its urge towards objectivity, its intense focus on eliminating values from its analytic processes, etc. But this is probably not the best place to do so. It does become, however, an essential piece of the feminist critique of the consequence-blind pursuit of scientific knowledge, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, ripped out from any embeddedness in the values of the community that supports it.)

Let us remind you again: that there are these two forms of mental functioning is very helpful, and not problematic. What is problematic is that one has so gained social, political, and economic power that the other has been silenced and rejected. The analytic thinking which fuels science, materialist thinking, and eventually, economic development (and capitalism), torn loose from its partnership with the inclusive, gestalt perceptiveness arising from the heart center, of the other form, has become extremely destructive both to human life and to the whole planet. That is the problem.

It is sadly very easy, when facing a system dramatically pulled into one pole or one extreme, to overcorrect in the other direction. Early feminists who decried male dominance and celebrated what they imagined to be a primal female consciousness did not advance very far towards a solution, necessary as that first attempt might have been. And ever since feminists have often confused the levels of their critique, addressing power asymmetries, gender roles, larger inequities, as well as cultural and linguistic practices, all in one enraged attack. We welcome their critique, and we can help direct it to more essential levels. What Marx did for your understanding of how class developed and continues to “work,” and in that, shaped the development of capitalism economies, we would like to help you do for how the patriarchal domination of the forms of human consciousness have resulted in near-catastrophe for human and planetary survival.

So, let us briefly retrace the steps of our argument: we began by noting the marked differences between two kinds of mental functioning, generally identified with male and female, the analytic and the synthetic or wholistic. We noted how that became assigned to gender roles, probably very early in human history via the projected narratives about gods and goddesses. But the huge expansion or rigidification of this occurred in the early modern period with the explosion of scientific inquiry. That particular form of knowing then acquired more and more social, economic, and political power,

deepening the divisions both between the sexes in the gender system and the divisions between the two kinds of mental functioning. What should have been jointed together in a roughly balanced, complementary system was broken apart, with one kind assuming complete superiority and domination over the other. And it is the long-term consequences of the hardening of the distinction and then the domination of one by the other, which has drawn our attention and stimulated this long teaching.

At our next session we will discuss how masculine mental functioning has been joined with and supported a patriarchal society.

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

This will be a short teaching; the energy just drained out of you. What we have here is a very powerful, self-reinforcing, positive feed back system, between these particular forms of mental functioning and the emergent social and political practices which become the institutions of patriarchy. We continue to lay all this groundwork so we can focus on the centrality of compassion to human well being and planetary survival. We have quite a way to go before arriving at that topic with all the preliminaries in place, but that is our plan here. You actually can see here one of the great strengths of masculine thinking; its preference for logic, clarity, and precision pushes us to separate out very complex processes into multiple concepts and particular lines of causation or influence. These then must be laid out in linear sequences, so we can discuss them one at a time. Even syntax must be pushed and shoved in order to wrestle these very slippery ideas into some conceptual and grammatical form that can be communicated this way. You must receive our less linear forms of communication and try to “translate” them into concepts, words, and sentences. It is no wonder this is very strenuous work for you. And we, for our part, try to simplify and go slowly, so you can pick out the concepts and present them in a clear and comprehensible order.

So, how are these several levels related? First, there is the innate different preferences for certain kinds of thinking or mental functioning found among men and women. Second, there is the further identification of that with gender, making it more visible in social practices and eventually becoming an essential dimension of the gender system and gender identity. Third, a system of dominance emerges, based in gender, which privileges much that is male and masculine. And fourth, cultural forms – most significantly,

religious and mythic systems – are created to legitimate and reproduce these structures of dominance. So the circle is complete.

Why did this system become so problematic? There are two ways to look at this: what it did, and what it prevented. The latter is actually the more dangerous, as it resulted in more and more disequilibrium, on more and more levels. Any possibility of complementarity vanished. And the cost of disempowering and silencing one half the population is of course immeasurable. And when you consider that this has also pushed to the margins of the culture or beyond all that rises from the heart center, one can barely imagine the cost of such one-sidedness.

But the puzzle remains: how did certain kinds of thinking result in parallel social structures? The exact mechanisms probably await some meticulous reconstruction by a deeply insightful anthropologist or archeologist. For our purposes here, it is sufficient to point to the early linkage between the two levels of human life and to note that at about the same historical time, humans were beginning to build settlements, based on agricultural cultivation, and the old nomadic life of the hunters with its much less rigid division of work and reproduction began to disappear. Settlements intensify the value of increasing divisions of labor, and it becomes possible to acquire more than one needed in the short term. Marx would say, that was when surplus value first appeared. That was the seed of complex human society, and that was also the moment that gender hierarchy, structured inequality, and the need to legitimate those emerging privileges so as to be able to avoid the use of force or violence all arose. By the time we meet Noah, there are domesticated animals, husbands and wives, and agriculture. Nomads or hunters/gatherers would have sensed the rising water and left the area. Farmers couldn't.

At any rate, this moment, far back in human history, probably before there really was human history, is where these particular pieces all appeared. We need not linger here any longer, unless you have some questions. Before we turn to our main topic, the heart of compassion, there is one more brief piece we should add here. So, our next session will be about the consequences for women and their primary forms of mental functioning of being subject to patriarchal domination.

Saturday, July 31, 2010

Good morning, Manjushri Sir. I'm grateful for this quiet morning, so I can sit with you. I'm feeling some dryness about all of this teaching, I must confess to you. It has seemed very analytic, certainly critical for the larger project, but without any "juice" for me. I wonder if we might move onward to some discussion of compassion and the dark goddess. I think it would be helpful, when I try to take up this work again at home in a week, that we will have started that material.

That is a very good idea. Let me just say a little piece about the topic we had set for today, and then, perhaps skip forward in the linear argument.

One very strong way to discuss how living in a patriarchal society affects feminine mental functioning would be for you to describe your life long struggles with the opposing forces within your own being, your own mind. Perhaps you would be willing to write about that at some later date. You could write an "Intermezzo" about being "Fitted to the Patriarchy," that would be very illuminating. And extremely surprising to many, who have taken all of that as a given, as "natural." One of the great gifts of those who have pushed to the margins or suppressed is their sharp insights into what is and is not "natural." This is definitely something you could develop.

That would be very interesting, indeed, and I will give myself that assignment some Wednesday morning, as my writing task. Thank you!

So, let us proceed. In the patriarchal world, human society is modeled on and governed by the ruling religious narrative. We see there the centrality of the male gods, with their powers of creation, (usurped, of course, from the great earth goddesses before them) law giving, and judgment. They often preside over war and conflict, as defenders of the community. They are fierce about boundaries, distinguishing between insiders and foreigners, between rulers and ruled, between the good and the bad, and between men and women.

These narratives, of course, began as a small seed, a slight fantasy, perhaps, in the mind of a powerful leader in some distant historical moment. But it grew and developed in complexity and reach, as we have discussed earlier, until it displaced all other myths within the community culture, claiming interpretive primacy. By that, we mean, it claimed the right to interpret all

other stories, myths, and practices. With that claim, it had finally established itself as the reigning cultural and religious practice.

Because this religious system valorized and legitimated at the same time the rule of individual men, both in the community and in the smaller groups organized around reproduction and early forms of property, such as the family and kinship groups, it also cleared the way for the dominance of the kinds of mental functioning most common to men. This too we have already discussed. So, the layers of domination stacked up, and this had huge implications for women, as you well know. It defined women's status in the family and in the community; it elevated male functioning as well as men, in every setting. Only men had access to the sacred, its precincts, texts, and practices. Men controlled sexuality and determined what could be included in "high" culture. The sons of Adam continued to claim the right to name things, from their children to their own significance.

In all things, men and the masculine dominated women and the feminine. But domination does not mean, the feminine was obliterated, only pushed into dark corners or the recesses of human consciousness. The more masculine mental functioning dominated, at least in the public realms of authority, power, and distribution of resources, the more feminine mental functioning was circumscribed and usually limited to women, in their more private spaces. The separation of the sexes, a common element of highly developed patriarchal societies, intensified these divisions, but did allow for a women's cultural space. There the affairs of the heart center could be cultivated and nourished. This supported the crucial practices of the care of children and the elderly, for example, and passed on stories and images of compassion and generosity to others to succeeding generations. These were not hidden from men or disallowed by them, so much as of little interest or import to men. Thus, they have survived, through generations, in many cultures.

All this you know, and your readers know. Unearthing (such a metaphor!) this story has been the major accomplishment of feminist scholarship in your lifetime. It is extremely important, and it should be taught much more prominently than it is. For understanding this long human cultural process makes some major correction possible. Not likely, but at least, possible.

Like all deeply significant cultural transformation, and this is probably the most deep-reaching and radical one could imagine, change begins with

individual human beings. The transformation must begin with some preliminary recognition of how one-sided one's consciousness is, how profoundly out of balance one is. Even to reach that level of awareness is a significant accomplishment, for it is for the fish to recognize what water is. Ironically or paradoxically, the clearest way to see this, at the start, is to look out at your world and see, really see, the destruction of the earth and the destruction of fully human life. In that is made visible the final and overwhelming consequences of having relegated the feminine to the dark edges of human society, of having built an entire world with the narrow tools of analytic masculine thinking and failing to cultivate the insight and depth of the heart-center so characteristic of feminine perception and awareness.

The excavation has surely begun, but there is enormous "work" to be done, in a very short time, if the earth is to be protected and human communities are to be reconstituted. One might say, the Dark Goddess, long exiled since the patriarchy first stretched its limbs and organized its world, is stirring, in her underground domain. One might say, the whole planetary system will find its new equilibrium, heedless of the implications for human life if it must be so. One might say that the human psyche is breaking under the inhuman pressures of this high tech, relentless economy and society. One might say, many people have been aroused in the night by the cries of the suffering, human and non-human. The story clothing this awakening, this shift in awareness, must fit each listener; there will be many more. But each must begin by activating the heart center, person by person. And this will be our topic in the next chapter.