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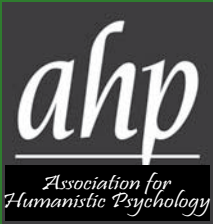
Winter November, 2010

Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies and Glimpes Into Soul Consciousness

carroy u ferguson, *UMASS Boston*



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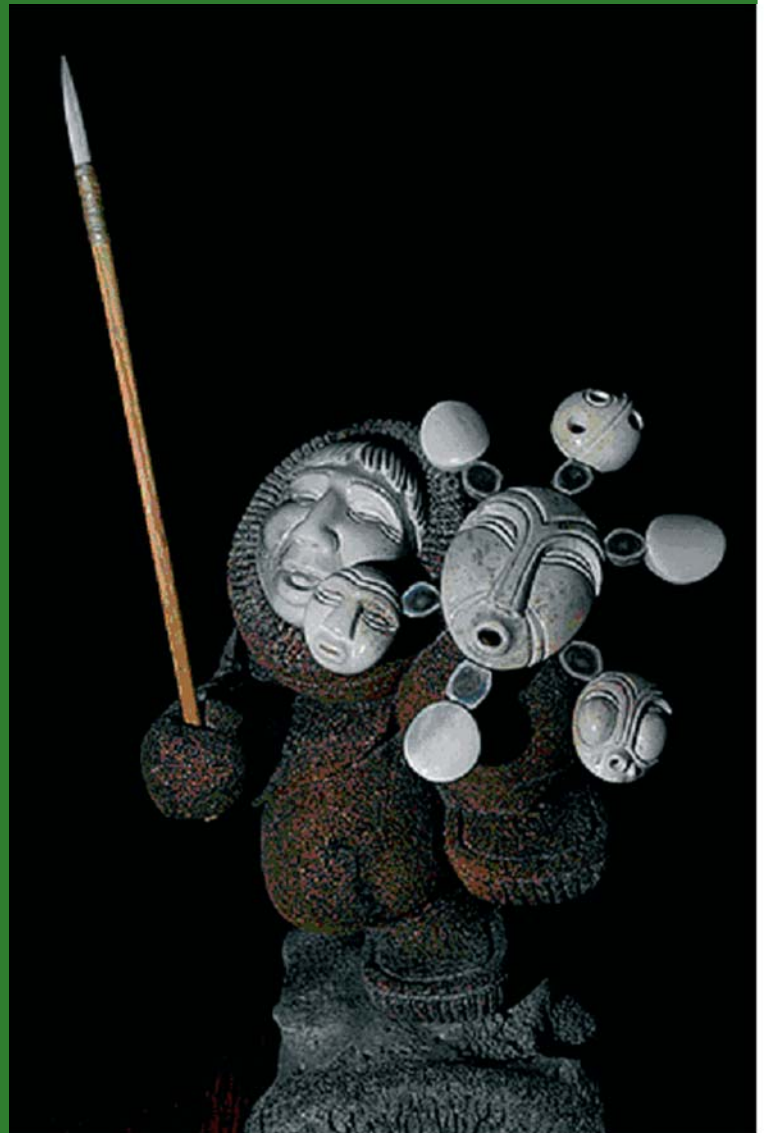
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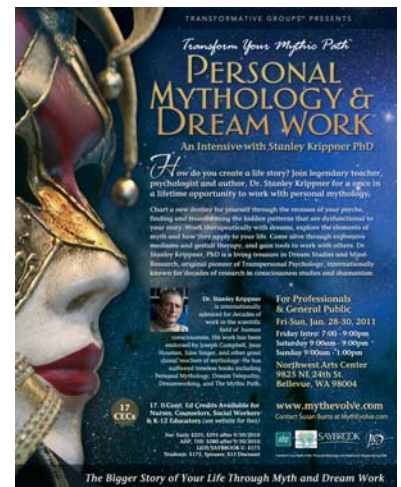
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LETTER ON AUGUST COVER STORY

I wanted to thank AHP for sending the print version of the August/September *Perspective*. The way my Internet connection has been lately, I wouldn't have found it for a week. I truly enjoyed and was informed by every article and review.

If I had read an article like the one written by Samuel Bendeck Sotillos [Humanistic or Transpersonal? *Homo Spirituallis* and the Perennial Philosophy, pp. 7–11] when I was still an undergrad in college, things would have turned out much differently. For one thing, I would have seen a reason to apply to grad school. Now thirty-some years later, I can finally see that the field of study I was interested in did, in fact, exist, but such speculation was unwelcome outside the humanities and theology when I was still in school.

AHP and ATP, along with the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness, certainly address the field of study I imagined, but could not access or discover.

Thanks again for a great issue—I read every word of it! (I came to AHP through a Gregg Braden/Conference Works event I attended.)

JOEL BAECHLE
16378 Butte Mountain Rd.
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UPCOMING PERSPECTIVE THEMES

December/January: Love and Justice; February/March: Soul Mates; April/May: Somatics

Please send in your ideas for future issue themes, and send articles on any topic of interest to AHP and ATP members, to EricksonEditorial@att.net

RESEARCH ON EXISTENTIAL THERAPY

Mick Cooper, author of *Existential Therapies* and Professor of Counselling at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, is reviewing research evidence on the effectiveness and efficacy of existential therapies. Please send references on published or unpublished research using controlled, observational, or systematic case studies designs to mick.cooper@strath.ac.uk

Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies and Glimpses into Soul Consciousness



AHP CO-PRESIDENTS CHIP BAGGETT AND CUF FERGUSON

— Carroy U. “Cuf” Ferguson

In other writings I have described Archetypal Energies as Higher Vibrational Energies that have their own transcendent value, purpose, quality, and “voice” unique to the individual that operate deep within our psyches, at both individual and collective levels. We tend to experience them as “creative urges” to move us toward our Highest Good or Optimal Realities. I use easily recognized terms to evoke a common sense of these Archetypal Energies (e.g., **Love, Acceptance, Inclusion, Harmony, Peace**). Here, I want to discuss *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies* and how they can assist us in gaining glimpses into the nature of our unique Soul Consciousness.

In a previous message (October/November, 2009), I noted that there are three types of Archetypal Energies: (1) *Foundational Archetypal Energies* (**Trust, Enthusiasm, Humor, Beauty, Hope, Flexibility, Courage**) that help us form or establish a personality structure, a foundation, which has Qualities that allow us to entertain the possibility of choosing to grow, expand, move Higher, and do so by choosing a path of growth with **Joy**; (2) *Transformational Archetypal Energies* that reposition us to change the foci and preferences of our Consciousness and the nature of various blending, transformations, transcendences, and transmutations of Energies as we make authentic contact with our Higher Self and as Souls make authentic contact (**Love, Acceptance, Inclusion, Harmony**); and (3) *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies* (**Understanding, Truth, Wisdom, Patience, Inspiration, Abundance, Compassion, Peace, Joy,**

Clarity, Vision, Oneness, Unity, Serenity) that help us mirror integration of our Lower (Ego-related) and Higher (Essence-related) Selves, to be our Truer Self, and to be and act out our Soul Qualities. Although operating deep within our individual and collective psyches, each of these Archetypal Energies seek “expression” and “form” as we interact in our life spaces.

As Soul Qualities, Archetypal Energies provide glimpses into Soul Consciousness, particularly *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies*. When we embody them and give them unique “expression” and “form” in our individual and collective life spaces, we become, in a manner of speaking, conduits for the Soul “coming into” the physical world. In other words, we make manifest aspects of Soul Consciousness individually and collectively on the planet.

I suggest that a primary focus of Soul Consciousness is on **Spiritual Unity**, fueled by two urges: (1) the urge to accept and love all of who we are, at individual and collective levels, and (2) the urge to express one’s **Love** (a Transformational Archetypal Energy) unconditionally at individual and collective levels. This state of Being is often called Agape and is aligned with a Higher Vibrational Reality that transcends the Ego. The primary *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies* that dispatch, nurture, support, and fuel these two urges are the Archetypal Energies **Oneness, Unity, and Serenity**. At a personal level, such “creative urges” may provide us with an opportunity to glimpse the nature of what some have called Cosmic Consciousness. At a personal level, we may also sense an “unencumbered Energy” connection

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

to Soul Consciousness and to Source Energy/Spirit or All-That-Is, or the Source of our unique Being. Additionally, we may sense the Spiritual or Higher Will of Soul Consciousness and how it relates to the Universal Energy *law of universality*. The Universal Energy *law of universality*, simply stated, is: "All is available. All flows around you at every moment, but you experience only what you prefer. The Universe reflects you, and you reflect the Universe. All is."

In giving "expression" and "form" to *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies*, I suggest that illusions are further lifted. For example, we may awaken and identify the Self as a Soul on the Physical Plane with a Mind and a physical body, one's *current physical form*. We may also awaken to a psychic potential for *telepathy*. In this context, we may further awaken to the Universal Energy behind a "thought-form," that views us as a unique aspect of Source Energy/Spirit or All-That-Is in our Soul's *current human form* on the Physical Plane, with the ability to manifest in alignment with our Spiritual or Higher Will. Prior to this, we may have awakened to a "mental" and "emotional" connection to the Universal Energy behind the "thought-form." Here we may awaken to an uncluttered or what some have called a purer Energy connection to the Universal Energy behind this "thought-form." As we do so, we may begin to learn how to transform and to manifest our *human experiences* in alignment with what I will call seven Soul Aspects of our Spiritual or Higher Will and Universal Energy.

What are these Soul Aspects of Higher Will and Universal Energy? Similar to some other authors, I suggest that the Soul Aspects of Higher Will and Universal Energy include:

- (1) The Will to *initiate* expansions of Consciousness, to receive insights and revelations, and to *initiate* activities that are in alignment with a "Higher Probable Plan" for life, individually and collectively;
- (2) The Will to *unify*, to bring unity to personality, Soul, and Spirit, and to increase the ability to know one's

Soul, the Soul of others, and to know other Higher Beings;

- (3) The Will to *evolve* both one's own Consciousness and all the forms and circumstances in one's life by further developing one's **Vision**, and to increase one's ability to express the Creative Intelligence of one's Soul to create one's Optimal Future;
- (4) The Will to *harmonize* and to deepen intuition by releasing limitations, to bring harmony to areas of conflict, and to expand one's ability to create art, music, and **Beauty** in all forms;
- (5) The Will to *act* in such a way as to achieve liberation by aligning one's Higher Mind with one's everyday, Concrete Mind; one's Mind can then fulfill its purpose of being a channel for the inflow of Higher Mind Energy (Archetypal Energies), and one's personality can become a purer channel for one's Spiritual Will;
- (6) The Will to *cause* through embodying high ideals and thoughts; thus the individual comes to know Universal Mind or the Mind of Source Energy/Spirit or All-That-Is which appears in one's Mind as high ideals and thoughts; and



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- (7) The Will to *express* and to create Spirit-in-form in a rhythmic and orderly way through the use of one's strength, perseverance, enhanced **Courage**, self-reliance, steadfastness, care in details, and precision in creating form.

From the perspective of Soul Consciousness, then, I suggest that *human experiences* at individual and collective levels are recognized as highly "creative acts," given the Spirit of Meaning only in so far as they evoke the pull toward **Spiritual Unity**. In this context, *human experiences* can be viewed as opportunities to expand Consciousness through engaging in and making authentic Energy contact with one's own Soul and authentic Energy contact with the Soul of others. In turn, *human experiences* at individual and collective levels can become opportunities to celebrate the miraculous **Oneness** of Spirit in its diversified forms. That is, *human experiences*, if allowed by Ego, can be viewed as opportunities to celebrate and to share one's unique and Authentic Essence with the unique and Authentic Essence of others.

Through making authentic Soul contact, we "resonate" on a purer Energy level with the inner Qualities, the Soul Qualities, of a person. We may find a deeper sense of inner **Peace**, known as **Serenity**, as an aspect of Authentic Essence in "Being" what I, and other authors, call the Higher Self. We may also experience a sense of **Serenity** in "being with" and "playing with" the Authentic Essence of the Energies of others. Rather than focusing or fixating the Ego primarily on the external, we may let go of all Energy blocks and fears. What is left as we do so is **Unconditional Spiritual Love**. In this context, we may experience an Energetic Resonance between our unique Soul Qualities and the Soul Qualities of others. In Spiritual terms, what this means is that the Auras of our personal Energy system vibrationally, energetically, and authentically touch those of others. From the perspective of Soul Consciousness, I suggest that the Auras of one's Higher Self touch the Auras of another's Higher Self. We thus engage our Self and the Self of others in what some authors have called "Soul linking" (e.g., Orin-Roman, *Spiritual Growth: Being Your Higher Self*, 1997).

From the perspective of Soul Consciousness, I suggest that *the Soul perceives no barriers*. While in

touch with Soul Consciousness, I further suggest that *we come to view people as "evolving Souls."* As such, everyone is a potential teacher, guide, learner, and companion on the planet. People whom we may have identified as different (e.g., racially, culturally, ethnically, socio-economically) now become Soul actors in "our human dramas," individually and collectively, to mirror for us our own inner dramas. They are there to assist us in our Soul growth. Likewise, we may be a Soul actor in "other people's human dramas," mirroring for them opportunities for learning, growth, and **Love**.

Free will is the cornerstone for all growth, expansion of Consciousness, and co-creative adventures. From the perspective of Soul Consciousness, I suggest that *Soul lessons are intended to be joyful lessons, as we create unique opportunities for the Spiritual blending of Energies*. Such lessons could include, for example, the choice to grow and the lesson of interdependence. Because we have *free will*, however, and as I have written elsewhere, we may all too often choose to use what I have called our *forceful will* rather than our *wise will* to manage our fears. However, when we identify the Self as a unique aspect of All-That-Is, all fears tend to dissolve. We can then learn to "play" as we engage in our Soul lessons. And, we can learn to grow with **Joy**, nurtured by an "unencumbered Energy" connection to the Spirits of **Oneness**, **Unity**, and/or **Serenity**.

So, I invite each reader to ask her or himself the following: how would your world look if you genuinely expressed **Unconditional** and **Universal Love** for your Self, for others, and for all of Humanity? What would you be thinking, feeling, and doing in your *personal life space*? How would you perceive, connect with, and experience others in your *societal life space*? How would you perceive, connect with, and experience others in your *global life space*? What kinds of resources would you direct toward enhancing the quality of your life and the quality of the life of others? How would you, in other words, "act out" your *Spiritually Integrative Archetypal Energies*? What would it mean, "to be" your Truer Self in your world? These questions and the discussion above are based on ideas that are more fully explored in my forthcoming book, *Evolving The Human Race Game: A Spiritual and Soul-Centered Perspective*.

— CUF FERGUSON

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Editor's Commentary

We open this issue with two honestly searching reflections on the human capacity for presence. The first article by Scott Greer, "That Day on River Valley and the Discovery of Presence," is a trailblazing inquiry into memory. Reminiscent of Proust, Greer expands on and deepens conventional theories about memories being located "in the head" or "within the past," and provides us with a fresh portrait. This portrait focuses on the memory of a reunion, which Greer marks with acuity of observation and poetry of sentiment. "That Day on River Valley" opens the reader to sparkling elucidations about how memory and present consciousness interpenetrate, what is "accurate" and what is embellished, and how, in the end, we can all benefit from the multidimensionality of attunement.

Speaking of attunement, the second article by Nate Koser is also a phenomenological gem. In "An Exploratory Presence," Koser asks himself what, beyond the obvious trappings of his fledgling craft, makes him a therapist? Is it his couch? His tranquil demeanor, the knowledge he has to share with others? Or is it something more subtle, less canned, and more alive? Discover what Koser finds to be the

— Kirk J. Schneider

essence of his calling, and how his very exploration is its embodiment.

From rich phenomenological illuminations, we now switch to incisive phenomenological critiques. In "Does 'Psychological Dysfunction' Mean Anything? A Critical Essay on Pathology vs. Agency," David Jacobs and David Cohen show why perspectives such as Greer's and Koser's are so needed today. Specifically, Jacobs and Cohen show how the diagnostic categories of the DSM (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association) are almost completely incapable of distinguishing between justifiable reactions to adverse circumstances, and psychopathology. The result of this "decontextualized" framework is that what we call disordered may in fact, in many instances, be understandable reactions to stressful circumstances. Find out why "bulimia," for instance, cannot even come close to being understood bereft of the "familial, interpersonal, and . . . societal context" within which the condition arises.

In his followup to Jacobs and Cohen, Ken Bradford takes their thesis a step further and calls for a new DSM. In Bradford's vision, all diagnoses should be apprehended phenomenologically, with



KIRK SCHNEIDER

full attention to both context and the evolving nature of self. What this amounts to is a discipline-wide reform in which mental health assessment is subject to all possible points of understanding—from the physiological, to the psychosocial, to the psychospiritual. Discover how such an approach may be implemented.

In our next article, Tatanja Schnell shows how we may want to elaborate a new disorder, alongside a new DSM. In “Existential Indifference: Another Quality of Meaning in Life,” Schnell fills a gap that has long puzzled existential thinkers—how do we characterize people who are neither disturbed nor energized by a life purpose, and who appear to be mentally healthy. Schnell calls these people the “existentially indifferent” and sets out to study more about them. I think you will be very intrigued by this article and the rather jarring questions it raises, not only toward the existentially indifferent, but the society out of which they emerge.

Finally, in our last article, Renate Motschnig-Pitrik and Godfrey Barrett-Lennard—two prominent innovators of humanistic inquiry—

provide the quintessential antidote to existential indifference: mutual and intimate encounter. Taking their cue from Rogers’ and Maslow’s conception of “self-actualization,” Motschnig-Pitrik and Barrett-Lennard introduce a new vocabulary to the actualization concept—“co-actualization.” By co-actualization, the authors refer to the personal and interpersonal expansion, deepening, and rejuvenation that can be achieved in constructive, “I-Thou” relationships. To illustrate this potentiality, the authors draw from a variety of fields, including humanistic and positive psychology, neuroscience, and even their own dialogical bond. Read this piece, and discover how co-actualization may invigorate your personal and relational worlds.

We close this issue with another solemn note on the death of a distinguished and longtime editor of our board. On January, 7th, 2010, human potential pioneer, Esalen Institute stalwart, and former editor for *Look Magazine* George Leonard passed peacefully from this world; he was 86 years old. I met George once at an Esalen Institute retreat with R. D. Laing, and I will never forget his smile.

—KIRK SCHNEIDER

IS SHAMANISM A RELIGION?

— Michael Berman

Is shamanism a religion, a way of life, or a methodology? The Pagan Federation defines paganism as the practice of polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religions, and includes shamanism under its umbrella. Neo-shamanic movements tend to take the view that shamanism is opposed to institutionalized religion and political systems and refer to a democratization of shamanism in which everyone can be empowered to become their own shaman. They think of shamanism not so much as a religion but as “a view of reality and an effective technique” (Vitebsky, 2001:151).

Drury asserts that “It is possible to speak of shamanism as a universal mode linking man with the cosmos by means of the magical journey” (Drury, 1982:xi), Halifax refers to shamanism as “an ecstatic religious complex” (Halifax, 1991:3), Jakobsen labels it a “complex of behaviour” (Jakobsen, 1999:6), Walsh calls shamanism “a religious tradition, implying that it has definite religious elements but may not always meet sociologists’ technical definition of religion” (Walsh, 1990:12–13), Ingerman describes it as a “system” and “a path to accessing spiritual information” (Ingerman, 1993:4), and

Harner considers shamanism to be a methodology rather than a religion. He says “Shamanism represents the most widespread and ancient methodological system of mind–body healing known to humanity” (Harner, 1990:40).

As William James points out,

the process of remedying inner incompleteness and reducing inner discord is a general psychological process, which may take place with any sort of mental material, and need not necessarily assume the religious form.

(James, 1982:175).

PRE-RELIGIOUS

It could be argued that Drury, Halifax, Jakobsen, Walsh, Ingerman, and Harner are intentionally begging the question, and they are not alone in this respect. Another way of avoiding the question is found in an article by Hultkrantz: "For some people religion is supposed to mean institutionalized religion with a priesthood and a growing class society. In this light, shamanism is of course a pre-religious phenomenon" (Hultkrantz, 1988:36). Hultkrantz has also referred to shamanism as "a religious configuration" (a mythico-ritual system) (Backman and Hultkrantz 1978:10–11), but this too can be seen as a way of avoiding the question.

If religion refers to the experience of the sacred rather than belief in a God or gods, then this is surely what is experienced by not only the shaman but also those who witness or participate in shamanistic practices. It can consequently be argued that both shamanism and neo-shamanism can be classified as religion.

Jung once described religions as "psychotherapeutic systems. . . . We [psychotherapists] are trying to heal the suffering of the human mind, of the human psyche or the human soul, and religion deals with the same problem" (Jung, 1977:162). And shamanism can surely be classified as one such system in that it is made use of by healers and therapists.

Radin suggests religion includes "a belief in spirits outside of man, conceived of as more powerful than man and as controlling all those elements in life upon which he lays most stress" (Radin, 1957:3). However, some neo-shamanists would argue that "rather

than there actually being other universes, [and spirits outside of man] the beliefs and associated rituals [can] serve to dramatize aspects of the quest within" (Heelas, 1996:89). They might also be of the opinion that through shamanic practices we can in fact take control of our lives.

Durkheim, the "father" of the sociology of religion, defines religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and surrounded by prohibitions—beliefs and practices that unite its adherents in a single moral community called a church" (Durkheim, 2001:46). A church is defined as

A society whose members are united because they share a common conception of the sacred world and its relation to the profane world, and who translate this common conception into identical practices.

(Durkheim, 2001:43)

He differentiates between religion and belief in magic by suggesting that the latter does not unite those who practice it into a group leading a common life (see Jones, 1986:115–155). There are, however, both solitary witches who celebrate their beliefs by themselves and societies of magicians. Consequently, there would seem to be both religions without any church buildings as well as moral communities of magicians, and for these reasons it has to be concluded that Durkheim's definition is far from being all-inclusive. Moreover, is a religion merely a "moral community" or is it not in fact something more than that?

According to Durkheim, "There is religion when the sacred is dis-

tinguished from the profane, and we have seen that totemism is a vast system of sacred things" (Durkheim, 2001:136). He also makes the point that "In addition to being a spiritual discipline, every religion is a kind of practice that allows man to face the world with more confidence" (Durkheim, 2001:142). Having a practitioner to act as a mediator on behalf of the community would certainly allow its members to face the world with more confidence. However, it has to be said that not only religion allows people to do this with more confidence. Being a member of a football supporters club or a political organization might have that effect, too.

INFINITE DIVINE

Max Muller saw all religion as "an effort to conceive of the inconceivable and to express the inexpressible, an inspiration toward the infinite" (Muller, 1873:18). Unlike Durkheim's, this is a more "poetic" definition, but it is surely something man could attempt to do on his own, so is what is being defined necessarily a religion?

William James defined religion:

the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider to be the divine. Since the relation may be either moral, physical, or ritual, it is evident that out of religion in the sense in which we take it, theologies, philosophies, and ecclesiastical organizations may secondarily grow.

(James, 1982:31)

However, it has to be remembered that James considered insti-

tutions to be compromisers of the religious impulse, which is probably why the definition makes no mention of the communal places of worship in which most religions are practiced or the organizations that regulate and monitor such practice. Jean Houston points out, referring specifically to shamanism, that it is possible to have spiritual experience and revelation direct and unmediated by institutional structures and doctrine. And she comments on how this appeals to those who seek autonomy in the spiritual journey (Houston, 1987:vii). This aspect of shamanism would presumably have appealed to James, too, though clearly not to those who consider institution and doctrine to be an integral part of religious life.

PRAYER

William James considered prayer to be religion in act.

It is prayer that distinguishes the religious phenomenon from such similar or neighboring phenomena as purely moral or aesthetic sentiment . . . the very movement itself of the soul, putting itself in a personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence—it may be even before it has a name by which to call it. Wherever this interior prayer is lacking, there is no religion. (James, 1982:464)

However, can it be said shamans pray in any conventional sense of the word? Does negotiating with the spirits consist of prayer? The answer must surely be that it does not, and indigenous shamans

would of course certainly not describe what they do in such terms. Consequently, if we accepted this definition of religion, shamanism would find itself excluded. Another approach to defining religion is to consider the characteristic forms religion takes, which is what Ninian Smart does. He considers most religions have seven main dimensions: the experiential, the mythic, the doctrinal, the ethical, the ritual, the social/instructional, and the material. From this Chryssides concludes that a group of people can be said to constitute

a religious group if they operate functionally as a religion—that is to say if they offer a means of coping with the key events and the adversities and misfortunes of life, using the key characteristics of religious practice which are identified by scholars such as Smart.

(Chryssides, 1999:14–15)

However, whether such people wish to regard themselves as a religious group or not is another matter.

Although the shaman was believed to possess the power to shape-shift, the ordinary man was basically uninterested in such questions and “accepted the interpretations of the shaman in his capacity as formulator just as he accepted the fact that the shaman alone possessed the power of transforming himself into an animal” (Radin, 1957:206). As Eliade points out,

wherever the immediate fate of the soul is not at issue, wherever there is no question of sickness (= loss of the soul) or death, or of misfortune, or of a great sacrificial

rite involving some ecstatic experience . . . , the shaman is not indispensable [to the shamanist] as a large part of religious life takes place without him. (Eliade, 1989:8)

It can be seen from this example how shamanism differs from the more universally accepted religions, in that the shamanist rarely participated actively in religious life, unlike a regular churchgoer, for example. A case can be made for regarding both shamanism and neo-shamanism as a way of life, so making it possible for people of any religious persuasion to make use of the techniques. The cynic would say this has the added advantage of providing the means for such practitioners to attract larger fee-paying audiences to their workshops. The way in which shamanism can be practiced alongside other religious beliefs, in the manner described in the following quote, gives further support to the case for regarding shamanism to be more a way of life than a distinct religion:

[In the case of the Kazak-Kirgiz baqca, the shamanic séance] begins with an invocation to Allah and the Moslem saints, and continues with an appeal to the jinni and threats to the evil spirits. The baqca sings on and on. At a certain moment the spirits take possession of him, and during this trance he “walks barefoot over red-hot iron” and several times introduces a lighted wick into his mouth. He touches the red-hot iron with his tongue and “with a knife, sharp as a razor, strikes at his face, leaving no visible mark.” After these shamanic exploits he again

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invokes Allah: “O God, bestow happiness! Oh, deign to look on my tears! I implore thy help! . . .” Invocation of the Supreme God is not incompatible with shamanic healing, and we shall find it again among some peoples of extreme northeastern Siberia. (Eliade, 1989:219–220, quoting *Magie et Exorcisme Chez les Kazak-Kirghizes et Autres Peuples Turcs Orientaux* by J. Castagne)

In view of the fact shamanism has no catalogue of doctrines or index of moral declarations, no buildings in which to honour its deities, no prayers to be recited, no hierarchy of power, and there is no devotion to a messianic cause, in the eyes of many it is doubtful whether it can be called religious. Hultkrantz, however, believes that since the supernatural world is the world of religion, shamanism can be said to play a religious role. On the other hand, the Hungarian researcher Mihaly Hoppal proposes a more secularized interpretation of its practices:

Shamanism is a complex system of beliefs which includes the knowledge of and belief in the names of helping spirits in the shamanic pantheon, the memory of certain texts (sermons, shaman-songs, legends, myths, etc.), the rules for activities (rituals, sacrifices, the technique of ecstasy, etc.), and the objects, tools, and paraphernalia used by shamans (drum, stick, bow, mirror, costumes, etc.). All these components are closely connected by beliefs given in the shamanic complex . . .

[Shamanism is] an overtly altruistic ideology which, in our egoistic and materialistic times, contains a decisively positive program for life.

(In Nicholson, 1987:95)

So Hultkrantz believes shamanism plays a religious role and Hoppal refers to it as an ideology. On the one hand it stands apart from institutionalized religion, and yet at the same time it participates in an ancient mystical tradition that possibly predates all other religious traditions.

RITUAL AND OBSERVANCE

If it is agreed shamanism is more a set of techniques than a philosophy and organization, which is currently the most commonly held view, it would perhaps be inaccurate to describe it as a religion per se. There remains, however, another possibility, yet to be considered, which is that shamanism, particularly in its classic form, is not a religion, methodology, a way of life, or a set of practices but “a religion of ritual observance,” centered on the dramatization of the death and resurrection of the shaman (rather than the figure of the King as in Ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Canaan) in whom the well-being of the client and of the whole community rests.

It is customary for religions to involve some sort of ritual observance, such as the sacraments of Christianity, the five daily prayers facing Mecca of Islam, or the elaborate rituals of Tibetan Buddhism. Indeed, as Gray (2004) points out, a strong case can be made for the fact that the heart of spiritual life is not to be found in doctrine but lies in practice—in ritual, observance, and sometimes even mystical experience. If we consider some of the major religions, for example,

nothing as simple as a creed can be extracted from the complex practices of Hinduism, Buddhism has never attached importance to doctrine, and in Judaism priority is given to practice rather than belief, and this applies to some Sufi traditions too.

The phrase “a religion of ritual observance” has been used in particular to describe Shinto—“a religion not of theology but of ritual observance” (Driver, 1991:38). The main texts connected with the Shinto tradition are the *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and the *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*). They were both written in Chinese in the early eighth century to help legitimate the position and the prestige of the Imperial Court, so neither can be considered to represent a theology as such. The former is basically a quasi-historical account of the early Japanese Emperors, and the latter is a Creation Myth recounting the formation of Japan and its people, and their descent from the *Kami*. It is in the textual reproduction of rituals and of the prayers (*norito*) that any unifying foundation approaching canonical status may be found in Shinto sacred writings, and many of these can be found in the *Engi Shiki*, a tenth-century collection of government ordinances. But it would seem to me that much the same could be said of shamanism.

Other religions, apart from Shinto, could also be listed under this heading, Wicca for example. As in the case of Shinto, there is no one bible or prayer book in Wicca and the primary concern is not ethics, dogma, or theology. Rather, it is a religion of ritual practice. These practices include marking eight holiday “sabbats” in the “wheel of the year,” falling on the solstices, equinoxes, and

the four “cross quarter days” on or about the first of February, May, August and November. Many Wiccans also mark “esbats,” rituals for worship in accordance with a given moon phase (such as the night of the full moon).

The Australian Aborigines can be said to practice a religion of ritual observance, too, as James Cowan (1992:2–3) expressively conveys:

[T]he Aborigines have made the “face of the earth” their Bhagavad Gita, their Torah, their Bible or Koran. Indeed the Dreaming is the Aboriginal Ark of the Covenant which they have been carrying about the Australian continent since the beginning of time.

MYSTICAL STATE

According to William James, personal religious experience has its basis in mystical states of consciousness, and these can be recognized by the four qualities they share. First of all, such states are ineffable—in other words, they have to be directly experienced as they cannot be imparted to others in any other way. Second, they have a noetic quality in that they appear to those who experience them to be states of knowledge. Third, they are transient and do not last, and fourth they are passive. For although the oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, once the state has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance and held by a superior power (see James, 1982:379–381). By this definition, the genuine ecstatic shamanic state is clearly mystical. It is also the case that

Shamans . . . are separated from the rest of the community by the intensity of their own religious experience. In other words, it would be more correct to class shamanism among the mysticisms than with what is commonly called a religion . . . A comparison at once comes to mind—that of monks, mystics, and saints within Christian churches.

(Eliade, 1964:8)

Consequently, it might in fact be more correct to describe shamanism as a *mystical* form of religion of ritual observance. Moreover, as Joseph Dan points out,

A unique characteristic of mysticism that is opposed, in most cases, to ordinary religious experience is the denial of the languages’ ability to express religious truth . . . [with mystics claiming] that truth lies beyond any possibility of expression by terms derived from sensual experience or logical deduction. (Dan, 2006:9)

No doubt the majority of shamanic practitioners would share this view, based on the difficulty encountered in conveying to others in words what they experience on their “journeys,” another reason for incorporating the word *mystical* into the definition.

CULTUS, CODE, CREED, COMMUNITY

In regarding shamanism as a religion, I am not a lone voice. Albanese (1992) sees such groups as forming a kind of religion, too, in that they have cultus, code, creed, and community, and so fulfill the criteria she deems necessary before

a religion can be classified as such. Further evidence to support the case for classifying shamanism under the heading of religion can be found in the following extract from an article by Ripinsky-Naxon (1992):

The essential core of shamanism or any religious institution, for that matter, can be described by the fact that it consists of a system of rituals and beliefs—not necessarily a codified corpus of dogma which defines its mystical character. . . . Ancient and classic shamanism was not characterized by a common object of worship (e.g., a sun-god or a Buddha) or by a codified body of scriptures. Traditional shamanism has consisted of specific techniques and ideologies that could be used to address issues and problems of spiritual concern. . . . From time to time, a voice is heard challenging shamanism as a religion on the grounds that it lacks a body of scriptures and a priestly hierarchy, in contrast to the recognized world religions. Such claims, however, cannot divest genuine shamanism of its ritualism, spiritualism, magico-mythic elements, and eschatology—all the essential ingredients of a bona fide religious complex. . . . Any genuine numinous and mystical experience of the preternatural, be it highly personal or structured by codices, must be recognized as part of a religious phenomenology. As such it must fall within the domain of religion.

In *Altaiiskii Shamanism* (1991),

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Popatov makes a strong case for regarding shamanism as a religion, too. He suggests that to make a judgment about a religion, we need to look into its content and argues that the foundation of shamanism is a specific shamanic worldview that incorporates universal “religious canons” that are also characteristic of many other religious traditions. These include the concept of a three-layered universe with its heavenly, earthly, and underworld spheres, a so-

called world tree that connects the different spheres together, and the universal concept of the world mountain (see Znamenski, 2003:211–213).

If we define “religion” as “a category label used in [modern] Western societies to cover belief in transcendental power or deity, rituals expressing that belief, a group’s worldview or cosmology, and myths explaining the works of the power or deity and associated beings” (Kehoe, 2000:25), and if we accept that organizations or communities in which these sorts

of behaviour can be practiced and taught are labelled “religions,” we can thus conclude there are religions with cosmological systems that incorporate the use of shamanic techniques, just as there are religions with cosmological systems that incorporate the use of Christian practices, scattered around the world. And by classifying shamanism as a religion in this manner, we can avoid the devaluation of its significance and function and thus ensure it is treated with the full consideration and respect it deserves.

The Second Most Important Job You Can Ever Have

As I leave the second most important job I could ever hold, I cherish even more the first, as a husband and a father. Thank you, and goodbye.

— Gordon Brown, resignation speech outside 10 Downing Street on May 11, 2010

These dignified parting words express part of a universal truth, unfortunately far too often disregarded. Whatever you do for a living is the second most important job you can ever have—the first is being part of the Great Mystery, for all life is connected, and whatever you or I do impacts on everyone else around us.

The practice of shamanism is understood to encompass a personalistic view of the world, in which life is seen to be not only about beliefs and practices, but also about relationships—how we are related, and how we relate to each other. And when this breaks down—in other words, when it is not taking place in a harmonious and constructive way—the shaman, employing what Graham Harvey likes to refer to as “adjusted styles of communication,” makes it his or her business to resolve such issues.

In shamanism the notion of interdependence “is the idea of the kinship of all life, the recognition that nothing can exist in and of itself without being in relationship to other things, and therefore that it is insane for us to consider ourselves as essentially unrelated parts of the whole Earth” (J. Halifax in S. Nicholson, 1987, *Shamanism: An Expanded View of Reality*, Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, p. 220). And through neurotheology, this assertion, so often heard expressed in neo-shamanic circles that all life is connected, can now be substantiated. This is because

*it has been shown that during mystical ecstasy (or its equivalent, entheogenic shamanic states [states induced by ingesting hallucinogens]), the individual experiences a blurring of the boundaries on the ego and feels at “one with Nature”; the ego is no longer confined within the body, but extends outward to all of Nature; other living beings come to share in the ego, as an authentic communion with the total environment, which is sensed as in some way divine. (Carl A. P. Ruck, B. D. Staples, J. A. G. Celdran, M. A. Hoffman, 2007, *The Hidden World: Survival of Pagan Shamanic Themes in European Fairytales*, Carolina Academic Press, p. 76)*

It is to be hoped that Gordon Brown is now “walking his talk,” and that we will all take heed of his words, for we forget the divine nature of what we are part of not only at our peril but also at the peril of children’s futures.

— MICHAEL BERMAN

According to Krippner (2002), “those writers who call shamanism a ‘religion’ ignore the fact that there are Buddhist shamans, Christian shamans, Muslim shamans, pagan shamans, and so forth.” But are there? Does anyone claim to be a “Christian shaman”? It is much more likely such a person would claim to be a Christian who makes use of shamanic techniques? And even if they were to call themselves “Christian shamans,” I doubt whether the church authorities would approve of the way they chose to describe themselves. What we can say is there are certainly shamans who make use of Christian rituals and the names of Christian Saints such as the curanderos in Spanish-speaking South America or the practitioners of macumba in Brazil, but that does not mean they are necessarily Christians.

“Concepts are not given off by the objects of our interest” (Braun & McCutcheon, 2000:9). Indeed, “religion” itself can be regarded as nothing more than an intellectual invention of modernity.

Another reason for associating shamanism with the word *religion* is that

[I]f indigenous religious perspectives continue to be ignored, or at least marginalized in academic circles, a highly significant portion of the world’s religious adherents will be excluded from scholarly research and teaching in religious studies.

(Cox, 2007:1)

Shamanism, like Wicca, is a non-scriptural faith, which helps to explain why it is marginalized and not considered a world reli-

gion by academics.

For Cox, religion focuses on “non-falsifiable alternate realities that are postulated by and legitimated within identifiable communities through the transmission of an authoritative tradition” (Cox, 2007:92-93). He goes on to add that through this, a religious community is able to collectively share in acts of remembrance of the past and these give meaning to the present. This definition can be applied to Shamanism, in the same way as it can be applied to the so-called “world religions.” Consequently, it can be argued that it deserves the same kind of status.

The Pagan Federation <http://www.paganfed.org> was founded to provide information on Paganism and to counter misconceptions about the religion. It works for the rights of Pagans (defined as followers of polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religions) to worship freely and without censure, as they are entitled to under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It publishes a quarterly journal, *Pagan Dawn*, arranges members-only and public events, and maintains personal contact by letter with individual members and with the wider Pagan community. Is shamanism a genuinely polytheistic religion though? A shaman is understood to be someone who performs an ecstatic (in a trance state), imitative, or demonstrative ritual of a séance (or a combination of all three), at will (in other words, whenever he or she chooses to do so), in which aid is sought from beings in (what are considered to be) other realities generally for healing purposes or for divination—both for individuals and/or the community.

As for the practice of shaman-

ism, it is understood to encompass a personalistic view of the world, in which life is seen to be not only about beliefs and practices, but also about relationships—how we are related, and how we relate to each other. In shamanism the notion of interdependence “is the idea of the kinship of all life, the recognition that nothing can exist in and of itself without being in relationship to other things, and therefore that it is insane for us to consider ourselves as essentially unrelated parts of the whole Earth” (Halifax in Nicholson, 1987:220). And through neurotheology, this assertion, so often heard expressed in neo-shamanic circles that all life is connected, can now be substantiated. This is because

it has been shown that during mystical ecstasy (or its equivalent, entheogenic shamanic states [states induced by ingesting hallucinogens]), the individual experiences a blurring of the boundaries on the ego and feels at “one with Nature”; the ego is no longer confined within the body, but extends outward to all of Nature; other living beings come to share in the ego, as an authentic communion with the environment, which is sensed as in some way divine. (Ruck, Staples, et al., 2007:76)

Further justification for the belief that all life is connected can be found in the fact that the elementary particles that make up all matter, by their gravitational, electromagnetic, or nuclear field, are coextensive with the whole universe, and as man is composed of these particles, he is thus in union with the entire cosmos (see

Eliade, 285–286). Whether he wants to be or not is immaterial.

Polytheistic or not, is it religion? Now if all life is connected, then the implication is that all life is one, and we become part of the godhead. However many spirit helpers or teachers in other realities a shaman may have, they

are part of that whole, too. And that is the essence of shamanism.

*MICHAEL BERMAN works as a teacher and a writer. Publications include **The Power of Metaphor** for Crown House, **The Nature of Shamanism and the Shamanic Story** for Cambridge Scholars Publishers, **Shamanic Journeys through the Caucasus** for O-Books, and **All God's Creatures: Stories Old and New** for Pendraig Publishing. <http://www.thestoryteller.org.uk>*



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Self-Hypnosis To Empower Your Sport

— Cathal O'Briain

Self-hypnosis helps the athlete to sharpen focus, increase skill, and develop mental and physical strength. Rather than relying on just mere chance, hypnosis brings you naturally and easily into the *zone*, providing energy at the appropriate time and delivering just the right amount. These controlled bursts of energy allow the sportsperson to conserve their strength, minimizing effort where it's not needed and maximizing power where it is.

The zone is basically a heightened state of awareness, where concentration is total and is uninhibited by internal or external distraction. In the zone, a feeling of time distortion can occur in the mind, slowing down reality enough to anticipate what's coming next, helping you to plan your moves ahead of time. The boxer will see gaps in his opponent's defenses where he can get through, and the goalkeeper can jump in the right direction as the player is striking the ball. When the mind has grown accustomed to being in the zone, it will then seek and manifest the same experience every time you play your game, providing you want, believe, and expect it to happen.

With hypnosis, performance preparation can be done in the home as well as on the field. But there's more to sports psychology than just using guided imagery and relaxation techniques. The overall psychological well-being of the athlete must also be considered. Family,

social life, work, and relationships all can work with or against an athlete. So all aspects of living must be addressed in therapy if you wish to gain insight into what is required to reach your true potential.

Many athletes dedicate a lot of time to improving their physical condition without paying enough attention to their mental needs. They often spend hours on end putting their body through rigorous training, without setting aside fifteen minutes a day to strengthen and focus their mind. This is why some find it harder to move into the zone than others. *Mental conditioning* is what moves you into the zone. But this alteration in perception can only occur when mental interference and distraction have been made practically non-existent. Even if the athlete is surrounded by people and distraction, self-hypnosis can be used to minimize noise, while at the same time increasing focus. The one who uses trance regularly to experience the feeling of being in the zone, can trigger the same response when required, by means of post-hypnotic suggestion, cues, breathing, and so on.

TRYING TOO HARD OFTEN PRODUCES LESS

Being *too effortful* is one of the main reasons some athletes can't improve their game. Many wonder why they can't go the extra distance, and this is often on account of pushing themselves too hard. In an effort to be the best, *force* can sometimes re-



place *finesse*, resulting in an over-exertion of energy, when all that may be required is a smooth delivery. The tennis player may learn that by loosening their grip a little, power in the wrist can increase while it rests. This way energy can be unleashed at the precise moment it's needed and not a second sooner. This conserving and utilizing of energy is what helps the athlete push harder and go for longer. Getting into the zone via breath, suggestion, and imagination reduces effort while increasing stamina. Slowing down the speed at which the external environment is being perceived in your mind comes about through concentration and controlled breathing. Breathing slowly while fixing your eyes upon objects in the external environment is what helps move you into the zone. By concentrating your attention for moments of engrossed inner focus, you minimize distraction in the mind by narrowing mental and sensory attention to one thing only, the point which you are focusing on. Concentrating intently also helps to prevent your senses from becoming too bombarded by distraction. A suitable place to focus on would be where you wish to go, or where you would like your javelin or snooker ball to end up. The process needed in order to

bring about the end result should be visualized in the imagination during this period of intense concentration. When the subconscious is shown repeated images of how the desired result looks and feels, it can then go about making the body carry out all the necessary actions to make these images real.

SELF CONFIDENCE: THE VITAL NECESSITY

Self-confidence is vital for making sport successful. If you do not believe that you have the ability, then you won't be able to use that ability, no matter how technically skilled you are. Many athletes have the physical strength and capability to go far in their sport, but lack the self-belief that's essential for success. Self-belief often beats technical skill, but when the two are combined, the ultimate athlete is created. The problem with confidence is that when it gets knocked, it is sometimes hard to recover. This is because confidence takes a good while to build up, but can be taken away in seconds. Self-hypnosis is a great confidence builder and can be used daily to instill images of confidence, intensity, motivation, and relaxation. To be the best of the best, you must first imagine that you already are and that success has already been achieved. Confidence is what helps you view your opponent as a challenge to be pursued. When you are confident, you do not view competition as difficult. This is because you have many ways to keep your confidence strong, even when faced with tough opposition or physical injury. Emotional control is what helps successful athletes see with clarity.

INTENSITY: USING IT WISELY

In many sports, how the athlete controls their mental and physical levels of intensity is crucial in

learning how to optimize performance. *Positive intensity* results in confidence, motivation, brain and muscular stimulation, strength, and endurance. *Negative intensity* can result from a lack in confidence and motivation, poor brain and muscular stimulation, fatigue, difficulty breathing, etc. Intensity ranges from being very calm and relaxed while engaged in sport, to breaking the pain barrier through extreme mental, physical, and environmental conditions.

By noticing the times you are short of breath, or when you experience tightness in your muscles, you can identify what is causing over-intensity and make the necessary changes to stop it. Over-intensity has a negative effect upon health and sport, but by learning to control intensity, stamina is accelerated, helping the athlete to break through mental and physical barriers.

THE EMOTIONAL ATHLETE

The emotional well-being of the athlete is of paramount importance. Not enough emphasis is placed on the role that emotions play in sport, but in order for you to be on top of your game, you must be in charge of your emotions. In the same way you switch off from your critical conscious mind in hypnosis, so too can you by-pass the distraction of thought and emotion by using hypnosis to get into the zone. Learning to put your emotions aside takes time to master. But a good way to start is by first taking charge of your emotional needs. The more you are in control of your emotions, the less you have to distract yourself from them while performing. The process of removing psychological and emotional barriers involves identifying them, understanding their meaning, and then making the necessary changes to minimize their impact on your sport. Emotions when used productively can improve your game. An example of this would be

an athlete winning a competition shortly after hearing his wife has just given birth. Such a life-changing experience would inspire and motivate a person to win, in the same way a death in the family could have the same or opposite effect.

GOAL-SETTING TO ENHANCE YOUR GAME

Setting goals to be achieved in lifestyle, diet, training, competition, etc., can be implanted each day in hypnosis. If you are using a coach or sports consultant, they too must understand how the goal-setting process works and how best to apply goals that suit your individual needs. Setting goals not only involves achieving outcomes within your sport; it also includes setting and achieving goals within your personal life. It could be difficult for an athlete to win gold in the Olympics if their marriage was in a crisis. This is because life and sport do not work in isolation. It is why goal-setting should always be geared toward achieving harmony both on and off the field.

USING IMAGERY TO ENHANCE YOUR GAME

As you have already learned, imagery (also called visualization or mental rehearsal) is a technique for programming your subconscious to respond in a certain way. It involves using the five senses to create the desired experience in your imagination before it has actually happened. It is a mental workout that approximates reality, because all that is missing from the picture is the motor response of the muscles. By imagining a previous experience of winning, you can program your mind to expect the same by focusing on these images in hypnosis. Imagery can be used before and during rehearsal and competition. The tennis player may spend fifteen minutes in mental rehearsal before a big match, visualizing a perfect

performance, set by set. Just before they serve, imagery can again be used to pinpoint exactly where the ball is going to land.

Imagery is where you think in images instead of words. By allowing perception to become more visual, you are less distracted by thoughts that often interfere in the form of words. Paying close attention to detail in your imaginings helps increase the likelihood of your subconscious carrying out your intentions in reality, as does adding rich color or feeling the cricket bat in your hand. Some athletes get nervous purely on account of the crowd capacity where they are performing. By imagining the crowd supporting you, and what these people will look and sound like, unrealistic fear can be significantly reduced on the day of the big event through self-hypnosis. When imagining, it's important to see events unfolding as if you are looking through your own eyes, rather than observing yourself from a distance. Feel the feelings that come with being in the zone, even if this means imagining sweat on your body. See yourself in full flight, exerting just the right amount of intensity, at just the right time. See the end result, hear the crowd erupting, and feel the trophy in your hand. The more senses you involve, the more instilled these images become in your subconscious. Repeating the same images daily in hypnosis will keep your program positive and up-to-date.

THE BENEFITS OF USING SELF-HYPNOSIS IN SPORT

- Improved confidence, motivation, stamina, mind-body connection, focus, perception, intensity, energy, self-control, self-discipline, self-awareness, physical strength, time management, balance in work, family, social, and sport life.
- Faster recuperation and recovery time.

- Ability to control pain.
- The ability to get into the zone quickly and easily.
- By mentally rehearsing training and competition in hypnosis, you significantly increase the likelihood of achieving your goals in reality.
- In the same way breath, suggestion, imagination, concentration, belief, and expectancy are central to hypnosis, so too are they central to sport. It's all about preparation, and what better way to prepare than to relax in trance each day.
- Hypnosis can be used to generate desire and interest, where the incentive to train or compete may be lacking.
- By looking after your emotional needs, you are looking after your sporting needs.
- Hypnosis provides such a platform for emotional healing to take place, where anxiety, worry, and stress can be reduced or removed.
- Hypnosis keeps the digestive system relaxed and stress-free. This is important to the athlete whose diet can sometimes be very strict.
- Certain protein-enriched foods can irritate the bowel, but stress will almost certainly aggravate an existing problem.
- Hypnosis brings all the appropriate muscles into play, so that outbursts of energy are channeled into the right areas of the body.
- When you visualize making a perfect movement or action, the muscles needed to accomplish that action begin moving in the correct way. With practice, these mentally rehearsed movements are easily transferred to the tennis court, golf course, swimming pool, and other sports arenas.
- When concentration and relaxation are total, the mind naturally slips into a heightened state of awareness. This is what gives certain athletes the edge over others.
- While many people use concentration and relaxation techniques to improve their game, few use their mental abilities to quite the same degree as those practicing self-hypnosis.

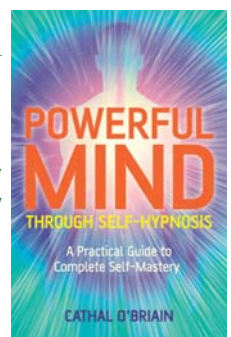
MENTAL TRAINING FOR MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Mental training should cover a wide variety of skills and not be restricted to performance preparation and competition. Conditioning the mind involves getting the most out of training sessions, dealing with setbacks, recovering from injury, combating fatigue, and coping with sickness and frustration. A strong mind can help the body recover quicker, so by staying mentally fit, you stay physically fit also.

For the athlete approaching a big event they are not yet mentally prepared for, a lack in self-belief could give rise to psychosomatic symptoms, such as poor concentration, cramps, or injury. The subconscious must be convinced that there's nothing to fear and that competition is a challenge to be pursued and won. If it has not been convinced, it may then attempt to sabotage the athlete's plans by creating barriers in an effort to keep them away from the event. This act of sabotage happens at a subconscious level, and so it must be rectified there too. Hypnosis has been proven a useful tool for overcoming such mental obstacles, because it paints a clear picture in the subconscious of what success looks and feels like, and how it should be replicated into reality. By removing unrealistic fear and bolstering your belief system, you automatically begin increasing self-confidence, possibly the most essential component for achieving success in sport.

To learn more about Hypnosis, please visit: www.powerfulmindhypnosis.com

CATHAL O'BRIAIN is a clinical hypnotherapist and psychotherapist in Celbrige, County Kildare, Ireland, and the author of *Powerful Mind* (2010). To learn more about hypnosis, please visit: www.powerfulmindhypnosis.com



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WHAT IS PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR? AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROFESSION OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

BY ALVIN R. MAHRER
Howard Gontovnick, 2010,
\$25.95, 265 pp., ISBN
9780968186541.

Reviewed by John Rowan

This exciting book offers a radical rethink of the field of psychotherapy, and is a joy to read, being well-written. Mahrer is well-known as a critic of psychotherapy as generally practiced.

His main target is the taken-for-granted assumption that psychotherapy is “mainly treatment of mental illnesses and disorders, the associated symptoms, psychological problems and complaints” (p. 21). If we take this seriously as what psychotherapy is about, he says, we throw ourselves into the hands of the researchers, the providers, the authorities, and the practitioners who find this definition convincing. We throw ourselves into the hands of those who want to turn psychotherapy into a science like physics, chemistry, or biology. And all this, he says, is quite wrongheaded.

He gives copious evidence to show that this is the definition that has been adopted by governments, by insurance companies, by powerful funders generally. It has become the current orthodoxy.

So what is the problem with that? One problem is that psychotherapists, he argues, themselves have created a self-indulgent culture where instead of trying hard to produce change in

clients and get them back into the everyday world as soon as possible, they set up a cosy regime where therapist and client collude to have a nice time. This is of course quite indefensible, but it goes on quite a bit, and he gives copious examples of it.

But a much more interesting problem is that many serious and effective approaches to psychotherapy do not see it as mainly treatment of mental ill-nesses and disorders, associated symptoms, psychological problems, and complaints (p. 69):

There are psychotherapies that do not enthusiastically support psychotherapy as exclusively or even mainly for treatment of mental disorders and their related symptoms and problems. The chorus of voices includes psychoanalytic therapy, client-centered therapy, Gestalt therapy, and Mahrer’s experiential psychotherapy.

This is evident in recent arguments about the Health Professions Council in the UK, and widely commented on in the US.

Also, the orthodox research-oriented approach (empirically validated or supported therapies (EVT)) lays a dead hand on the real work of therapy. “The scientific paradigm that accompanies the EVT movement is unlikely to lead to any truly new knowledge about the mechanisms of psychotherapy because it is not discovery-oriented” (p. 78). Psychotherapy is changing all the time, and we need to be able to keep up with these

changes and do justice to them.

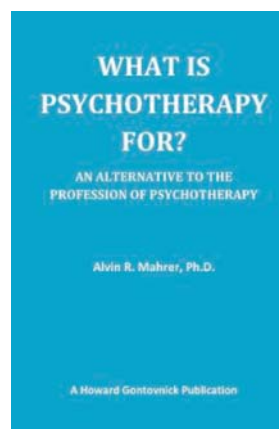
Another powerful point he makes is that the “empirically supported therapies” approach leaves out the practitioner. It concentrates only on the procedures, the techniques used. Yet research on outcomes of therapy consistently says it is the therapist and the relationship with the therapist that is more important. “Can we afford to leave

the person of the therapist out of consideration, and create a manual that addresses only procedures?” (p. 95).

Mahrer can be caustic and attacking at times (p. 109):

What is psychotherapy for? It is to generate lots of money. It is to provide the money for a huge industry. Psychotherapy is big business. Psychotherapy pays for university training programmes, scholarships for students, salaries for teachers, managed care companies, psychotherapy lobby groups, clinics and agencies, professionals earning incomes in private practice, conferences and workshops, registration and professional fees, insurance companies, and lawyers. Psychotherapy is big business. Psychotherapy is to make big money.

So what is the answer to all this? Here I think the book is relatively weak. Instead of gathering together all the positives he has already mentioned, he leaves all that aside and concentrates on his own brand of therapy, which he

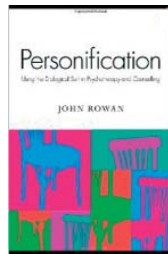


REVIEWS

calls experiential psychotherapy (as if all therapy were not experiential). And this is quite a specific and narrow approach, where therapist and client lie back side by side with eyes closed, and the therapist enters into the intimate world of the client in a very direct way. I have no doubt that this is an effective approach, because I have experimented with it myself, and taught it to others, but to present this as the only answer to the manifold problems mentioned in this book seems to me quite narrow.

The first half of this book should be read by anyone who has the slightest sympathy with the idea of empirically supported treatments—they will have their socks blown off.

*JOHN ROWAN's new book is **Personification: Using the Dialogical Self in Psychotherapy and Counselling** (Routledge, 2009).*



EARNING A LIVING OUTSIDE OF MANAGED MENTAL HEALTH CARE: 50 WAYS TO EXPAND YOUR PRACTICE

EDITED BY STEVEN WALFISH
American Psychological Association, 2010, 243 pp., \$69.95, ISBN 9781433808098.

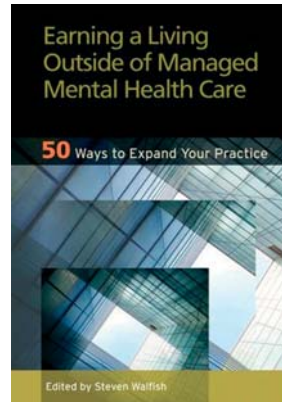
Reviewed by David Ryback

In these hard economic times, it's hard to keep a roof over your head if you're relying solely on your private practice. Managed care cuts its costs at your expense, and

you still have all that paperwork that eats into your time as well as your professional integrity, at times. So here comes a book that promises some relief—extra income with exciting opportunities to spread your wings into a new area of endeavor.

Steven Walfish gathered up 50 of his colleagues to share how they got into their respective niches to broaden their professional scope to include such specialties as premarital counseling, canine behavior therapy, vocational counseling, smoking cessation, stress management for corporations, vocational rehab assessments, consulting with traders and investors, and many more.

Starting off with *Seven Keys to Building Your Dream Non-Managed Care Practice* by David Verhaagen, Dr. Walfish then allows his colleagues to share their “secrets” in twelve segments, ranging from family psychology, through business, finance, teaching, forensic psychology, to positive psychology (sports psychology, retreats for personal growth, and tantric sexuality education). Each chapter or contribution is only 3 to 4 pages long—very to-the-point. The section *Services to Organizations* includes working with developmentally disabled adults and assessment of individuals entering religious life. Teaching and Supervision includes teaching online and conducting workshops for teachers and educators. But let's take a closer look at that last section on Positive Psychology.



Mitchell A. Greene, a marathon runner himself, always dreamed about consulting with athletes and coaches. He began by working with kids diagnosed in the Asperger's disorder spectrum, initiating a week-long summer camp for these children. Then he spent a year volunteering his time at a basketball training facility. This was followed up by volunteering as one of the few sports psychologists for the 2007 New

York City Marathon. He became a consultant to two triathlons and to the athletic department of a prep school as a result. He also writes articles for newsletters. Now his practice includes these same athletes and coaches who come with personal issues to deal with. Thus is created a sports psychologist.

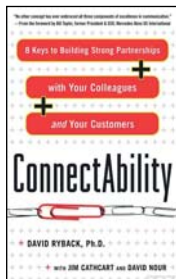
Kathy Martone studied Jung and grew through her own experience with Jungian dream groups, Gestalt supervision group, and ten years of training with Jean Houston. She then started running her own weekend or four-day retreats, including dream retreats, complete with her own rituals, often including sacred dance, poetry readings, prayers, and music.

David Yarian had a traditional psychodynamic training, but, 16 years later, enrolled in Margo Anand's Love and Ecstasy Training in tantric sexuality. A year later, he began to offer tantric educational workshops for individuals and couples, but his efforts were not very financially rewarding. So he decided to attend the annual conference of the American

Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists and to enroll in some of the continuing education courses he found there, following up with supervision. He became certified within a year and found himself to be the only certified sex therapist practicing in Nashville, where he works. The most effective source for new income, Yarian writes, “has been my website” which “contains articles, resources, book reviews, and recommended links.” The Internet, apparently, allows for some anonymity for those seeking help with their sexuality.

Each contributor has a unique story of success. The common thread is a combination of personal interest, intense involvement in the desired niche, and a common-sense, business approach to integrate new business into the existing framework of a practice. The result is at least some freedom from managed care, and personal fulfillment that comes with “doing your own thing.” If nothing else, this excellent book allows you to dream, perchance to act, and by doing so, to enhance your professional life. Of the 50 ways to expand your practice that Walfish’s contributors offer, surely one will tickle your fancy, and perhaps offer you some long-awaited freedom.

*DAVID RYBACK, author of **ConnectAbility**, recently published by McGraw-Hill, is head of EQ Associates International, located in Atlanta and consulting with organizations across the globe. He can be reached at David@EQassociates.com or 404/377-3588.*



CATHARSIS IN REGRESSION THERAPY: TRANSCRIPTS OF TRANSFORMATION (VOL. II)

By RANDAL CHURCHILL
Transforming Press, 2008, 456 pp., \$60, ISBN 9780965621823.

Reviewed by Paul Von Ward

This book not only identifies regression therapy practices that fail the client, but offers solid and specific professional principles that avoid misleading outcomes.

Randal Churchill is highly qualified to write such a definitive text—based on forty years of commendable work and teaching. His focused and highly self-critical development of techniques and their refinement is grounded in followup and testing with both students and clients.

More than a century ago, Freud, Jung, and other analysts “re-discovered” what many traditional societies had long known: Emotional blocks based in earlier trauma—resulting in dysfunctional behaviors—could be overcome through various means of cathartic release during group and individual healing rituals.

Late 19th-century analysts—working within the mores of Victorian culture—invented a more sedentary process. They learned that patients, mostly women, could be hypnotized to recover suppressed memories of childhood trauma. The setting, an authoritarian power figure,

and the depth of emotion involved created conditions comparable to the freedom given the psyche through tribal rituals.

The history of some 20th-century psychological and spiritual traditions produced innumerable variations of the fundamental process of energetic clearing of debilitating unconscious memories. Among them are many superficial, even deceptive, methods whose claims greatly exceed their merits.

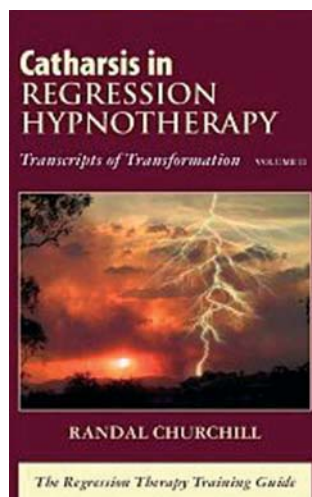
Churchill’s work stands out for its professionalism, suggesting openness to new techniques, but requiring their validation through tangible results. It requires considerable self-restraint by the therapist at two levels: Do not

overpromise, and do not interject personal perspectives into the dialogue between the hypnotist and the hypnotized.

While Churchill does not see his work as “past-life” oriented, from time to time some students access memories that appear to be related to possible

previous lifetimes. In these cases, he scrupulously uses his same neutral stance.

His reality-based approach—aware of the illusive nature of recovering and describing memories—does not suggest or reinforce interpretations that go beyond the uncertainty of what is by nature an uncertain process. He reminds us that “in the highly suggestible state of hypnosis, well-meaning therapists can help create false memories.” (This is an acutely sensitive issue in past-life



regression therapy.)

The recovery of traumatic memories, particularly potential sexual abuse or other personally abusive situations, requires neutral attention on the part of the therapist. Churchill notes (p. 223) that “most age-regression hypnotherapy ends up focusing on memories that were never forgotten.” However, it may heighten the recall of details, providing more accuracy than recall attempts in a waking state.

Case transcripts—the core of the book—graphically display his sensitivity and, as seen in their reactions, his deft passing of the responsibility to the hypnotized. He sees himself as the facilitator of the individual’s own self-exploration.

Churchill’s philosophy and approach are quite conducive to realizing the values and principles associated with humanistic psychology. Based on the premise that humans are self-actualizing beings participating in a multidimensional, consciously evolutionary process, this book demonstrates a therapeutic, self-empowering tool. It ought to be on every therapist’s bookshelf, whether they use hypnosis or not.

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SEX AT DAWN: THE PREHISTORIC ORIGINS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

BY CHRISTOPHER RYAN AND

CACILDA JETHÁ

Harper, 2010, 416 pp., \$25.99,
ISBN 9780061707803.

Reviewed by Cheryl Fracasso

Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jethá’s book *Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Human*

Sexuality is a mind-altering journey through the evolutionary history of human sexuality that challenges the popular paradigm that our species is naturally monogamous. While this radical hypothesis may at first make some readers feel uncomfortable, Ryan (a psychologist) and Jethá (a psychiatrist) provide a compelling historical account of the sexual evolution of humans compared to apes, our closest ancestor, while suggesting that the shift from an egalitarian society to an agricultural society 10,000 years ago threw us out of balance. From this perspective, the shift from an egalitarian society (based on cooperation and sharing) to an agricultural society radically changed the social, political, and historical structures of what it means to be human—including our human sexuality.

Ryan and Jethá argue that with agricultural society came political, social, and religious hierarchical structures that resulted in a shift from sharing and cooperation to competition. The authors suggest that from this shift the “standard narrative of human sexual evolution” evolved to support these sociocultural changes. This is essentially the predominate model we are all familiar with,

rooting back to Darwin, that was expanded by contemporary society with the added assumption that we are a monogamous species seeking long-term pair bonding. However, Ryan and Jethá challenge this assumption, and instead suggest that we are going against our evolutionary history that supported an equal sharing of everything—including multiple sexual partners. Subsequently, the main premise here is that “contemporary culture misrepresents the link between love and sex. With and without love, a casual sexuality was the norm for our prehistoric ancestors” (p. 6).

Ryan and Jethá draw from findings in anthropology, archaeology, anatomy, and primatology to support their contention that human beings evolved in egalitarian groups that shared everything from food and shelter to sexual partners. Subsequently, this turns the standard narrative of human sexual evolution upside down—directly challenging whether monogamy is a natural or social phenomenon. Ryan and Jethá argue that the “standard narrative” of either monogamy (one partner) or polygamy (one male with many partners) handed down from pioneers such as Darwin that have been maintained by sociocultural influences over the past several centuries, have actually served to suppress our natural human desire for casual sex with multiple partners for both men and women. This suppression, according to Ryan and Jethá, is why humans have a long history of infidelity, high rates of separation and divorce, and numerous other problems surrounding sexuality. Ryan and Jethá present the following reflections and questions

for the reader to ponder:

Although we're led to believe we live in times of sexual liberation, contemporary human sexuality throbs with obvious, painful truths that must not be spoken aloud. The conflict between what we're **told** we feel and what we **really** feel may be the richest source of confusion, dissatisfaction, and unnecessary suffering of our time. The answers normally proffered don't answer the questions at the heart of our erotic lives: why are men and women so different in our desires, fantasies, responses, and sexual behaviors? Why are we betraying and divorcing each other at ever-increasing rates rather than not opting out of marriage entirely? Why the pandemic spread of single-parent families? Why does the passion evaporate from so many marriages so quickly? What causes the death of desire? (p. 4)

Part 1 provides a historical overview of the nature of our species. Beginning with "What Darwin Didn't Know about Sex" (p. 25), Ryan and Jethá challenge the standard narrative that suggests the drive to procreate and "pass on our genes" is solely biologically driven. This Darwinian way of thinking suggests that males are driven to "spread their seed" (while claiming ownership to a few females to ensure paternity certainty), while females are more apt to guard their limited supply of eggs for worthy suitors. In this view, males are

more apt to desire several partners (polygamy), while females are more reserved, holding out for the best suitor (monogamy). However, the authors pose the questions: What if Darwin's view of sexual selection was only half of the story? What if the whole notion that our human sexual desire evolved solely for the purpose to procreate was more a reflection of the Zeitgeist of the Victorian era Darwin was immersed in? What if the two choices of monogamy or polygamy are too limited? What if Darwin overlooked sex with multiple partners as another plausible advantageous trait for our species for both men and women?

While Darwin's theory of natural selection is obviously brilliant and indisputable, Ryan and Jethá remind the reader how sociocultural and sociopolitical influences dramatically shape societal norms, which are subjective and shift from era to era. The authors lead the reader to consider how the Victorian era was dominated by the church, and sexuality—especially for women—was extremely oppressive during this era. To illustrate this point, the authors discuss Freud and his theories on sexual repression, while reflecting on diagnoses such as hysteria and neurosis. This leads the authors to question whether a majority of these symptoms experienced by women were a result of suppressed and oppressed sexuality.

To support this argument, the authors point out that the female orgasm was essentially shunned,

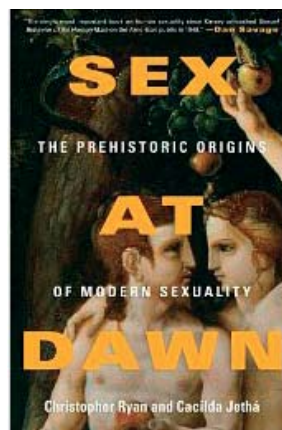
and it was considered immoral for a female to masturbate in the Victorian era. Another compelling point made by Ryan and Jethá is that the female orgasm was considered a medical issue that

could only occur in the doctor's office. That's right ladies—in that era women would have to make an appointment with their doctor to get "treated." The authors further illuminate the reader with research showing it was doctors who created and designed the first

vibrators solely for the purpose of treating these women patients.

Part 1 moves on to critically evaluate the standard narrative by analyzing the validity of its widely accepted assumptions based on the role of male parental involvement (MPI), the role of jealousy and paternity certainty, and concealed and receptive ovulation. Ryan and Jethá then compare human sexual/social behavior with that of other primates, including chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, gibbons, and our closest cousin the bonobos to further illustrate that having multiple sexual partners is more common than we may think.

Part 2 devotes special attention to debunking the standard narrative. Ryan and Jethá take the reader on a provocative journey that challenges widely accepted assumptions based on the role of jealousy and paternity certainty. They argue that humans, and our cousin bonobos, are highly erotic sexual primates that use sex for pleasure and social purposes. Research is presented to support this view, while the authors introduce the concept of how sex



REVIEWS

with multiple partners could be an advantageous genetic and social trait for our species. The central argument is that sex with multiple partners increases a female's chance of becoming pregnant, and increases social cohesion by reducing male competition.

Particularly compelling is cross-cultural research that has been gleaned from various tribes in South American societies that practice a concept that social scientists call "partible paternity" (p. 90). Ryan and Jethá explain that many of these tribes believe that pregnancy is a matter of degree. According to this view, a woman is partially pregnant at all times, and the only way to form a fetus is by accumulating semen in the womb that builds up from multiple partners over time. In these societies, the authors argue, sexual jealousy does not exist. Rather, "a man in these societies is likely to feel gratitude to other men for pitching in to help create and care for a stronger baby" (p. 92). Paradoxically, Ryan and Jethá argue that men are bonded together by joint paternity for the children they created together, which further debunks the claim that jealousy is an innate trait found in all humans.

The authors conclude this section by sharing how and why marriage in today's society is such a mess, suggesting that infidelity is the result of suppressing our innate sexual desire to have multiple sexual partners. Ryan and Jethá suggest: "Marriage, mating, and love, are socially constructed phenomena that have little or no transferable meaning outside of any given culture" (p. 137).

Parts 3 and 4 explore our evolutionary roots in detail, highlighting research on body size dimorphism and its link to our "promiscuous past." Particularly intriguing is Ryan and Jethá's presentation of research data showing that "the ratio of testicular volume to overall body mass can be used to read the degree of sperm competition in any given species" (p. 222). Specifically, species that have frequent ejaculations have larger testes, compared to species that have less frequent ejaculations. The authors then move on to examine the evolution of penis size among humans and other primates, noting that human males are amongst one of the largest. Compelling evidence is presented to support the hypothesis that larger penis and testes size exists among primates that are highly sexual with multiple partners, compared to that of monogamous primates that have a smaller penis and testes. The authors speculate that monogamy may be slowly shrinking the male penis in evolutionary terms.

Part 5 concludes with the challenges we face while trying to live in a monogamous culture, which, according to the authors, is in direct opposition to our innate and social desire to be openly and freely sexual. They conclude that the result of this denial is the high rates of separation, divorce, and infidelity seen in our culture.

In conclusion, this is a must read for anyone interested in evolution and human behavior—specifically sexual behavior. However, in the end I was left questioning why the authors didn't explore other aspects of the current sociocultural paradigm to further explain why we may have such high rates of divorce and infidelity. It must be pointed out that we live in a fast-paced society that is growing exponentially with technological advancements with resulting information overload. It would be interesting to explore recent social science research to examine whether these may be intervening variables, as well computer use in recent decades, and increased quick and easy access to pornography and a larger network of potential sexual partners at the drop of a key stroke, and instantaneous access to an array of sexual paraphernalia we might want at the drop of a hat. Could these also be variables that may be leading to higher divorce rates and infidelity? I'll leave that for the reader to consider.

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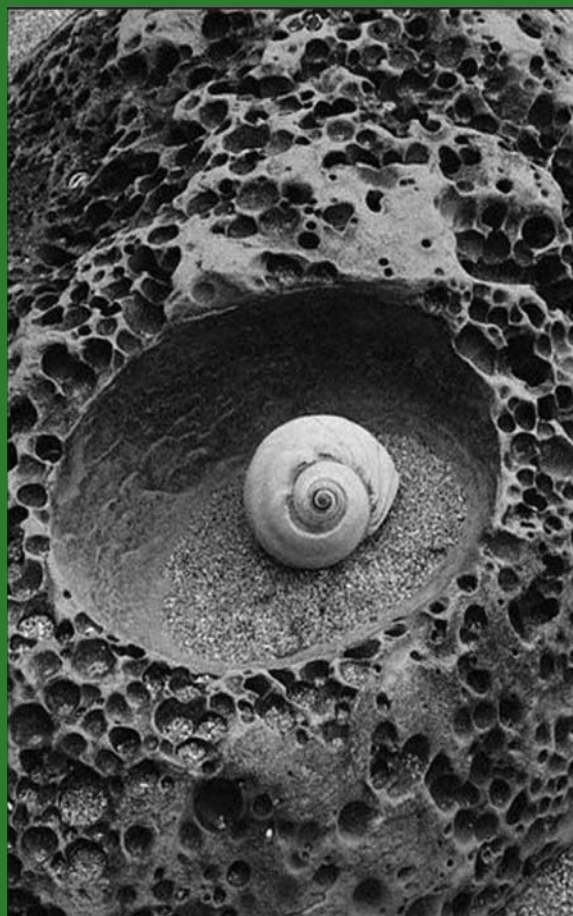
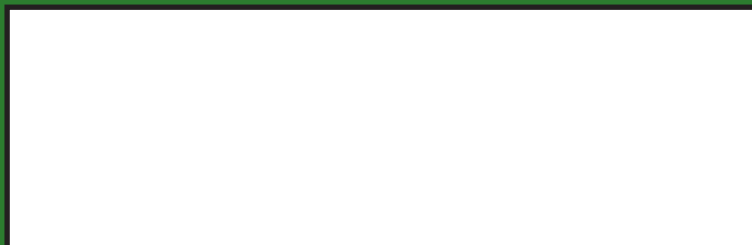
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