

A Gathering of Orphans: Keeping a Foot in Two Worlds  
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ABSTRACT

Emancipatory, prophetic, teaching has its root in the archetype of the orphan. The fiery energy of transformation can be acted on more consciously as we become aware of the many forms the orphan can take. These include the orphan as biology, symptoms and secrets, as history, culture and cosmology, as iconoclast and chosen one, as trickster and elder, as bearer of planetary consciousness. There are strengths and weaknesses to each orphan mode. Keeping a foot in two worlds helps us to avoid the trap of taking ourselves too literally, too seriously. With one foot in the calling of educare, this paper considers the invisible ground upon which the other foot stands in three different ways; as the cutting edge, as the ongoing symptom, as the sensuality of the invisible.

A GATHERING OF ORPHANS: KEEPING A FOOT IN TWO WORLDS

In an earlier attempt (Reynolds, 2005) to clarify the archetype of the orphan, the one-not-good-enough-to-keep, I offered 5 images. They were the orphan as biology, symptoms and secrets, the orphan as history, culture and cosmology, the orphan as iconoclast and chosen one, the orphan as trickster and elder, and the orphan as carrier of planetary consciousness. I made a bold claim that perhaps the path of the orphan was the path of the bodhisattva, not so much the eastern notion as a western, democratized version of the soul of the returning teacher. This essay pushes further, beyond even the orphan as western bodhisattva. The theme of having one foot resting in time, the other in timelessness does open the way for an awareness of inner longevity that is a strong validation. Yet, the influx of such convincing light, gnosis, or as Monick (2006) calls, *unconditional knowledge*, has the dark side of becoming a dogmatic trap. Jorge N. Ferrer describes this dogmatic shadow:

...once one believes oneself to be in possession of a picture of  
“things as they really are,” dialogue with traditions maintaining different spiritual  
visions often become uninteresting and sterile monologue. At its worst, the  
conflicting viewpoints are regarded as less evolved, incoherent or simply false.  
(p. 94)

Our absolute knowledge, the fruit of emancipatory and prophetic teaching, is the educare moment. Educare here means in the Platonic sense of being led out from a shallow, disconnected experience of being alive, to deep connection and interconnection. These moments are the foundation of feeling an inner authority. They reside at a much deeper level than ego authority. They represent the panexperiential source of authority of the living spiritual

traditions as well for the most individualized paths. Unfortunately, it turns out that the *pearl of great price* makes you very lonely. There's no one to talk to because those who have not touched upon it don't get what you are talking about and, as Ferrer notes, those who have experienced an awakening have trouble getting out of guru/preacher/bodhisattva mode.

It is the foot that stands in nowhere, in the invisible world, that we can learn to move. Ferrer goes on to remind us that, "what the spiritual literature suggests then, is that neither the order of emergence of dual and non-dual insight is pre-ordained, nor is their spiritual value universal or pre-given" (p. 105). While it is possible to dutifully and continually release our sense of absolute knowledge, it takes the edge off our loneliness to gather in friendship with others to see through it, hear through it, create through it. So, let us consider the invisible in three ways: as the cutting, growing edge; as the ongoing symptom; and as the sensuality of the invisible.

### THE INVISIBLE AS THE CUTTING, GROWING EDGE

There is an Unrealist parable of the two sleepers (Reynolds, 2001) that bears repeating:  
Once upon a time, two friends lay down and went to sleep. They slept the whole night through, but in the morning were awakened by a conversation that was going on. As they awakened more, they realized that the voices were their own. In fact, they were waking up in a conversation that began in their sleep. As each sleep-talker awoke, s/he joyfully continued the conversation, wide awake in the dream.

This sense of awakening in a conversation already in progress occurs often when those who seek and who are working at their creative edge begin to share from that edge. We are eased of our loneliness when we sense the same invisible guidance coming through the quite individual and original voice of another. There is a remarkable example of this in the relationship between Kandinsky and Schoenberg. Wasserman (2003) writes that the first time Kandinsky went to hear some of Schoenberg's music, he made two quick sketches of the performance, quite possibly during the performance itself. The next day, he made a large painting in oil. The depth of empathy is expressed by Wassily himself in his first letter to Schoenberg, the letter that came to the composer's home along with Impression III (Concert). He wrote: "...what we are striving for and our whole manner of thought and feeling have so much in common that I feel completely justified in expressing my empathy" (p. 25). We know that Kandinsky's response hit the mark because Schoenberg says so in his first letter to Kandinsky. The musician responded:

I am sure that our work has much in common -- and indeed in the most important respects: in what you call the "unlogical" and I call the "elimination of the conscious will in art." I also agree with what you write about the constructive element...I think we would have a lot to say to each other. (p. 25)

Wasserman goes on to note that the ensuing Kandinsky and Schoenberg correspondence reveals, "a wonderful mixture of abstruse theory, keen interest in each other's work, and many warm personal expressions of concern and fellowship" (p. 27). The sharing of the personal cutting, growing edge, where our lead foot intuitively steps toward the unknown in our original work, reveals, is revelatory and inspirational. There is a conversation that wakes us up to the dream that we were already having together. This is the first way to keep a foot in the invisible. The invisible is the intuitively sensed, yet guiding unknown patterns that shape our creative work. A conversation about the cutting edge can be as simple as asking the question, "So, what are you working on right now?" The depths open even further when conversing in the symbolic language of our art-forms, inventions, formulae, dreams and visions.

## IN YOUR SYMPTOM IS YOUR CURRICULUM

*In your symptom is your curriculum*, could be a motto of curriculum formation in holistic education. From holistic perspective of humanity and the cosmos, (Reynolds & Piirto, 2005, 2007), (Miller, 2006), what afflicts us is where we are being called to go into the dark in order to lead out from. Our unforgettable wounds form an aspect depth psychology calls the *daimon* or *genius*. It's as if those following the orphan path come by invitation to stop the cycles of violence, degradation and ignorance. It is as if the pain and suffering in the temporal world calls out to the Spiritual World for assistance. This assistance comes via those who enter into the suffering of the world, those who experience both the wounds and the causes of wounds, and who then create a healing curriculum for self and other.

For example, in our high school, one of the guidance counselors developed a death and dying class for students about to graduate. The curriculum grew, in large part, from the pain of loss suffered by this particular counselor. He was also deeply affected by the grief of loss he observed in the students he advised over the years. The patience and endurance necessary to bring a healing curriculum is usually a matter of decades. It's good to be reminded about the painful slowness of our work. There are years of loneliness pointing to a place that no one else seems to care about or even recognizes as existing. The symptom is inward too, always not quite fully healed, showing up again and again, the same damn thing over and over.

The idea of teachers coming into the world to heal invisible symptoms invites us to walk together through curriculums others have created from their brokenness. We are also invited to offer assistance to help those curriculums be received. A certain faith in synchronicity is necessary, but the need and the curriculum are not far apart when the time has come. You may have know the person that I need to meet to move forward in my teaching and vice verse.

So, to flesh out the rest of the story about the death and dying class at our high school, it wasn't enough to develop this curriculum because the counselor needed the help of others in the administration and community to set it in place. That effort took years.

## THE SENSUALITY OF THE INVISIBLE

In the Olin-Hitt (2006) prophecies, the Holy says that the flesh and the Spirit are unified and are not separate. There is a sensuality to educate that includes the body, requires the body for wholeness. For this to occur, the relationship is marked by selflessness, love of wisdom, and passion. We are called to stand as witnesses to the spiritual realities that inform our actions. The physical vocabulary from individual to individual varies, but the experience of Spirit gives confirmation, guidance and direction. As I write this, I feel a motion and pressure at my heart at the front of my chest. Ferrer gives a general sense of the sensuality of the invisible when he writes:

Human participation in transpersonal and spiritual phenomenon is a creative, multidimensional event that can involve every aspect of human nature, from somatic transfiguration to the awakening of the heart, from erotic communion to visionary co-creation and from contemplative knowing to moral insight. (p.12)

Sharing my own cutting edge, I can be more frank. In the *Urrealist Manifesto*, (2001) I Shared that:

...there are always invisible visitations that enter the manifold space. Something divine can come to the table. These emerge as as-if presences, are felt as shifts in time, are perceived when turns of phrase come forth thick like sandwiches, trailing scintillae, are recognizable where the cramped and constricted ease with

re-newed life. In Urreality, the full body begins to awaken to the conversation, golden chills wash over the shoulders, warm the heart, draw attention to depth. There is a sense of clarity about the face, a clarity of sensing. One is aroused and even the sensate world unveils herself delighting to be seen and truly appreciated. The heart flutters.

Since 2001, my own physical vocabulary of Presence has increased. As I teach, I am very aware of the sensuality of sacred moments. When someone shares from the heart, I may feel warm tingles over my legs, my head, through my back, etc... The golden chills are metaphoric and contain messages important to the fullness of the moment. Interestingly, there is a physical response to writing where opening to the Spirit occurs. I have seen it called, *shaktizap*. You, dear reader could join me in this experiment now. I can tell you that as I am writing, I feel a tingling on my the right side of my face that moved to my left, like an embrace of an invisible hand. This in turn is giving way to my noticing of my breathing and a rush of energy downward across my arms and over my legs. Warm tingles are coming now from my chest. This doesn't always work, but I think if you are able to receive my words with the spirit in which I am sharing them, you may feel it.

This is the third invisible place to stand, upon the sensual response of the body to the invisible Presences. In this stance, the dogma of what has been known gives way to a revealing of what has not yet been. Even more important, this experience of the invisible reminds us of the importance of our own presence in the room when we teach. Our most powerful teaching tool is not contained in any methodology. What speaks loudest about us, what teaches deepest, is our presence. A wholeness that includes a sensual joy of the Holy is to be in the world but not of the world.

## CONCLUSION

The path of the orphan that is the guiding image of emancipatory, prophetic teaching rests upon the invisible. As we move our temporal foot from job to job, conference to conference, we do well when we do not get trapped in a single way of imagining the invisible that supports our other foot. There is no end to the many ways of imagining the invisible, if you will, of imagining nothing.

Orphan Soul (Reynolds, 1999)

When you meet the Orphan Soul

may you talk all night, because the time is full

may you know the growing edge of you

the secret questions, what your dreams told you.

Where did you wake up in this world?

These are the meanings, the signs I explored.

Feel your words grow thick, the synchronistic clues

feel the golden chills for the beautiful and true

Minds from All Times visit our time

Minds from all times are visiting Our Time

When you meet the Orphan Soul

talk of erotic love, the southern and the northern pole.

As philosophers held out their mirror

again you know yourself.

Together the Mind is clearer.

Once in painted caves, cathedral rooms

in Alexandria, the temple and the sweatlodge too.

Know each other by laughter and heart,

by the passion for your work and your Art.

Minds from All Times visit our time

Minds from all times are visiting Our Time

When you meet the Orphan Soul

talk of your loved ones from the young to the invisibles.

Share this ritual, bless the human kind

with an immortal Heart that's in love with Time.

Minds from All Times visit our time

Minds from all times are visiting Our Time.

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