Small Graces:
Mapping a Route of Beauty to the Heart of the World

by
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Abstract

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Utilizing artistic-creative and heuristic methodologies, this thesis examines the role a meditative photographic practice can play in relating an individual to the surrounding world. Drawing on the work of Carl Jung, James Hillman, Robert Sardello, and other depth psychologists, as well as the writings of photographers and artists such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Wassily Kandinsky, this thesis presents a series of photographs that, for the author, capture some of the beauty suffusing his everyday world. The effects of these photographs are then situated within the context of the concepts of the *anima mundi* and Martin Buber's I-Thou style of relation. The author's experience during this practice will be presented as a case study suggesting that a simple, regular appreciation of small moments of beauty serves to situate one in one's environment and restore one to a stronger felt body-sense.

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Chapter I
Introduction

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

Hopkins, 2010, p. 24

> What I am looking for, above all else, is to be attentive to life.

Cartier-Bresson, 1996/1999, p. 66

> Our only chance to escape the blight of mechanization, of acting and thinking alike, of the huge machine which society is becoming, is to restore to life all things through the saving and beneficent power of the human imagination.

Laughlin, 1973, p. 14

> Photographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one—and can help build a nascent one.

Sontag, 1977, p. 17

This thesis seeks to chart a course to the warm, beating heart of the world. In this day and age so ruled by the Concept and the machines it has spawned, how may one break through the fog of intellect and make contact with the world as a living presence? I look around and see so much of Western culture oriented towards the acquisition of experience as an end in itself, caught in a consumerist ideal that sees life as a kind of entertaining tourism, and the value of such a life measured by how many cheap plastic tacks have been pushed onto the map. If one can manage to achieve a world-relation that

seeks the soul of things in this kind of environment, how can it be sustained? Or is modern humanity destined for only fleeting moments of presence?

It is no ordinary map that this thesis seeks. As a modern person I am used to having my maps drawn out for me, neatly gridded, color-coded, and labeled, with letters across and numbers down, as though I were a bird soaring over a patchwork quilt earth. But no such thing is possible with the winding path of living experience. Instead, the necessary map is itself an encounter, placing it in the realm of sacrament and ritual. The real world is a jumble of textures, smells, sights, sounds, and sensed suggestions; this map must navigate those on-the-ground features, up-close and personal, so that every weave and tuck of the flowing land might be felt.

Even the approach to such a map must be made with care. Approaching with an ego intention throws the game from the start. The intent to acquire something via this map—whether that something be material riches, recognition, higher consciousness, or even improved mental health in the form of better functioning—inevitably detours the seeker. The sole intent that can be held is a Soul intent—the meeting of the individual soul with the world-soul, or put more accurately, the realization that the individual soul, rather than standing alone, is but a piece of the *anima mundi*. In the process, not only is a new sense of wholeness found, but a kind of magic is invoked, creating the world as it is experienced much like the Australian Aborigines' songlines, which serve as both geographical maps and incantations that renew the land as they are sung (Abram, 1996, pp. 166-167).

For now the need for a map that helps find the way back to the heart of the world is taken as a given. For the curious, it has been well documented by ecologist and

philosopher David Abram (1996), founder of archetypal psychology James Hillman (1992), and depth psychologist and cultural commentator Robert Sardello (2004), among others. All of these writers have described the ways in which the modern disconnect from the world has helped generate the numerous problems threatening civilization—and in some cases, life on earth itself. In some ways the vision these writers lay out is grand and far-reaching, calling for a reimagining of civilization's dominant mode of relating to the world, a shift in the use of language, and a new kind of consciousness. Such global projects are to be saluted, but this thesis started from a much smaller, more personal, and not-at-all-thought-out place.

Area of Interest

In December of 2009, my first year at Pacifica, my wife received a Canon Rebel XS digital Single Lens Reflex camera as a Christmas present. Although not a high-end camera it produced colors and textures that were strikingly rich. Not long after, one January day, the blooming of a seemingly confused tulip tree caught my eye; something about its colors and lines seen in the unique context of winter light trapped my attention. I remembered the new camera, and soon became absorbed in photographing the pink, purple, and green buds of the tree. Over the next year this sort of experience became semi-regular. A detail of my surroundings would grab me and the camera would be the essential tool that allowed for its exploration. Occasionally I showed the pictures to my wife, but otherwise kept them to myself. There was so little attention put on the activity and my skills so raw that I can barely even describe this activity as a hobby; an occasional diversion would make a better description.

But in the spring of my second year at Pacifica something shifted; I was possessed with a new intensity by this photographic spirit. Suddenly it was the only thing I was interested in, to the detriment of my school assignments. Words, previously my natural form of expression, ceased to flow for me. I could neither focus on reading nor organize my thoughts into coherent sentences. Though alarming at first, this failure of my verbal skills served to open a space for my visual sense to come to life, and as it did the world came alive with it. I felt different, and I tended to get cranky if I did not spend some time every day taking pictures.

As I began to exhaust the surfaces of our house and yard I started moving further out into the world. Power lines became an obsession for a week or so, also vacant lots, parking garages, and the geometrical scaffolding on buildings under construction. Times of day achieved a new importance, as did the weather. During the summer there was little rain and few clouds; the high and unbroken sun produced especially harsh and ugly light in the mid-day that seemed to drain all life from the world. Mornings and evenings, on the other hand, when the light had filtered through more of the atmosphere, were still okay. One day there was cloud cover and the resulting diffusion of the sun was like a drink of water in and of itself—colors returned, and with them the vitality of things.

The all-consuming nature of this task was not something I had experienced before, and it took me by surprise. It came at the very moment when I was trying to make a final decision on a thesis topic. The idea of a photographic production thesis had not occurred to me at all—indeed, it seemed far away from everything I had intended to focus on in coming to Pacifica and from all of the thesis ideas I had consciously entertained up to that point. Yet having experienced this obsession there seemed little I

could do except accede to whatever unconscious force was declaring this particular activity to be so important at this particular time. As I have worked on this thesis, attempting to elucidate the significance of that intense experience, I have come to see this topic as a culmination of sorts of my time at Pacifica. Early in my time at Pacifica I had a series of intense dreams and active imaginations that I struggled to make sense of at the time. In retrospect, however, they all seem to have been pointing in the direction of this thesis.

A central tenet of this thesis—one I have largely borrowed from Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996)—is the necessity of reincorporating into modern consciousness the notion of *participation mystique* (Lévy-Bruhl, 1910/1966), a mode of interacting with the world that has been largely associated with indigenous, oral cultures, the kind of cultures so often referred to as primitive in the literature of the first half of the 20th century. There will be more to say about participation mystique later; for now the important points are its association to these cultures, and its association with bodily sensation.

With this in mind a quick look at two of these dreams and one active imagination, all from my second quarter at Pacifica, will be useful. I will not attempt to fully analyze any of these, only to flesh out the ways they seem to highlight the path this thesis has taken. It is my hope that with these images in mind the themes of this thesis will shine through more clearly. Here is the first dream.

> With my wife and daughter I flee a city of very tall buildings because of dangerous winds. We go to a small village in the Mexican countryside. But even here a lone huge skyscraper is under construction as part of the building boom, completely out of place in relation to its surroundings. I worry that the skyscraper is a display of arrogance that will invite destruction. In the distance, coming from the city, I spot a violent windstorm, a huge tornado churning across the plain. The

> skyscraper begins to sway back and forth, and I am terrified that it is going to topple. The storm gets closer and closer and the building sways further and further, until it finally comes crashing down. In the chaos I am afraid I will be blamed for its collapse and I flee, going into hiding with a Mexican woman who pretends to be my wife in order to protect me from the local boss who is hunting for me. (Author’s dream, October 15, 2009)

The beginning of the dream seems to indicate a situation that has become untenable. The towers—with all their associations of intellect, accomplishment, drive, and progress—had become too large, unable to withstand the onslaught of the world. The response was to flee this situation in favor of the more rustic countryside, populated with people who lived in closer relation to the earth. Yet even there the attitude of exploitation, of profit making, of mechanically sticking within the letter of the law but disregarding the spirit of the law had penetrated. I feared the arrogance on display there, certain it would bring a wrath, and it did. The small village was no safer from the winds than was the city—perhaps even less safe—and the great wind came and tore down the tower.

This situation indicates to me a progression of ego consciousness from a situation where the indigenous contents of the psyche are completely out of consciousness, to one where those contents are being exploited for the ego’s purposes, to one where the ego has been reduced, brought down to the level of those other contents. One way to approach this thesis, then, is to view these photographs as a way of allowing these other elements to gain a voice. It is worth noting the importance of the anima figure at the end of the dream who rescues and transforms the ego figure in such a way that it can walk amongst the others. Without this anima character, that ego figure would remain in opposition to the other figures; it is only through her intervention that he is allowed to make contact with the others on an up-close-and-personal basis.

One other observation about this dream seems relevant—it is strongly archetypal. It startled me, and when I woke I immediately started making associations. Among them were the World Trade Center towers, the Tower card of the Tarot deck, and the biblical Tower of Babel, all of which have strongly archetypal connotations. When I researched this last association I discovered, much to my surprise, that although the method of the Tower of Babel's destruction was unspecified in the biblical story I was familiar with, multiple other sources declared that it was destroyed in a great wind. "The/ Lord sent a mighty wind against the tower and overthrew it/upon the earth" (Book of Jubilees, trans. 1902, x:25). "Straightaway the Immortal added to the winds/A mighty force, and tempests from above/Hurled down the huge tower" (Sibylline Oracles, trans. 1890, III:119-121). The eerie overlap between the dream and this myth cemented for me the importance of this dream.

Shortly after this dream I did an active imagination in which my manner of relating to the world became a more central issue. Starting the session I invited whatever might come, and the figure I saw was an enormous indigenous man, dressed in a loincloth. He refused to speak and seemed angry with me. Eventually he quietly led me on an expedition meant to test me—but the details of the imagination are less important here than the figure. The figure that my unconscious presented was a being from outside Western civilization, a being very connected to the earth and the surrounding world through his senses, and a being who held me in a large degree of contempt for my lack of a similar connection.

Finally, in early December of my first year at Pacifica, actually on return from a session, I became sick with appendicitis. It was not standard appendicitis, which usually

proceeds quickly, with the pain becoming specific and localized to a particular point within "12 to 24 hours after the illness starts" ("Appendicitis," n.d.). Instead my appendicitis just seemed like a stomach bug that kept going, characterized by low-grade abdominal discomfort. It was two weeks before I finally went to see a doctor about it, and his probing and a CAT scan revealed an inflamed appendix. Even then the emergency room refused to operate on it because I had had no fever and seemed in no danger of immediate rupture. My gut, it seems, was demanding my attention, pregnant with something new. Oddly enough, we found out a few weeks later that my wife was pregnant with our second child.

Already this seemed to be something other than just a standard case of appendicitis. Even so, the thing that, in retrospect, convinced me that there was deeper significance was another dream I had during this period, a dream in which the sun went black. At the time I found this image alarming, but in working on this thesis I came across the alchemical notion of the *sol niger*, the black sun, that is traditionally associated with the *nigredo*, the beginning of the alchemical opus. Analytical psychology founder Carl Jung (1956/1970) explained the significance of the image.

> In the heat of the *nigredo* the "*anima media natura* holds dominion." The old philosophers called this blackness the Raven's Head or black sun. The *anima media natura* corresponds to the Platonic world-soul and the Wisdom of the Old Testament. In this state the sun is surrounded by the *anima media natura* and is therefore black. It is a state of incubation or pregnancy. Great importance was attached to the blackness as the starting point of the work. (p. 512 [*CW* 14, para. 729])

Apparently, the attention my gut was demanding was also the beginning of my opus.

It is also worth noting that in Japanese, the term *hara* “refers to the abdomen or lower part of the torso, including belly, guy, intestines and stomach” (Erendt & Tanita, 2010, p. 8). Further,

> the ancient Japanese believed that it is in the *hara* that one feels, thinks and makes decisions, which in contrast English symbolizes with a focus on the heart. In Japanese *hara* is at the core of life and symbolizes the whole life of a person.
>
> Since *hara* is one’s very persona, a metonym of person, it is considered that one’s relationships with others, the attitudes/reactions toward outside things and events as well as emotions /state of mind control the *hara* and vice versa. (p. 8)

This potential connection between the gut and the heart will become important later in this thesis.

Depth psychologist Robert Romanyshyn (1989) and Abram (1996), among others, have documented the way this very disconnect I was wrestling with has become endemic to Western civilization. Therefore this thesis should be of wide potential interest in the general population, and particularly for anyone who seeks a deeper connection to his or her surroundings. In my experience, the practice described here deepens one’s sense of place by building a capacity for noticing the details of one’s backdrop, details that usually go unnoticed and are therefore taken for granted. Further, the widespread availability of digital camera technology makes this practice widely accessible and convenient, making it ideal for anyone drawn to a meaningful but uncomplicated creative practice.

Methodology

With these beginnings in mind, this thesis will examine how a regular meditative photographic practice might shift one’s stance towards the world from an I-It relation to an I-Thou relation. This latter looks like a heart—and gut—engagement with the world, inner and outer. The actual creation of the included photographs (see Appendix) was an expression of the artistic-creative method, and the heuristic method (Moustakas, 1990)

will be used in the analysis and extraction of conceptual lessons from the creative experiences described. For the goal laid out here, to produce a map through human experience towards contact with the world, the artistic-creative method is essential. Phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1948/1964) described art's suitability to such a task.

> It is not enough for . . . an artist . . . to create and express an idea; they must also awaken the experiences which will make their idea take root in the consciousness of others. A successful work has the strange power to teach its own lesson. The reader or spectator who follows the clues of the book or painting, by setting up stepping stones and rebounding from side to side guided by the obscure clarity of a particular style, will end by discovering what the artist wanted to communicate. (pp. 19-20)

The finished product, therefore, should be a kind of self-correcting guide to the heart of the experience under discussion. But the production of that work is also important here. As creative arts researcher Estelle Barrett (2004) noted,

> conventional forms of criticism tend to focus on the finished product rather than material, intellectual and cognitive processes that produced it. The . . . internal representation of ideas that produced the artwork is then obscured by the vehicle in which it is carried. (para. 9)

These internal ideas are important because of the "growing recognition of the limits of traditional ways of representing the world [that] has given rise to a search for alternative approaches to transform and represent the contents of consciousness" (para. 11).

It is a natural fit to pair this artistic-creative approach with a heuristic approach. The heuristic method "seeks to discover the nature and meaning of the phenomenon itself and to illuminate it from direct first-person accounts" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 38). To this end,

> the crucial processes in heuristics . . . are: *concentrated gazing* on something that attracts or compels one into a search for meaning; *focus on a topic* or formulation

> of the question; and *methods* of preparing, collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data. (p. 39)

Out of the combination of these methods, then, comes not just a produced body of work—in this case in the form of a collection of photographs—but also a conceptual framework within which to derive some sense of meaning from the creative process itself.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter II serves to outline the theoretical underpinnings and research necessary to the developments of Chapter III. The framing of the ideas in this thesis relies heavily on existential philosopher and theologian Martin Buber's (1957/1970) notions of I-It and I-Thou relations, and therefore Chapter II begins with an elaboration of those notions. The process under discussion in this thesis is essentially a kind of alteration of vision, the introduction of a new way of seeing. However, before that new way of seeing can be introduced, the old way of seeing must be described. That style of vision belonged not just to me, but was in large measure inherited from the civilization in which I grew up. Therefore Chapter II continues with a historical overview of the objective style of vision. Next it discusses the concept of participation mystique (Abram, 1996; Lévy-Bruhl, 1910/1966), as the new style of seeing that this thesis seeks to elaborate relies heavily on that idea. The connection to the world that is regained through the cultivation of a sophisticated participation is one that is ensouled; in such a relation not only is an individual soul made, but also the world soul. Hence, Chapter II proceeds with a discussion of the ideas of the anima mundi and its relation to aesthetics (Hillman, 1992). Then the possibilities of art and photography as a connecting tissue between the individual psyche and the world-soul are examined. In conjunction with the discussion of

art, Chapter II finishes by expounding on the importance of beauty and ugliness to the soul-making process (Hillman, 1992).

Chapter III starts by describing the artistic process utilized in this thesis and explores the thematic implications of that process. It then examines the qualitative shifts in experience that resulted from the process, in terms both of how I related to the world and of how I related to myself. Chapter IV summarizes the findings of the thesis. It examines the ramifications of the ideas here for the field of counseling psychology and suggests further areas of research.

Chapter II
Literature Review

> Archetypal psychology attempts to connect present experience to historical culture. . . . Hoping to open a closed door long bolted from two sides—history and its scholarship bearing witness only to the dead and gone, and psychology utterly contained within the painfully present and personal subjective soul. . . . When scholars speak only to documents and psychologists only to patients, culture languishes, its soul shallows, unrooted in historical knowledge, and historical knowledge without soul.
>
> Hillman, 2006h, p. 222

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the theoretical underpinnings necessary to understand how one might develop a deep connection with the world's soul. It will start by examining Buber's (1957/1970) notions of I-It and I-Thou relations, which will provide a useful language to contain the discussion. Then this literature review will consider how the I-It relation has become the dominant mode in Western society and seek to understand some of the historical origins of that dominance (Romanyshyn, 1989, 2008; Weber 1921/1958). From there, the chapter will look to anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's (1910/1966) concept of participation mystique in the hope of understanding humanity's historical way of being in the world. Next, an attempt will be made to define a developmental individuation timeline that incorporates these ideas into a narrative of how one becomes separated from the world and how one may reconnect. The important role of beauty and ugliness in this process, and their relation to the world soul, or anima mundi, will be examined (Hillman, 1992). Finally, the chapter will conclude with an

appraisal of art and photography-as-art in approaching the world in an I-Thou fashion (Cartier-Bresson, 1996/1999; Hillman, 2006f; Kandinsky, 1970/1994c).

I-It and I-Thou

Buber (1957/1970) defined the I-It and I-Thou or I-You relations in his work, *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du* in the original German). “One basic word is the word pair I-You. The other basic word is the word pair I-It; but this basic word is not changed when He or She takes the place of It” (p. 53). The pairing of the I with You or It indicates that Buber was not merely talking about different ways for an I to approach objects in the world, which is part of it, but also about the ways in which the I itself is shifted when it engages in different kinds of relations. Roughly an I-It style of relation would be one in which the I conceptualizes the It, allowing the possibility of analysis, classification, judgment, and optimization. An I-You relation, on the other hand, would be one in which the I engages in a reciprocity with the You, each fully seeing the other outside the filter of abstractions. “The world as experience belongs to the basic word I-It. The basic word I-You establishes the world of relation” (p. 56).

It should be noted that the I-You relation (Buber, 1957/1970) was originally translated as I-Thou (Kaufmann, 1970), and is commonly referred to as such. The translation by scholar Walter Kaufmann (1970) used in this thesis, however, in an attempt to “liberate I-Thou from affectation” (p. 15), altered the translation to I-You. In this thesis the two terms will be used interchangeably.

Buber (1957/1970) associated the I-It relation with

> the sphere of goal-directed verbs . . . activities that have something for their object. I perceive something. I feel something. I imagine something. I want something. I sense something. I think something . . . All this and its like is the basis of the realm of It. (p. 54)

He went on to note that in an I-It relation the It becomes “an object of detached perception and experience” (p. 80). This detachment has an effect on the perceiver as well as the perceived, reducing the I in such a relationship “from substantial fullness to the functional one-dimensionality of a subject that experiences and uses objects” (p. 80).

Objectification and observation without participation are the hallmarks of I-It. Buber (1957/1970) illustrated this aspect:

> He bends down to examine particulars under the objectifying magnifying glass of close scrutiny, or he uses the objectifying telescope of distant vision to arrange them as mere scenery. In his contemplation he isolates them without any feeling for the exclusive or joins them without any world feeling. . . . Now things seem to him to be constructed of their qualities. . . . Only now does he place things in a spatio-temporal-causal context; only now does each receive its place, its course, its measurability, its conditionality. . . . Only It can be put in order. Only as things cease to be our You and become our It do they become subject to coordination. (pp. 80-81)

Science, as a discipline that seeks to classify the world and order it by a set of causal laws, is inherently an I-It mode. This is not to say that science is not useful, just that it is limited in its inability to afford proper status to the particular. That inability tends to wash the distinctive features out of the world. The things of the world seen in this way become mere objects—“the representative mode of thinking, which is also that of science, brings about the universal loss of things by flattening out their inner depth and self-sufficiency, their standing-in-themselves” (Avens, 2003, p. 60).

The image of the one-way mirror captures the essence of the I-It relation. An observer sits, unobserved, isolated from the subject of observation, a cold, dispassionate, and objective evaluator and classifier of what is seen. In the one-way mirror’s most modern form the physical glass is gone, the mirror instead reduced to the small and often unnoticed eye of a camera. The observer has become even more physically removed, the

importance of physical proximity completely obliterated. The proliferation of such cameras seems characteristic of the age—the *Guardian* newspaper recently determined that in the United Kingdom there is now "one camera for every 32 UK citizens" (Lewis, 2011, para. 6).

A haunting version of the authoritarian potential inherent in this image was captured brilliantly in the iconic 1967 movie *Cool Hand Luke* (Carrol & Rosenberg), which tells the story of a small-time renegade sent to prison for drunkenly sawing the heads off parking meters. With his buoyant happy-go-lucky attitude, Luke becomes a hero of sorts to the other prisoners leading the forces of authority to make an example of him by bludgeoning him into submission. Boss Godfrey, who oversees the prisoners, lives behind a pair of mirrored sunglasses, watching and waiting for the moment when the prisoners step out of line, the shotgun in his hands the physical embodiment of the power implicit in his gaze. The prisoners describe him as the man with no eyes, but he is also the man with no voice, an emotionless black hole that takes in all sights and sounds but gives nothing back. The only thing he responds to is behavior—step out of the approved behavioral norm and one can be sure of a reaction.

A different but more horrifying vision of the I-It relation, one that captured its potentially corrosive effect on the soul of both observer and observed, appeared in film director Michael Powell's 1960 movie, *Peeping Tom*. In the film Mark—a psychopath and himself the product of intense childhood observation and experimentation by his scientist father—works by day as a quiet and introverted movie cameraman. At night, however, he comes alive as he films the reactions of prostitutes as he murders them. The film may be viewed as a nightmare study of what happens when an observer becomes so

removed that he or she loses the ability to have a response to human anguish, when other people become nothing more than objects of observation and judgment. Ironically, Mark is a prudish, repressed fellow and although the film is never explicit on this point, he seems at times to see himself as an agent of sexual morality, recalling Jungian analyst and author Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig's (1971/1999) observation that "the power drive is given free rein when it can appear under the cloak of objective and moral rectitude" (p. 23).

Both of these films presented nightmare visions of what the I-It relation might become. But director Wim Wenders's haunting 1987 film, *Wings of Desire*, captured the potential pathos of one locked into an I-It relation with the world. The movie depicts a group of observing but unseen angels who watch the passions and vicissitudes of human life in Berlin from the distance of eternity. They too seem to long for life—not just an infinite and observing but ultimately impotent life, but a physical, embodied life. Eventually one angel makes the leap across the glass to the mortal world, motivated by love for a beautiful circus performer. In the process he surrenders the remove from which he has been viewing, losing eternity but finally able to feel the full caress of the world and the wholeness of an I-You relation.

In contrast to the analytic character of the I-It, in an I-You relation, "the relation to the You is unmediated. Nothing conceptual intervenes between I and You, no prior knowledge and no imagination . . . No purpose intervenes between I and You, no greed, and no anticipation" (Buber, 1957/1970, pp. 62-63). The world of You is the world of direct encounter, and in that encounter is found both a wholeness of self and a wholeness beyond self in a unity with the You.

> The basic word I-You can be spoken only with one's whole being. The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me,

> can never be accomplished without me. I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You. (p. 62)

The I-You notion is difficult to capture in words, but it seems to spark an intuitive understanding. Buber (1957/1970) used an example to clarify its nature, worth repeating here.

> It can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me.
>
> . . . .
>
> Whatever belongs to the tree is included: its form and its mechanics, its colors and its chemistry, its conversation with the elements and its conversation with the stars—all this in its entirety.
>
> The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood; it confronts me bodily and has to deal with me as I must deal with it—only differently.
>
> . . . .
>
> Does the tree then have consciousness, similar to our own? I have no experience of that. But thinking that you have brought this off in your own case, must you again divide the indivisible? What I encounter is neither the soul of a tree or a dryad, but the tree itself. (pp. 58-59)

As Buber made clear here, the essence of the I-You relation is encountering the object in its particularity—not the tree as exemplary of the category Tree, but the tree as this particular configuration of matter that meets one's senses.

Buber (1957/1970) was very clear that both modes of relating are necessary. "Without It a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human" (p. 85). Indeed, in his discussion of art he described an ideal in which the two modes bleed seamlessly back and forth into one another. "That which confronts me is fulfilled through the encounter through which it enters into the world of things in order to remain incessantly effective, incessantly It—but also infinitely able to become again a You, enchanting and inspiring" (pp. 65-66).

Even so, Buber (1957/1970) also noted modern humanity's tendency towards the I-It relation. "However the history of the individual and that of the human race may diverge in other respects, they agree in this at least; both signify a progressive increase of the It-world" (p. 87). Buber related the individual tendency towards I-It to "its multifarious purpose—the preservation, alleviation, and equipment of human life" (p. 88), and observed that "the improvement of the capacity for experience and use generally involves a decrease in man's power to relate—that power which alone can enable man to live in the spirit" (p. 89).

The Objectifying Eye

A historical precursor of the one-way mirror style of vision was Jeremy Bentham's design for what he termed the Panopticon (Foucault, 1977/1980). This design involved a central observation tower surrounded by a ring of cells, each cell backlit so that an anonymous observer in the tower might be watching any cell at any moment. The intention of the design was to produce "an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself" (Foucault, 1977/1980, p. 155). The self-enforcement that this design was intended to produce is reminiscent of Buber's (1957/1970) I-It relation, a stance of self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-control. In short, the Panopticon was meant to engender an I-It relation between the individual and him or herself.

The Panopticon incorporated a new way of relating to the observed. "The arrangement in space that was afforded by the Panopticon facilitated the conditions under which these persons could, according to the norms constructed by the organizations, be

classified, qualified, measured, compared, differentiated, and judged" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 69). Here in this design are visible the first glimmerings of something that has become almost cliché in modern American culture, the treatment of the individual as a quantifiable, measurable entity, rather than as a full-bodied Other (Foucault, 1977/1980). "Like a tiny blade of grass/In a great big field/To workers I'm just another drone/To Ma Bell I'm just another phone/I'm just another statistic on a sheet/To teachers I'm just another child/To IRS I'm just another file" (Seger, 1978). Lost is the particularity of engagement with an individual. In its place is the cumulative and statistical paradigm that seems to be taken for granted in today's society.

Implicit in the Panopticon and the one-way mirror observational style is a root metaphor—what Romanyshyn (2008) called "a psychology of seeing" (p. 512)—that holds a detached and distant observing eye to be the most suitable way of seeing. As natural as this mode of perception is to modern Westerners, Romanyshyn demonstrated that it was, in fact, an artificial invention that had its origins in the 15th-century artistic development of linear perspective. Rather than capturing the world as experienced, this new technique captured the world as it would look from a theoretical fixed vanishing point.

> Linear perspective, which already presumes as a pre-condition for its appearance that space is infinite and homogenous, relies essentially on the notion of a vanishing point . . . [that] fixes in pictorial space the point toward which parallel lines converge . . . The vanishing point makes visible a new relation between the see-er and the seen, between humanity and the world. That relation is one according to which one can best know the world by removing oneself from it . . . Increasing distance brings greater knowledge. Indeed, the ideal embedded within the technique of linear perspective is a distance which is infinite. (p. 507)

Linear perspective privileges a point of view removed from the world, a point of view that would allow a viewer sitting at that remove to ascertain a previously inaccessible

world-knowledge. Art historian Helen Gardner (as cited in Romanyshyn, 1989) noted that linear perspective "made possible scale drawings, maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams—those means of exact representation without which modern science and technology would be impossible" (p. 33)—in short the foundations of the modern world.

The significance of the change can be seen in Romanyshyn's (2008) description of a piece of pre-linear-perspective art.

> That anonymous artist and his canvas depict eyes whose sensing of the world is a sensuous contact with it, eyes which in looking at what they see caress and are caressed by what they see, eyes in the midst of the world, surrounded by it as it were, rather than an eye removed from the world in order to confront it head on . . . along the straight lines sketched out by the geometry of linear perspective. (p. 512)

In the process of this change the instrument of vision becomes detached from the rest of the body, elevated like the eye on top of the pyramid on the back of a dollar bill, and other ways of knowing the world are forgotten. "Linear perspective, in making the eye the world's measure, has transformed the self into a spectator, the world into a spectacle, and the body into a specimen" (Romanyshyn, 1989, p. 33).

Without access to the body the sensuous character of being in the world is lost, and this loss impacts not only how humanity relates to things, but also how humanity relates to itself.

> While such a distance yields a more comprehensive, broader knowledge of the city than one can obtain by moving through it, that man on the hill—the detached, distant, objective observer of modern life—. . . 'will never know from that distance either the words of anger or the sounds of love uttered by those living in the city.' And without that knowledge, a knowledge born within a more intimate space, is not that figure destined to become increasingly indifferent to, and even perhaps incapable of, understanding such knowledge? (Romanyshyn, 1989, p. 89)

Romanyshyn (1989) intimated a point that will be revisited later and is indeed at the heart of this thesis—that the sensuous connection to the world is necessary to self-knowledge. Forget the world, and one forgets oneself.

If linear perspective was the father of the objectifying eye, it was Calvinism that seemed to turn that eye towards the individual. As sociologist Max Weber (1921/1958) noted, John Calvin's doctrine of predestination, "derived not, as with Luther, from religious experience, but from the logical necessity of his thought" (p. 102), declared that "God's grace is, since His decrees cannot change, as impossible for those to whom He has granted it to lose as it is unattainable for those to whom He has denied it" (p. 104). The inevitable consequence of such a doctrine "was a feeling of unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual . . . No one could help him. No priest . . . No Sacraments . . . No Church . . . Finally, even no God. For even Christ had died only for the elect" (p. 104). This doctrine took the subject-object paradigm that grew out of the development of linear perspective and placed God in the role of the subject and all of humanity into the role of objects. Nor was this doctrine limited to the Presbyterians, the direct theological descendants of Calvin. Weber (1921/1958) noted its influence on both the Baptist and Methodist sects (p. 125).

In the face of this awful uncertainty about one's fate it was almost inevitable that some sort of pressure valve would develop, and that valve took the form of worldly evaluation. "However useless good works might be as a means of attaining salvation . . . they are indispensable as a sign of election. They are the technical means, not of purchasing salvation, but of getting rid of the fear of damnation" (Weber, 1921/1958, p. 115). The result was a constant observation of self and others. The observation of self

was imperative since “only a life guided by constant thought could achieve conquest over the state of nature” (p. 118), and the Calvinist “could not hope to atone for hours of weakness or of thoughtlessness by increased good will at other times” (p. 117).

Thus, wherever the doctrine of predestination predominated—including among the Puritans who settled America—a type of evaluation based on observed behavior came to dominate (Weber, 1921/1958). One knew one’s place, as did everyone else in one’s community, by the preponderance of good acts. “The Calvinist . . . creates his own salvation, or, as would be more correct, the conviction of it . . . This creation . . . [must consist] in a systematic self-control which at every moment stands before the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned” (Weber, 1921/1958, p. 115).

In his discussion of Buber’s relevance for psychotherapy, Jungian analyst Mario Jacoby (1984) stated that “the I-It attitude would mean that the world and one’s fellow men are seen only as objects” (pp. 61- 62). The Calvinist behavioral attitude engendered this sort of relation between people, encouraging neighbor to view neighbor as object rather than encounter. Writing of this attitude Weber (1921/1958) noted, “it comes out . . . in the strikingly frequent repetition, especially in the English Puritan literature, of warnings against any trust in the aid of friendship of men” (p. 106). Indeed, the judgment could be quite harsh. Weber detailed:

> This consciousness of divine grace of the elect and holy was accompanied by an attitude toward the sin of one’s neighbour, not of sympathetic understanding based on consciousness of one’s own weakness, but of hatred and contempt for him as an enemy of God bearing the signs of eternal damnation. (p. 122)

Calvinism also turned this harsh objectifying judgment onto the sensuous connection with the things of the world.

> Combined with the harsh doctrines of the absolute transcendentality of God and the corruption of everything pertaining to the flesh, this inner isolation of the individual contains . . . the reason for the entirely negative attitude of Puritanism to all the sensuous and emotional elements in culture and in religion. (Weber, 1921/1958, p. 105)

Later the relationship between this sensuous connection to the world and magic, in the sense that Abram (1996) defined it, will be explored more deeply. For now Abram's definition alone will suffice to shed some light on the Calvinist project.

> Magic . . . in its perhaps most primordial sense, is the experience of existing in a world made up of multiple intelligences, the intuition that every form one perceives—from the swallow swooping overhead to the fly on a blade of grass, and indeed the blade of grass itself—is an *experiencing* form, an entity with its own predilections and sensations. (pp. 9-10)

Keeping this definition in mind, it is fascinating to read Weber's (1921/1958) description of Calvinism's relationship to magic.

> That great historic process in the development of religions, the elimination of magic from the world which had begun with the old Hebrew prophets and, in conjunction with Hellenistic scientific thought, had repudiated all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin, came here to its logical conclusion. The genuine Puritan even rejected all signs of religious ceremony at the grave and buried his nearest and dearest without song or ritual in order that no superstition, no trust in the effects of magical and sacramental forces on salvation, should creep in. (p. 103)

The objectifying eye of Calvinism therefore forbade the individual from treating the forms all around—animal, vegetable, or mineral—as living entities in their own right, each a potential Thou to the observer's I. Instead the individual was compelled to approach each form as an It, and the objectifying eye was locked firmly in place. Buber (1957/1970) described how the subject-object divide arises from such an attitude:

> The I that has emerged proclaims itself as the carrier of sensations and the environment as their object . . . Once the sentence 'I see the tree' has been pronounced in such a way that it no longer relates a relation between a human I and a tree You but the perception of the tree object by the human consciousness, it has erected the crucial barrier between subject and object. (pp. 74-75)

But as Abram (1996) pointed out, killing off this sensuous connection with the world also broke humanity's connection with itself. "By linguistically defining the surrounding world as a determinate set of objects, we cut our conscious, speaking selves off from the spontaneous life of our sensing bodies" (p. 56).

Lest this discussion become too lost in the mists of time, it should be noted that the objectifying eye is alive and well in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health today. Indeed, according to apostate psychiatrist Thomas Szasz (1974) the entire modern notion of mental health—without which there could be no notion of mental illness—has been built on behavioral observation, on an I-It relation.

> Modern psychiatry . . . began not by identifying . . . diseases by means of the established methods of pathology, but by creating a new criterion of what constitutes disease: to the established criterion of detectable alteration of *bodily structure* was now added the fresh criterion of alteration of *bodily function*; and, as the former was detected by observing the patient's body, so the latter was detected by observing his behavior. (p. 12)

Likewise French historian of science Michel Foucault (1961/1965), in his discussion of the development of the pre-Freudian asylum, wrote of the "passage from a world of Censure to a universe of Judgment . . . thereby a psychology of madness becomes possible. . . . It is judged only by its acts. . . . Madness no longer exists except as *seen*" (p. 250). This attitude is recognizable in the heavy emphasis on so-called evidence-based therapies (Rowland & Goss, 2000), evidence that inevitably refers to behavioral, statistical evidence, rather than the evidence of a specific therapist with a specific patient.

Participation Mystique and I-Thou

The magic is, of course, not really dead. Where then, if Western civilization has become so engrained behind the glass wall, alternating between the impotent voyeurism of Wenders' (1987) angels and the destructive voyeurism of Powell's (1960) cameraman

psychopath, may modern man find it? Depth psychologist and author Thomas Moore (1996) pointed the way when he wrote of the need “to return to childhood and recover its truths, its vision, its logic, its sense of time and space, its extraordinary cosmology, and its creative physics if we want a way out of the black-and-white world of disenchantment” (p. xvi). Indeed, magic is alive and well for my 4-year-old daughter. For her a hairbrush can be a close personal friend, a backpack laying in the hallway a monster that must be vanquished to the attic, and the space under her bed the lair of a giant lizard. This phenomenon is probably familiar to anyone who has been around young children; equally familiar is its disappearance as those children grow older and the sense of loss that often leaves the Western adult with a sense of longing for that previous condition. Picasso’s quip caught this sense of a lost vision— “It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child” (as cited in Scigliano, 2005, p. 296). In her classic book, *Mary Poppins*, author Pamela L. Travers (1934) captured a similar sentiment:

> “Listen, listen, the wind’s talking,” said [baby] John, tilting his head to one side. “Do you really mean we won’t be able to hear *that* when we’re older, Mary Poppins?”
>
> “You’ll hear alright,” said Mary Poppins, “but you won’t understand . . . it can’t be helped. It’s how things happen.” (p. 144)

In her story Travers made clear that that world was not gone, just lost. That magical world is not less real than this one, just inaccessible, a theme that will be returned to later.

Jung (1928/1954) noted the similarities between this Western childlike relation to the world and the world relation of indigenous peoples.

> The child is psychologically more or less identical with its environment, and especially with its parents. This peculiarity is one of the most conspicuous features of the primitive psyche, for which the French anthropologist, Lévy-Bruhl, coined the term ‘participation mystique.’ (p. 149 [*CW* 17, para. 253])

It should be noted that much of the terminology used in Lévy-Bruhl's (1910/1966, 1922/1923) work is unfortunate, as is the frequent implication that this mode of experience is childish. Indeed, Lévy-Bruhl himself renounced much of the terminology and the notion that participation mystique was limited to what he had termed "primitive" or "undeveloped" peoples, without abandoning the core idea that participation is a fundamental mode of human experience (Bunzel, 1966, p. xvii). Although Lévy-Bruhl's (1910/1966, 1922/1923) language was very much of his time, his project sought to elevate the thinking of these cultures to a level equivalent to that of modern Western civilization. In his own words Lévy-Bruhl (1922/1923) said:

> Let us rid our minds of all preconceived ideas in entering upon an objective study of primitive mentality . . . Then we shall no longer define the mental activity of primitives beforehand as a rudimentary form of our own, and consider it childish and almost pathological. On the contrary, it will appear to be normal under the conditions in which it is employed, to be both complex and developed in its own way. (pp. 32-33)

Such a project should be familiar to anyone involved in a humanist strain of psychotherapy. The focus here will be on the concept and its overlap with Buber's (1957/1970) notion of the I-Thou relation.

Abram (1996) summarized Lévy-Bruhl's thought, noting that

> the word "participation" was used by Lévy-Bruhl to characterize the animistic logic of indigenous, oral peoples—for whom ostensibly 'inanimate' objects like stones or mountains are often thought to be alive, for whom certain names, spoken aloud, may be felt to influence at a distance the things or beings that they name, for whom particular plants, particular animals, particular places and persons and powers may all be felt to *participate* in one another's existence, influencing each other and being influenced in turn. (p. 57)

Lévy-Bruhl (1910/1966) himself observed that quality of action-at-a-distance, "objects, beings, phenomena can be . . . both themselves and something other than themselves . . .

They give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain where they are" (p. 61)

Buber (1957/1970) was clearly influenced by these ideas in his development of the I-Thou notion. In his own discussion of the indigenous person's relationship to the world he wrote:

> The elementary, spirit-awakening impressions and stimulations of the "natural man" are derived from relational processes—the living sense of a confrontation—and from relational states—living with one who confronts him. About the moon which he sees every night he does not think much until it approaches him bodily, in his sleep or even while he is awake, and casts a spell over him with its gestures or, touching him, does something wicked or sweet to him. What he retains is not the visual notion of the migratory disk of light nor that of a demonic being that somehow belongs to it, but at first only an image of the moon's action that surges through his body as a motor stimulus; and the personal image of an active moon crystallizes only very gradually. (pp. 70-71)

Here Buber intimates the essential role of the body in this phenomenon. The body's role was also crucial in Abram's (1996) work, which relied on Merleau-Ponty's notion that "participation is a defining attribute of perception itself" (p. 57). Clarifying that statement Abram wrote, "Perception always involves, at its most intimate level, the experience of an active interplay . . . between the perceiving body and that which it perceives . . . At the level of our spontaneous, sensorial engagement with the world around us, we are *all* animists" (p. 57). Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) himself observed that in the significant moment "our gaze, prompted by the experience of our own body, will discover in all other 'objects' the miracle of expression" (p. 230).

Participation and its magic then are not lost, just forgotten, as Travers (1934) implied. They have gone into a hiding of sorts, underlying everything one does, yet usually just out of the grasp of conscious awareness. For most modern people it is only through a conscious effort to reconnect with the senses—both inner and outer—that the

world and the individual in it begin to come back to full-bodied life (Abram, 1996, 2010). Abram (1996) described this experience.

> When we begin to consciously frequent the wordless dimension of our sensory participations, certain phenomena that have habitually commanded our focus begin to lose their distinctive fascination and to slip toward the background, while hitherto unnoticed or overlooked presences begin to stand forth from the periphery and to engage our awareness. (p. 63)

This kind of conscious participation requires a stepping back from the ego's will, a deliberate effort to put aside the quick judgments of the mind and just notice what the senses are saying. What often emerges is this sense of participation, what Sardello (2004) called "*imaginal* sensing. . . . It is *as if* we smell the silence, touch it, feel its movement" (p. 37). In this moment of wonder the visible world becomes something more "Within our sensing of the visible world, we remember the presence of the invisible world. . . . The depth of life presents itself as an invisible undulating movement. . . . We see the active being of beauty shining through the mundane" (Sardello, 2004, p. 39). Sardello's language may appear overly enthusiastic until it is placed next to Lévy-Bruhl's (1922/1923) statement, "To them the things which are unseen cannot be distinguished from the things which are seen. The beings of the unseen world are no less directly present than those of the other; they are more active and more formidable" (p. 61).

All three of these writers (Abram, 2006; Lévy-Bruhl, 1922/1923; Sardello, 2004) included the concept of otherworldly presences or beings who make themselves felt in those moments of deeper connection. This idea should not be taken to mean that there are literally other unseen beings, as the movie cliché would have it, of the type that have been personified through the ages as nymphs, dryads, fairies, and the Ghillie Dhu (Briggs, 2002, p. 284). Rather, instead of seeing the living being in the dead object, this

experience is one of seeing the object as a living thing in its own right, "the thing itself as a center of forces, as another nexus of experience, as an Other" (Abram, 1996, p. 62). This experience reaffirms the link between the visible world of objective observation—the sensible world of the one-way mirror—and the world of inner subjectivity. Abram (1996) connected the two:

> Once I acknowledge that my own sentience, or subjectivity, does not preclude my visible, tactile, objective existence for others, I find myself forced to acknowledge that *any* visible, tangible form that meets my gaze may also be an experiencing subject, sensitive and responsive to the beings around it, and to me. (p. 67)

Once one recognizes that any visible form may be an experiencing other, it is not difficult to understand the roots of the ancient notion of Western civilization "that the soul was the form of the body, that is, the form of things present their soul in a material way" (Hillman, 2006b, p. 150).

Further, the glimpses of Others that shine through the visible face of things allow not just the perceived objects to be experienced as fully living entities, but also the observer himself or herself to come more fully to life (Abram, 2010). One does not experience perception as the exercise of only this or that sense, but as the simultaneous activation of all of the senses, outer and inner. "My experience of the world is not fragmented; I do not commonly experience the visible appearance of the world as in any way separable from its audible aspect, or from the myriad textures that offer themselves to my touch" (Abram, 1996, p. 125). Thus synaesthesia is the order of the day and that synaesthesia is critical to one's sense of wholeness.

> We may think of the sensing body as a kind of open circuit that completes itself only in things, and in the world. The differentiation of my senses, as well as their spontaneous convergence in the world at large, ensures that I am a being destined for relationship: it is primarily through my engagement with what is *not* me that I

> effect the integration of my senses, and thereby experience my own unity and coherence. (p. 125)

Buber (1957/1970) seemed to have been thinking along similar lines when he wrote, “man becomes an I through a You” (p. 80). Full-bodied encounter is essential to one’s developing sense of self. Buber went so far as to declare that

> the development of the child’s soul is connected indissolubly with his craving for the You, with the fulfillments and disappointments of this craving, with the play of his experiments and his tragic seriousness when he feels at a total loss. (p. 79)

As Abram (1996) announced humankind’s relational destiny, so Buber (1957/1970) proclaimed that “the longing for relationship is primary” (p. 78) and in the child, this longing leads precisely to the sort of experiences Abram described. “These glances will eventually, after many trials, come to rest upon a red wallpaper arabesque and not leave it until the soul of red has opened up to them . . . coming to grips with a living, active being that confronts us” (Buber, 1957/1970, p. 78).

The Developmental Narrative

These thinkers, then, have returned the discussion of participation mystique back to where it started—namely, the child’s way of being with the world. In this context, it seems useful to recapitulate the ideas discussed so far into a developmental narrative that draws the line from the childhood sense of participation that is celebrated (Jung, 1921/1971) to the repressed adult sense of participation that is oftentimes regarded as a form of psychosis (Stevens, 1993). Finally this narrative will make a case that an engagement with the sense of participation mystique is a necessary step in most individuation processes.

The narrative goes like this: In the first stage of life, from conception roughly through the child’s first year, psyche is dominated by participation mystique, “a

characteristic of the mental state of early infancy" (Jung, 1921/1971, p. 441 [*CW* 6, para. 741]). Although the child grows more differentiated as he or she grows older, the prevalence of participation mystique continues, as illustrated by my 4-year-old. Indeed Lévy-Bruhl's (1910/1966, 1922/1923) work indicates that, absent cultural intervention, participation can continue into adulthood as a valid and regular mode of consciousness. In those cultures where participation does continue into adulthood it merely becomes more refined, more able to coexist with, cooperate with, and inform the other modes of consciousness (Abram, 1996).

But for Westerners something different happens. For the purposes of this thesis it seems reasonable, without wading into the debate over the exact nature of the mechanism, to acknowledge a process by which the child internalizes standards from both parents and the wider culture, and begins to apply those standards to himself or herself—this is the mechanism Freud (1940/1949) referred to as the super-ego, and that term will be used here. Already as Freud defined this concept he was noticing the cultural nature of it.

> It is not only the personal qualities of these parents that is making itself felt, but also everything that had a determining effect on them themselves, the tastes and standards of the social class in which they lived and the innate dispositions and traditions of the race from which they sprang . . . the super-ego . . . represents more than anything the cultural past. (p. 96)

As was shown earlier, in Western—and particularly puritanical American—cultures these internalized values tend to strongly privilege supposedly objective vision, vision that robs the things of the world of their souls, at the expense of the participation mystique that has been the child's special mode up to that point (Abram, 1996; Hillman, 1992).

Nor is it just the parents who provide these messages. My daughter regularly comes home from school repeating phrases or ideas that she could not have heard from us. It seems that these messages must come from her school and play mates, each of who presumably have picked up messages from their own set of significant influences. But why stop at messages from people? Developmental psychologist Jacqueline Goodnow (1990) observed:

> When clocks abound in public space, for instance, and most adults wear watches, the message is clear that keeping track of time is important. . . . Messages conveyed in this tacit, uncommented-upon form may have a particular impact. For instance, they may appear to have a particular objective validity and be the least likely to be reflected upon and recognized as being matters of custom and value rather than of nature. (pp. 281-282)

If a child can read the existence and import of a specific notion and relation to time from these sorts of clues, then it seems clear that a child growing up in a culture filled with objects not designed to invite participation could easily internalize the dominant cultural paradigm of ensouled individuals living in a soulless, materialistic world as well as the behavioral lesson that things should not speak.

From this perspective the things of Western culture become a kind of insidious, invasive, and omnipresent communication about the values of society, a communication Goodnow (1990) suggests would seem natural for children to internalize along with the messages from other sources. Hillman (2006b) railed about the all-pervasiveness of these messages.

> I'm talking about the soulless forms and the visible ugliness. . . . There's no escape. A building is thrown up on the street corner that blocks the sun, causes vicious down-drafts, invades the perspective, places the pedestrian against a giant wall as if for an execution. This building, a public nuisance, stands there on a street corner anonymous, unsigned. . . . No accountability for that building. If *I* made too much noise, or took off all my clothes on a street corner, I'd be arrested

> as a public nuisance. But the building stands for decades, making even more psychic noise and displaying even more in-your-face insult. (p. 151)

It seems ironic that our cultural commentators seem to spend endless reams fretting over the influence on children of violence in video games, of colorful language in music, of sex in movies, or of the peccadilloes of famous athletes, but little space ruing the ugliness of our things. We have ratings systems for movies and music, rules about what can be said on the radio, public outcries at Super Bowl wardrobe malfunctions that might have exposed children to a corrupting breast. Where then are the worries about the soul-assaulting messages being sent when we teach our children in cheap trailers, take them to shop in big box stores that assault the senses, confine them to car seats in automobiles on freeways that fail to engage, feed them tasteless and low nutrient food, or hand them cheap and texture-less plastic toys to play with? Is it any wonder that our children become television addicts? For all of its other faults, television invites and validates participation—the last place where it is acceptable to experience the inanimate speaking, and therefore the last refuge of magic.

Further, as the child grows up and goes forth into test-oriented school systems, performance-oriented jobs, and status-oriented relationships, this objective vision becomes more and more ingrained. To the extent this attitude becomes a core part of how the individual relates to the world, it becomes a part of that person's persona (Jung, 1921/1971). Jung (1921/1971) defined the persona as "that general idea of ourselves which we have built up from experiencing our effect upon the world around us and its effect upon us" (p. 218 [*CW* 6, para. 370]). But Jung (1928/1966) was also very clear about its non-personal character, elsewhere referring to the persona as "this arbitrary segment of collective psyche" (p. 157 [*CW* 7, para. 245]), and noting, "by definition we

have to say of the persona's contents . . . that it is collective" (p. 157 [*CW* 7, para. 245]). For the purposes of this thesis, these observations imply that the collective attitude that embraces objective vision becomes a part of the persona, while the participatory mode becomes repressed into the collective unconscious. For evidence of this repression one need only consider the fact that, in Western culture, participation has become almost exclusively associated with the psychotic—"the psychotic lives in closer relationship with the two million-year-old through a form of *participation mystique*" (Stevens, 1993, p. 88).

The process of individuation during which this persona begins to be stripped away does not isolate the individual from the collective. Rather "individuation means precisely the better and more complete fufilment [sic] of the collective qualities of the human being" (Jung, 1928/1966, pp. 173-174 [*CW* 7, para. 267]). Participation exists in the collective as a universal but repressed potential within human consciousness, and it must be engaged in the process of individuation. Indeed, Jung hinted at the edges of this argument, noting in his description of individuation that

> the more we become conscious of ourselves through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished. . . . This widened consciousness is no longer that touchy, egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions which always has to be compensated or corrected by unconscious counter-tendencies; instead, it is a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding, and indissoluble communion with the world at large. (p. 178 [*CW* 7, para. 275])

Hillman (2006e) expanded upon both the collective nature of individuation and the necessity of engagement with the world by defining "Self as the interiorization of community" (p. 59).

> If Self and its draw toward reflective interiority refers not to an immanent soul-spark of a transcendent God, or to a germ, seed, truth, center, or core of will power, but rather is constituted of communal contingencies, then the draw toward interiority must be at the same time a draw toward exteriority, toward the contingencies of the actual ecological field—where I am placed, with whom I am, what is happening with my animals, my food, my furniture and what the toaster, the newspaper, and the refrigerator's purr do in the field I am in. To find myself I must turn to them, visibles and invisibles. Then to work on the unconscious, to foster my growth, my self-understanding and to cure my illness, I will no longer drift into dream, walk solitary in nature, shut myself off to meditate, to analyze or recall my childhood . . . Instead I turn to what is simply there, my rooms and their trash, my acquaintances and their reactions, my neighbors and their concerns, for this presents my Self, for it is of them I am constituted. Interiorization of community means taking in, noticing, attending to what actually engages me and enrages me. (p. 60)

The failure to engage with the world in this way produces a sort of therapeutically induced impotence, or, in archetypal psychologist Patricia Berry's (2008) words, a narcissistic virginity.

> The virgin Narcissus reflects endlessly, purely upon himself. . . . The horizontal world of Echo is ignored. . . . Let us say that Echo is the echoing of what is 'out-there'—objects, the daily, others, the lateral. Narcissus ignores these reverberations from surfaces, things around. Attempting to find insight and meaning within oneself, one becomes deaf to surroundings. (p. 96)

Introspection and the narcissistic, personal gaze are, of course, essential parts of the process. Yet therapeutically, as long as one remains stuck in them without also engaging both the human and non-human worlds in new ways, one remains stuck in the confessional mode (Hillman, 1992). Deep introspection reveals internal horrors that have been thrust out of the mind's eye; the therapeutic hour provides atonement and prescribes penance. But the fundamental repression of the voices of the surrounding world remains, and indeed is often deepened. "As long as experience means personal felt-experience, it requires the genre of confession, whether in depth psychology or in the arts, as subjectivism, expressionism, and personal romanticism" (Hillman, 1992, p. 33).

Changing perspective from the point of view of Romanyshyn's (1989) observer on the hill to a more involved point of view shifts this dynamic and its results.

> The *récit*, however, is an account of events experienced, rather than of my experiencing. It was then unfolded; the angel then said; a mountain, a room, a colored light, a figure shone in splendor. Like a walk through the world, there is this and this and this; the colors and shapes of the things illumined, their faces, are the confession—it is *their* coming to light, *their* testament, and *their* individuation, as Corbin said, not mine. (Hillman, 1992, p. 33)

The world is sung into existence through such activity—"The Dreaming, the imaginative life of the land itself, must be continually renewed, and as an Aboriginal man walks along his Ancestor's Dreaming track, singing the country into visibility . . . the storied earth is born afresh" (Abram, 1996, p. 170).

Given the repression in Western culture of sensuous participation, therefore, as the individual begins to see through the persona and engage the shadow, anima and animus, and other figures of the unconscious, at some point the faculty of participation must reappear. Jungian analyst Edward Edinger (1972) noted the importance of this mode of consciousness to healing.

> It is through the child or primitive in ourselves that we make connection with the Self and heal the state of alienation. In order to relate to the mentality of the child and primitive consciously, rather than unconsciously and inflatedly, we must learn how to incorporate primitive categories of experience into our world view without denying or damaging our conscious, scientific categories of space, time and causality. (p. 100)

Abram (1996, 2010) might take issue with the specific scientific concepts Edinger wished to protect, but the larger point stands. The aim is not to discard scientific knowledge and modern living, but to put the objectifying viewpoint in its correct place.

As Buber (1957/1970) discerned,

> the unlimited sway of causality in the It-world, which is of fundamental importance for the scientific ordering of nature, is not felt to be oppressive by the

> man who is not confined to the It-world but free to step out of it again and again into the world of relation. (p. 100)

The objectifying eye is a useful tool when it is not assigned a role it is incapable of filling, that of making meaning, of perceiving a sense of purpose in the everyday. Yet that is often the role it is given, resulting in the mechanistic, materialistic orientation so prevalent today. Buber diagnosed the fatalism built into that clockwork paradigm.

> The biologistic and the historiosophical orientations of this age, which made so much of their differences, have combined to produce a faith in doom that is more obdurate and anxious than any such faith has ever been. . . . All these laws . . . are based on the obsession with some running down, which involves unlimited causality. The dogma of a gradual running down represents man's abdication in the face of the proliferating It-world. (pp. 105-106)

Buber also plotted the way out of this morass:

> One gains power over an incubus by addressing it by its real name. Similarly, the It-world that but now seemed to dwarf man's small strength with its uncanny power has to yield to anyone who recognizes its true nature: the particularization and alienation of that out of whose abundance, welling up close by, every earthly You emerges to confront us—that which appeared to us at times as great and terrible as the mother goddess, but nevertheless always motherly. (pp. 107-108)

By taking back the noumenal energy that Western culture has invested in the objectifying eye as represented by science, and putting that energy back where it belongs, back into the relationship with the world—something that is accomplished by a renewed embrace of the faculty of participation—the individual is reconnected with that great mother, the soul of the world, the anima mundi (Abram, 2010; Buber, 1957/1970).

The Anima Mundi, Beauty, and Ugliness

Many of the noumenal energies that until the last century were invested in religion—energies that, with the death of paganism, had themselves been taken out of the world and placed into abstract concepts of God—have been diverted into science. British mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell (1952) wrote that "the power of science

has no known limits. We were told that faith could remove mountains, but no one believed it; we are now told that the atomic bomb can remove mountains, and everyone believes it" (p. 25). Rather than just helping elucidate the physical mechanisms at work in the world, science has become a dominant religion of sorts that seeks to define the world in purely mechanistic terms—in Buber's (1957/1970) terms, an It-world. This point of view implicitly defines the nature of humanity's relationship with the universe, and includes a set of myths to help mankind understand how this clockwork universe operates (Midgley, 1992). These myths canonize a set of dim archetypal figures imperceptible to ordinary human experience, the Gods of this pseudo-religion, with names like neutrino and quark, gravity and entropy.

But it does not need to be this way; such canonization is not inherent in the foundations of science (Abram, 2010). There is nothing in the basic precepts of science that confines the interiority of things to a dead-matter explanation, nothing that inherently reduces lived experience to cold interactions following some long-ago set-down physical laws (Abram, 2010). The widespread embrace of that view is a choice the culture has made, for lack of an alternative viewpoint that could accommodate both the knowledge generated by science and the felt-experience of life in the world (Abram, 2010). A resolution of this dilemma lies in a return to an ancient Western idea laid out by Plato, that of the anima mundi, or the soul of the world (Hillman, 1992).

The idea of the anima mundi returns one to recognition of soul in the world, not through the injection of some essence into things, but immanent in the way things present themselves. Hillman (1992) framed the concept:

> Let us imagine the *anima mundi* as that particular soul-spark, that seminal image, which offers itself through each thing in its visible form. Then *anima mundi*

> indicates the animated possibilities presented by each event as it is, its sensuous presentation as a face bespeaking its interior image—in short, its availability to imagination, its presence as a *psychic* reality. Not only animals and plants ensouled as in the Romantic vision, but soul is given with each thing, God-given things of nature and man-made things of the street. . . . Our imaginative recognition, the childlike act of imagining the world, animates the world and returns it to soul. (pp. 101-102)

The face of things is essential here as "an object bears witness to itself in the image it offers" (p.103). Hence, the aesthetic response becomes the key to engagement. "An aesthetic response to the world . . . ties the individual soul immediately with the world soul" (p. 105). Indeed, to the extent that the aesthetic response is repressed it is impossible to establish such an engagement. "The anima mundi is simply not perceived if the organ of this perception remains unconscious" (p. 108).

Hillman's (1992) aesthetic response is closely related to Abram's (1996) synaesthetic participation. Abram described, "Perceived things are encountered by the perceiving body as animate, living powers that actively draw us into relation" (pp. 89-90). Compare that with Hillman's (2006b) statement, "I think we have an immediate sense of attraction to things. They seduce us and they repel us. It is how we read the world how our animal nose and ears and eyes read the world" (p.149). Further compare Abram's (1996) comment that "things disclose themselves . . . as dynamic ways of engaging the senses and modulating the body" (p. 81) with Hillman's (1992) description of the aesthetic response as "that thrill or pain, disgust or expansion of breast" (p. 39) and his instruction that "you can recognize this aesthetic response as a gasp, a sigh, a startle" (2006g, p. 190).

Further, there is an intimate connection between the soul of the world and the individual human soul. Indeed, in Plato's ontology "the soul of man is made out of the

remains of the elements which had been used in creating the soul of the world" (Jowett, 1892, p. 408). Hillman (1980) noted "the soul in Platonic usage is always both an all-soul, an *anima mundi*, and an individualization" (p. 12). Attending to the personal soul, therefore, also means tending to the soul of the world, and vice versa. The care of one is the care of the other.

One way to tend the soul, and the one that is the particular focus of this thesis, is through the practice of noticing beauty. "For the soul, then, beauty is not defined as pleasantness of form but rather as the quality of things that invites absorption and contemplation" (Moore, 1992, p. 279). In clarifying the term and its relation to soul, Hillman (1992) wrote that "beauty is the manifest *anima mundi* . . . [and] refers to appearances as such, created as they are, in the forms with which they are given, sense data, bare facts, Venus Nudata" (p. 43). Beauty provides the link to the Gods, not confined to some conceptual heaven in the sky, but there in front of one, in the world. "Beauty . . . is the manifestation, the showing forth of the hidden noumenal Gods and imperceptible virtues like temperance and justice" (p. 43).

Beauty is essential to the soul, one's guide through the world. Hillman (1992) made the connection between beauty and soul-making explicit, writing, "if we would recuperate the lost soul, which is after all the main aim of all depth psychologies, we must recover our lost aesthetic reactions, our sense of beauty" (p. 41). Beauty is so important because "the soul is born in beauty and feeds on beauty, requires beauty for its life" (p. 39). Through beauty the world is personified, the things of the world winking flirtatiously in a kind of solidarity based on the secret knowledge shared between human

consciousness and other-consciousness. Imagination is part of the picture here too, as imagination is a faculty of beauty.

> Imagination . . . is the soul of Ideality [the aesthetic response], the essence by which it penetrates the very heart of things and qualities, looking through external matter, and bringing up from out of the mysterious depths of Nature, the secret springs of existence. (Jarves, 1855, p. 94)

Imagination brings the soul of things to the surface, so that their beauty can shine forth. In other words, imagination personifies, and personification allows one to love. “Personifying . . . offers another avenue of loving, of imagining things in a personal form so that we can find access to them with our hearts” (Hillman, 1975, p. 14).

If imagination allows one to glimpse the beautiful, beauty embeds one in the world by revealing the Gods latent in all things (Hillman, 1992). The Gods are in the human, but also in the delicate spider web on a clothes hanger, the fig half-eaten by squirrels, or groping leaves caught in wire mesh. One recognizes the presence of the Gods through the beauty of these moments. “Beauty is an *epistemological* necessity; it is the way in which the Gods touch our senses, reach the heart, and attract us into life” (Hillman, 1992, p. 45).

Further, the act of noticing these Gods, or graces, when they shine through—an act that requires a slowing and a willingness to notice—returns soul to the world. “The transfiguration of matter occurs through wonder” (Hillman, 1992, p. 47). In the gasp of wonder an imaginative transformation takes place, and the gasp itself, that intake of breath in response to the world, also anchors one to his or her own unique soul, for “to be in touch with soul means to live in sensuous connection with fantasy” (Hillman, 1975, p. 23). Imagination and beauty intertwine in the physical body, and in the authentic moment of contact one comes to love the world, not abstractly, but erotically, desirously,

carnally. "The development of the feminine, of anima into psyche, and of the soul's awakening is a process in beauty" (Hillman, 1962, p. 101).

But what of beauty's perversion, ugliness? Looking around today's world it would be easy to write off this discussion. Beauty is all well and good, but it seems hard to find in much of the world at the moment. The ugly is much more easily found; surely an answer is needed for it as well. Indeed, It seems strange to speak of ugliness when the topic is the grace of moments of small beauty, but it should be noted that beauty and ugliness are natural intimates (Hillman, 1992)—it is with reason that Aphrodite was forced into marriage with Hephaestus, ugliest of the Gods (Roman & Roman, 2010, p. 201).

Ugliness, too, is essential to soul, and especially to the soul of the world (Hillman, 1992). Beauty sustains, but ugliness leads out into the world and towards engagement. Beauty invites appreciation, but ugliness drives one to outrage and its eventual result, action. Hillman (1992) went so far as to declare that "therapy as an aesthetic undertaking requires an eye for ugliness—both delighting in and shocked by what we meet in the psyche—else we do not see the Gods at all" (p. 58). Such an eye allows one to see the pathological, and the pathological provides the opening through which soul may creep. "The pathology is the place that keeps the person *in* the soul, that torment, that twist that you can't simply go along in a natural way, that there's something broken, twisted, hurting, that forces constant reflection—and work" (Hillman & Pozzo, 1983, p. 23).

As a therapist oriented toward soul—one with an eye for the beauty of psyche and the ugliness of its absence—part of the job is to help a client learn to recognize his or her own aesthetic response, and thus become responsible for his or her own soul-making

(Hillman, 1992). "Soul-making can become a self-steering process through aesthetic reflexes. . . . The relation to ugliness guides our self-knowledge. Ugliness is the guide because aesthetic responses occur most strongly in relation with the ugly" (Hillman, 1992, p. 59). Moreover, the quashing of the aesthetic reaction—as more and more must be done just to make one's way in an ugly world—is soul-crushing. "By repressing our reactions to the basic ugliness of simple details, like ceilings, by denying our annoyance and outrage, we actually encourage an unconsciousness that estranges and disorients the interior soul" (Hillman, 2006c, p. 197).

That repression is linked intimately with the objectifying eye, with the dominance of the It-world (Buber, 1957/1970). To see the beauty in something is to connect with it on an I-Thou basis, but the object that cannot sustain such connection is doomed to remain an It. When the aesthetic reaction is conscious such an object inspires recoil, a pulling back and pushing away (Hillman, 1992). But when that reaction is repressed—as could happen defensively if too much of one's environment generates recoil—then the object becomes another soldier in an army of Its. The lack of recoil, the inability to pull back from the ugly, leads to that dirty and banal evil that reporter and political theorist Hannah Arendt described (1965). Such evil need not appear in as dramatic a setting as a Nazi concentration camp; when one becomes numbed every mundane thing becomes an agent of evil.

> The question of evil, like the question of ugliness, refers primarily to the anesthetized heart, the heart that has no reaction to what it faces, thereby turning the variegated sensuous face of the world into monotony, sameness, oneness. The desert of modernity. (Hillman, 1992, p. 64)

Ugliness in the world bespeaks the pathology of the world, a pathology carried upon and within the things of the world, particularly the man-made things (Hillman,

1992). That pathology, that world-suffering, is made possible by modern humanity's anesthetized sense of the beautiful. Without the capacity to recognize the sensuous connection to matter, the capacity to participate with that matter, the substance of the world is destined to remain an It. An It inspires nothing, demands nothing, feels nothing, and sees nothing. It just sits there, a clone of all the other Its, finding its fulfillment in a spreadsheet analysis, the kind of thing that is perfectly happy to be a statistic. Who can love a statistic? Without humanity's love of the world how is this sickened globe ever to flourish again? "When you find something beautiful, love pulls you towards it. . . . This connection between ecology, love, and beauty means that an awakened aesthetic sense is the most practical way of defending the environment" (Hillman, 2006c, p. 203).

Art and Photography

The stated goal of this thesis is to define a route, through photography, between the human heart and the soul of the world. Beauty and ugliness have been shown to be the blazes marking that trail, but for the purposes of this thesis, those ideas must be rooted in the specifics of photography. Photographs can be put to many uses, but roughly those usages fall into the categories of art and reportage. The photographs in this thesis are not intended as reportage in the usual sense; they are not photojournalism, nor even records of significant personal life events. Rather they are meant as art, where art is understood as the production of images meant to generate an aesthetic response in the viewer. Therefore it will be necessary to examine the intersection of art and beauty, in the senses those terms have been used so far, and then to extend that discussion to the particulars of photographically produced images.

Art's relation to a sensuous I-Thou world connection can be seen most readily through the words of artists themselves. American painter Robert Henri (1923), for example, exclaimed:

> There seem to be moments of revelation, moments when we see in the transition of one part to another the unification of the whole. . . . This sometimes in a passing face, a landscape, a growing thing . . . If one but could record the vision of these moments by some sort of sign! It was in this hope that the arts were invented. (p. 32)

In this view, then, art becomes a way of indicating the route back to a moment of connection with the world and a witnessing of the connections in the world.

French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson (1996/1999) described his process:

> Photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.
>
> I believe that, through the act of living, the discovery of oneself is made concurrently with the discovery of the world around us, which can mold us, but which can also be affected by us. A balance must be established between these worlds—the one inside us and the one outside us. As the result of a constant reciprocal process, both these worlds come to form a single one. And it is this world that we must communicate. (pp. 42-43)

Cartier-Bresson introduced the notion here that form must meet content, and through the world discovery that happens in that process a simultaneous process of self-realization occurs.

The Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky (1970/1994c) wrote of a key moment in his artistic development:

> Everything "dead" trembled. Everything showed me its face, its innermost being, its secret soul, inclined more often to silence than to speech—not only the stars, moon, woods, flowers of which poets sing, but even a cigar butt lying in the ashtray, a patient white trouser-button looking up at you from a puddle on the street, a submissive piece of bark carried through the long grass in the ant's strong jaws to some uncertain and vital end, the page of a calendar, torn forcibly by one's consciously outstretched hand from the warm companionship of the block

> of remaining pages. Likewise, every still and every moving point (= line) became for me just as alive and revealed to me its soul. (p. 361)

Kandinsky's lines bear a striking similarity to Hillman's (2006f) suggestion that "what we turn toward may become beautiful . . . The work of art allows repressed districts of the world and the soul to leave the ugly and enter into beauty" (p. 184).

How specifically does photography function as an art? It is clear that photography is distinct from the other arts, but how is it different? The ambiguity pervades even the thinking of photographers—at one point Cartier-Bresson (1996/1999) noted that photographers "are reaching for something much less lasting in value than the painters" (p. 30), but later declared that "you make a painting at the same time that you take a photo" (p. 53). That ambiguity leads to the heart of the relationship between photographer and image.

It is worth noting that for many years, starting just after the invention of photography, there was a running debate about the exact relation of camera images and art. The camera was, in fact, originally promoted as a device for the reproduction of natural scenes, and its fidelity to those scenes was a large part of its appeal (Daguerre, 1980; Poe, 1980). Louis Daguerre (1980), inventor of the photographic forerunner known as the daguerreotype, assigned to his invention "the spontaneous reproduction or the images of nature" (p. 11). Predicting uses for it he suggested, "Everyone . . . will make a view of his castle or country-house . . . portraits will be made . . . this important discovery . . . will not only be of great interest to science, but it will also give a new impulse to the arts" (p. 12). Writer Edgar Allen Poe (1980) described the daguerreotype as "the most important, and perhaps the most extraordinary triumph of modern science" (p. 37) and

gushed that “the Daguerreotyped plate . . . is *infinitely* more accurate in its representation than any painting by human hands” (p. 38).

The 19th-century writer on photography, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (1980), noting steady improvement in photographic quality, revisited the possibility of photograph as artwork. While acknowledging the fascination of photography—“no photographic picture that ever was taken . . . is destitute of a special, and what we may call an historic interest” (p. 65)—she went on to declare that photography’s “business is to give evidence of facts, as minutely and impartially as, to our shame, only an unreasoning machine can give” (p. 66). Yet even with this seemingly firm classification of photography into the category of reportage, Eastlake also noted the artistic effect of less-than-representational photography, pointing specifically to the moving effect of “pictures taken slightly out of focus, that is with slightly uncertain and undefined forms” (p. 60).

French poet Charles Baudelaire (1862/1980), who also generated a significant body of criticism, likewise noted the attraction of the photograph, but bemoaned its influence on the higher arts. He referred to photography as “the refuge of all failed painters with too little talent, or too lazy to complete their studies” (p. 87) and condemned photography’s influence, noting, “if photography is allowed to deputize for art in some of art’s activities, it will not be long before it has supplanted or corrupted art altogether, thanks to the stupidity of the masses, its natural ally” (p. 88).

Later, as the technology became more accessible, photographers such as Henry Peach Robinson began to produce photographic images as art, along with a body of written work defining principles of the practice (Meyers, 1980a, p. 91). Robinson (1980) made the crucial observations that “the photographic pictorial effect depends entirely on

the man" and that a photograph often "represented not so much the subject which was before the camera as the photographer's individual impression of the subject" (p. 96). This is an argument echoed down through the ages since. For example, German photographer and critic Franz Roh (1980) maintained that

> the principle of organization in photography . . . [lies] in the act of selecting an in every way fruitful fragment of that reality . . . there are a hundred possibilities [for recasting and reducing the exterior world] of **focus, section and lighting** in photography, and above all in the **choice** of the object. (pp. 158-159)

Roh laid out the heart of the arguments of those who maintained that photography was more than mere reportage. In these arguments, the photographer is a creative part of the process through a combination of the technical aspects of picture-taking—control of focus, aperture, lighting, and so forth—and the pick of subject.

American photographer Edward Weston, an influence on artists such as Ansel Adams and Imogen Cunningham (Meyers, 1980b, p. 169), expanded on the creative technical options available to the photographer.

> By varying the position of his camera, his camera angle, or the focal length of his lens, the photographer can achieve an infinite number of varied compositions with a single, stationary subject. By changing the light on the subject, or by using a color filter, any or all of the values in the subject can be altered. By varying the length of exposure, the kind of emulsion, the method of developing, the photographer can vary the registering of relative values in the negative. And the relative values as registered in the negative can be further modified by allowing more or less light to affect certain parts of the image in printing. Thus, within the limits of his medium, without resorting to any method of control that is not photographic . . . the photographer can depart from literal recording to whatever extent he chooses. (Weston, 1980, p. 173)

It should be noted that the options for this sort of image manipulation have multiplied even further with the advent of digital photography and the widespread availability of cheap post-processing software options.

Photographer Beatrice Abbott (1980) spoke to the importance in photography of picking a subject. “[A photograph] is or should be a significant document, a penetrating statement, which can be described in a very simple term—selectivity” (p. 183). She fleshed out this idea further:

> To define selection, one may say that it should be focused on the kind of subject matter which hits you hard with its impact and excites your imagination to the extent that you are forced to take it. Pictures are wasted unless the motive power which impelled you to action is strong and stirring. (p. 183)

There are strong echoes in her statement of both Hillman’s (1992) aesthetic gasp and Abram’s (1996) synaesthetic participation.

Through this combination of technical control and choice of subject matter the photographer is able, therefore, to produce images that are more than mere reportage. To attain to the level of art proper, those photographs would need to, as Henri (1923) stated earlier, act as signposts to an epiphany. As anyone who has ever been moved by a photograph can probably attest, photographs as images certainly have that power. Louisiana photographer Charles Laughlin (1973) captured the essential quality of the photograph as art, “It is *only* when the photograph presents the object so that the meanings conveyed *transcend* the meaning of the object as a *thing-in-itself*, that photography becomes art” (p. 13).

Summary

This chapter has explored the theoretical basis for understanding how a practice that tunes one into bodily senses might allow a shift from an I-It style of relation to the world to an I-Thou style (Abram, 1996; Buber, 1957/1970; Hillman, 1992). The I-It style of relating, while basic to human consciousness, has achieved dominance in the modern era due to the triumph of the long religious project of killing off magic (Buber,

1957/1970; Weber, 1921/1958). Magic, as understood here, involves an I-Thou relationship to elements of the non-human world, a sense of a thing in the world as "another center of experience" (Abram, 1996, p. 127). The synaesthetic participation of one's senses with an object in the world allows one to have the direct, felt experience of that object as a living presence. This kind of participation is intimately related to soul. "As long as the soul remains joined to the body, it can as a rule only receive vibrations via the medium of the senses" (Kandinsky, 1970/1994b, p. 87). Soul, in turn, is intimately related to beauty, which can be understood as the "revelation of soul's essence, the actual showing forth of Aphrodite in psyche" (Hillman, 1992, p. 44). Art, and photography specifically, can be viewed as an attempt to capture and transmit a transitory moment of connection with the world, a kind of clever use of the I-It relation to inspire the sensation of an I-Thou relation. "The created work is a thing among things and can be experienced and described as an aggregate of qualities. But the receptive beholder may be bodily confronted now and again" (Buber, 1957/1970, p. 61).

In the next chapter the production of the pictures included in this thesis will be examined in the light of this theoretical discussion. My experiences of the process serve as a narrative about the possibilities arising from a sensuous reconnection with the world. Further, the shifts I have experienced during that process suggest the long-delayed necessity of the return to the body.

Chapter III
Findings and Clinical Applications

> That time we sat in the evening silence in the face of the mesa and heard the sudden howl of a pack of coyotes, and had a thrill and a dread which was not fear of the pack, for we knew they were harmless. Just what was that dread—what did it relate to? Something 'way back in the race perhaps? We have strange ways of seeing. If we only knew—then we could tell. If we knew what we saw, we could paint it.
>
> Henri, 1923, p. 33

> [In dreams,] watching images on a screen or making images with a camera also present modes of psychologizing.
>
> Hillman, 1975, p. 142

> I go out into the world and hope I will come across something that imperatively interests me. I am addicted to the found object.
>
> Adams, 1985, p. 1

> That is the job [of the artist]—not to distinguish and separate the ordinary and the extraordinary, but to view the ordinary with the extraordinary eye of divine enhancement.
>
> Hillman, 2006f, p. 179

This thesis seeks to use a regular photographic meditation—essentially a practice of noticing beauty and ugliness in the world—to reconnect the human heart with the soul of the world. A conceptual framework supporting this goal was presented in Chapter II, but though that material appears first in this thesis it was very much an afterthought of the lived experience of taking the pictures included in the Appendix. Those pictures came primarily out of a flurry of camera obsession that seemingly arose spontaneously as an urge hungry for focus and demanding my attention. Only after the fact, after the

realization that something truly authentic was moving through me, after the decision to make these pictures the focus of the thesis, only then did the theoretical start to enter the picture. It was gratifying to discover the immense body of thought (Abram, 1996, 2010; Hillman, 1992; Romanyshyn, 1989, 2008; Sardello, 2004) that seemed to capture aspects of what I had experienced, like discovering the deep underwater mass of the iceberg upon which one is standing.

Yet theory cannot really capture the lived character of the experience, for theory aims at “general principles independent of the thing to be explained” (“Theory,” n.d.). Theory is conceptual, and by its very nature tends to establish an I-It relation with the material itself, when the goal of this thesis is to chart a course to an I-Thou relation. It seems necessary, therefore, to attempt to capture in words the significant aspects of my personal experience during this time. My song must follow my songline, and my songline reveals the particular contours of my geography. This chapter therefore relays the specifics of the process involved in the creation of the included images, details the changes I have experienced through this practice and the ways I have come to know myself better, and offers some personal reflections growing out of self-observations made in the photographic and scholarly phases of this thesis.

The Process

Although I have long had a viewer’s interest in photography and cinema, outside of an informal class on cinematography I have no background or formal training in photography. For me this made the Canon Rebel XS an ideal camera—its automatic settings generate beautiful pictures in most situations, and it is easy to adjust some parameters without having to immediately grasp how to handle all of them. Practically

this meant that the vast majority of these pictures were taken with the automatic settings. In a minority of them I manually adjusted the focus either because I wanted a specific diffuse focus or because I wanted the focus on a particular detail that the auto-focus resisted. The digital nature of the camera meant both that I could see my results immediately and that I could easily take large numbers of pictures without extravagant film and development costs.

The first of these pictures were attempts to capture moments that spontaneously grabbed my attention. Something about the way the pieces of children's chalk fell would take hold of me, and such a moment seemed to ask for a close-up. Later, as I began to notice the pervasiveness of these instances of beauty, I made an intentional practice of going hunting until I found something to photograph. The first picture would inform the second as I noticed a framing that was not quite right, that the light was better in a different spot, or that a particular angle was more intriguing. Because I could cheaply and efficiently take many pictures I would experiment, and this experimentation would become a kind of dialog with the subject.

The phenomenological character of this dialog was fascinating, almost like a real conversation. I often imagined the object I was photographing as a Rita Hayworth or a Katherine Hepburn insisting that I photograph her from her best side. I came to know the sense of synaesthesia as my guide—the image in the viewfinder would just feel off, not quite right, and that imbalance in the image would show itself as bodily sensation. Sometimes a dropping would appear in the pit of my stomach; sometimes I would literally feel off-balance. Likewise when I hit on the right picture something inside would flutter with delight. There were a variety of these sensations, including a literal breathing

in, a fluttering in my stomach, a tingling in the groin, or a tightness of longing in my chest. But sometimes the bodily response would be in my head, in which case I would often find the picture less moving when I returned to it later—I took this as an indication that I was intrigued by the idea of a particular photograph rather than its actuality.

This dialogue became the point of the exercise, for in it the world seemed to come alive in a new and unique way. The hidden connections between the faces of the world and the sensations of my body began to reveal themselves, silvery gossamer spider webs shining in the morning's light. The breath became important, both as indication of the presence of beauty and as the continuous sensuous connection to the enveloping air, whose constant presence serves to remind one of the corporeal nature of bodily being. As Abram (1996) demonstrated, this kind of awareness was a return to an ancient understanding.

> As the experiential source of both psyche and spirit, it would seem that the air was once felt to be the very matter of awareness, the subtle body of the mind. *And hence that awareness, far from being experienced as a quality that distinguishes humans from the rest of nature, was originally felt as that which invisibly* ***joined*** *human beings to the other animals and to the plants, to the forests and to the mountains*. (p. 238)

The back of my camera features a small screen that displays the picture that has just been shot. This screen proved very useful in the process of dialogue with the subject matter, but its limited resolution made it difficult to examine an image in detail. Consequently, close scrutiny of the photos would have to wait for the much higher resolution of my laptop screen, which could provide a more intimate view of the image.

This part of the process demanded a different stance. No longer the photographer out in the world seeking its images, I now had to put on the hat of a viewer of these images, attempting to be aware of the impact each individual image might have. The way

of the mind in this stance was also an essential part of this process, feedback that fed back into the photographic act. Natural photographer Ansel Adams (1985) wrote: “I believe the artist and his art are only a part of the total human experience; the viewer in the world at large is the essential other part” (p. 137). For me, this viewer mode of consciousness provided a phase in which I could refine and clarify the nature of the gut reactions that had appeared as I was taking the pictures. Out of this phase of the process I learned, in particular, of the magic possibilities of different types of light, perhaps the most single important element in the magic of photography. “One of my basic feelings is that the mind, and the heart alike, of the photographer must be dedicated to the glory, the magic, and the mystery of light” (Laughlin, 1973, p. 13).

Often the images would surprise me—pictures I thought were going to be highlights would appear dull and lifeless, while ones I had previously dismissed would suddenly shine. When this happened I felt as though the photographed objects themselves had surprised me as well—such surprising depth might suddenly appear in the banal. Like shooting the pictures, this viewer process was also a synaesthetic experience—eventually I learned that the pictures that held up after many viewings were the ones that produced a bodily sensation as I looked at them. Often these were accidents, off-handed experiments, made as curiosities in reaction to some barely felt sense. I would cull the pictures that seemed clearly good, mark some of them as maybes to come back to later, and leave the rest. The digital nature of these photographs served to reduce my emotional investment in the individual outcomes, making it significantly easier to discard work that was not good enough.

In spite of their digital nature, I made a choice with these photographs not to enhance them with post-processing effects in any way. Partly this was a practical decision—I become quickly overwhelmed when faced with the vast array of post-processing options, and I felt unsure how to effectively integrate them into the workflow. But this choice was also partly aesthetic. The ostensible point of these photographs was not to serve as works of art, but as a record of my meditations on objects in the world. While a different purpose might very well have demanded that the images be manipulated to produce their maximum aesthetic effect on the viewer, here I felt it better to leave them as they were taken.

Over time some of these photographs and themes rose to the top, and some that initially I had found especially moving faded in their effect on me. For a while I was obsessed, for example, with photographing transmission lines and accompanying infrastructure—the wooden poles and transformers of neighborhood equipment, as well as the heavy-duty metal poles and space-age accoutrements of long-distance transmission lines all entangled me. I pored over these photos, soaking them up. But then as quickly as interest in these subjects had come it left again, and many pictures I had found moving ceased to have much effect. In the final collection included in this thesis a few of the most powerful of these images remain, but a disproportionate number have been discarded. It would be an interesting topic for further investigation to explore the origins and implications of this cycle of captivation and fading interest.

To get down to the 133 images presented here it was often necessary to cut out the variations on a theme that might have been preserved in a different setting. It was also necessary to become ruthless about noticing the bodily response an image generated. A

picture that could really grab the gut consistently was in; one that could only muster that effect occasionally was left out. Ordering was also important, and I have gone through a repeated process of watching an ordered slideshow of the pictures, noting the sequenced effect each image has, and rearranging them to maximize that effect. In particular, if too many pictures in a row provoke the same bodily response, it quickly becomes dulled, and it is necessary to insert another picture in the sequence that affects a different zone of the body.

Reflections on the Process

A key point about this process was that the production of these images was both cheap and easy. It required minimal upfront monetary investment—and as high-quality digital camera technology has flooded into cell phones and other devices, the investment required has fallen even further since I began this project. Likewise it required minimal know-how. I did not need to learn to draw or paint, and in particular I did not need to learn the intricacies of photography, before I could produce images that I found affecting.

Based on my experiences, it seems that this sudden widespread availability of digital camera technology offers vast opportunities for non-artists who wish to engage their creative process. Because the marginal cost of each picture is virtually zero there is strong incentive to experiment; merely being drawn to a particular detail is ample reason in and of itself to take a picture. The screen included on most cameras allows one to see one's work right away, allowing immediate feedback. These features seem to make this kind of photography ideal for the exercise and development of the aesthetic sense, for which the ability to notice affecting details is essential. As Hillman (1992) spelled out, "a restoration of soul to world means knowing things in that further sense of *notitia:*

intimate intercourse, carnal knowledge" (p. 116). As one learns what works and what does not, an eye for the soul of things develops. This honing of the aesthetic sense ultimately allows one to participate with both one's self and the world in a new fashion.

The Relation to Self

When I first started therapy years ago I was in crisis, as so many are when they come to consulting rooms. Just talking about my inner state out loud was a transformational experience, and for a long time that cultivation of the inner was a great comfort. The consolation of introspection was so great that I would find beautiful, special notebooks, leather-bound and red, and every day sneak out of my computer-programming job for half an hour to huddle in a nearby coffee shop and pour my stream of consciousness reactions to the world onto paper. This self-dialogue was essential for me as it gave voice to the panoply of interior figures whose calls I had ignored for so long. That process was essential, and it led to real change. In those dialogues I was starting the process of becoming what I was meant to be, first by getting to know the host of characters that comprise this fiction known as I, and then by taking their counsel and transforming it into exterior changes. I recalibrated my relationship to my family, got married, had kids, and went back to school to change careers.

But things have shifted for me in my time at Pacifica. I have noticed lately that solo introspection rarely holds the appeal it once did for me. Instead, recently when I have felt down, going for walks has been just the thing. Not just any walks will do; they cannot be purposeful, they cannot be meant to help me work out some problem, but instead must be unfocused. They can have a destination—that is helpful, actually—but they cannot be measured in any way. While walking I must let my awareness of things

become diffuse, and when I do the things of the world come alive around me. They watch me as I watch them, and afterwards I often realize that I was caught by loneliness, by a sense of being unwanted and isolated, and the companionship of the things of the world becomes a cure. What is struck at here is “the reciprocal nature of direct perception—the fact that to touch is also to feel oneself being touched . . . to see is also to feel oneself seen” (Abram, 1996, p. 69).

This sense of being witnessed by a world I am simultaneously witnessing is a kind of mirroring, and points towards a connection with psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut’s self psychology, which defines the concept of the selfobject “to denote one’s experience of another as a part of the self” (Rowe & Isaac, 1991, p. 30). Kohut (as cited by Rowe & Isaac, 1991) clarified the function of the selfobject:

> Throughout his life a person will experience himself as a cohesive harmonious firm unit in time and space, connected with his past and pointing meaningfully into a creative-productive future, [but] only as long as, at each stage in his life, he experiences certain representatives of his human surroundings as joyfully responding to him, as available to him as sources of idealized strength and calmness, as being silently present but in essence like him. (p. 30)

Based on this concept Kohut defined a set of selfobject transferences essential to human development; if any of those transferences was not amply experienced then characteristic disorders would arise (pp. 32-35).

Kohut (as cited in Rowe & Isaac, 1991) defined those transferences as limited to the human, but I would like to offer the idea that the participation mystique that has appeared so often in this thesis is also a necessary selfobject transference onto the non-human world. It is my belief, growing out of the experiences related here, that there is a basic human need to participate with the world, to experience the world as alive. As the human selfobject transferences are necessary to the proper development of emotional,

spiritual, and interpersonal functioning, so the bodily nature of the participatory selfobject transference is essential to the proper development of a person's physical being in the world. It is often treated as an afterthought that we are animals built for participatory being in the world, but I believe the forgetting of our animal selves is at the root of a whole host of the ills that swamp the world today.

Indeed, as these pictures and this thesis have developed and grown, I have reached a realization that their true subject is the reconnection with a magical world in Abram's (1996) sense of the word. "In tribal cultures that which we call 'magic' takes its meaning from the fact that humans, in an indigenous and oral context, experience their own consciousness as simply one form of awareness among many others" (p. 9). With this realization I have begun to see these pictures as spells of sorts, meant to capture a little of the essence of a thing in a way that it can be shared with and experienced by another. Indeed, this type of participation seems to be at the heart of photography. Critic and commentator Susan Sontag (1977) opined,

> what defines the originality of photography is that, at the very moment in the long, increasingly secular history of painting when secularism is entirely triumphant, it revives—in wholly secular terms—something like the primitive status of images. Our irrepressible feeling that the photographic process is something magical has a genuine basis . . . A photograph is not only like its subject . . . It is part of, an extension of that subject; and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it. (p. 155)

Sontag here invoked the part of Lévy-Bruhl's (1910/1966) law of participation in which images play a crucial role: "Every picture, every reproduction 'participates' in the nature, properties, life of that of which it is the image . . . . By virtue of the mystic bond between them, a bond represented by the law of participation, the reproduction *is* the original"

(p. 64). The image, therefore, becomes a potent talisman for connection with the magical realm.

Oddly enough, as I have been writing this thesis I have been obsessed with author Joanne Rowling's Harry Potter series of books. I started reading the first book in the series as a means of evening decompression after long days of thesis research, but I quickly became sucked into the world Rowling had created. These books became more than just entertainment; they became an integral part of my thinking about not just what appears in this thesis, but also my own life. As I contemplated the novels' attraction I realized that they are highly relevant to the magical participatory sense.

In the first of the books, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Rowling, 1997), young Harry is rescued out of the blue from a mundane, miserable suburban existence and dropped into a world filled with wonder, where things are literally alive. Candles float, tables fill themselves with food, figures in portraits walk and talk, and the appropriate configuration of natural elements placed in the correct form of a wand can allow a practitioner to engage with that world in a way most foreign to normal experience. For me these books captivate because they are about wonder at the world, encounter with nature and the things of the world, cultivating one's ability to converse with the non-human, and engagement in a struggle against those who would put wonder in the service of power rather than power in the service of wonder.

Likewise, this thesis is really about making contact, through beauty, with the magical in the mundane. Although a handful of these pictures were taken on a vacation trip to coastal California, the bulk was taken in or around my home in Austin, Texas, where I have lived for almost 10 years. They came out of my everyday, mundane, world.

Their point, indeed, was that there was an always-present dimension just beyond the ordinary, a dimension that is accessible if one has eyes to see it. Tuning into that dimension provides an ever-present source of sustenance, of soul nurturance.

Further, I also began to remember how that dimension had sustained me, even well before I was conscious of the effect. Memories from childhood came back, demanding a new appreciation. One in particular stands out. I am a young teenager sitting in church on Sunday morning, enduring yet another boring sermon from a less-than-enlightening preacher. I stare out the window at the green of a run of pine trees that line a cow field, and I am struck by their majesty and the depth and resonance of their color. I feel very thankful that that window is plain glass rather than stained, which would have confined the images available to me to church-sanctioned ones. I can feel the magic of the world in that moment and it sustains through the hour.

The more I became aware of these moments, the more I realized how they pervaded my life and how much ongoing sustenance I took from them. The evening light would come through the bathroom window at the moment I most needed it; the hints of light in my child's dark room at naptime would hold me as I as I held her. I realized that these small moments of grace are everywhere, all around, enveloping, protecting, and feeding me through the umbilical that magically appears every time I take notice. They are our context, the ether through which we move, the unacknowledged depths from which souls grow. The experience brought me to the perspective captured in Hillman's (1992) statement: "The soul is born in beauty and feeds on beauty, requires beauty for its life . . . primordial aesthetic reactions of the heart are soul itself speaking" (p. 39).

Therefore, these pictures are more than just pictures; they form a catalogue of the blessings that fill my life. As I inventory them I offer praise to the world's majesty. "Praise . . . delights in the world and brings delight to it, as biblical psalms and old hymns praise the beauties and pleasures of creation" (Hillman, 2006d, p. 129). Moreover, the acknowledgement of blessings leads to their proliferation, more and more things revealing their beauty, until the catalogue becomes uncountable, and the inventory of images uncontainable. As I notice these particular moments of beauty I become grounded, woven together with the world, my soul and its soul one.

My changing perception of the physical world also seemed to work a physical change on me. I have spent most of my life disconnected from my body. Although I have athletic ability I have never been athletic in practice. Over the last several years, as the pressures of school, work, and family left me increasingly stressed, I became more distant from and often neglectful of my physical self. But during this photographic period I experienced a simultaneous shift towards embodiment. I began exercising quite a bit, minding my diet, and lost 35 pounds. Now I grow restless and agitated if I do not begin my day out of doors, regardless of the weather. For me, so often lost in the spiritual realm of ideas and introspections, the process of coming into body by moving into the world seemed naturally to lead to physical changes, and those changes seem an essential piece of the soul-making involved. "The body is itself the visible expression of soul" (Sardello, 2001, p.133).

Slowing Down

Slowness is central to this process. Indeed, it may be the single most important ingredient, and the hardest to come by. It is no accident that the things of the world have

lost their souls at the same time the culture has witnessed an unprecedented speeding up of the pace of life. It takes time and attention to notice things, and when one is moving too fast there is simply not enough space to stop in that instant when a small grace shines through, even if one were able to notice it.

Abram (1996) repeated multiple accounts of Australian Aboriginals crossing or following their songlines while riding in automobiles (pp. 173-174). The scenes are comic and simultaneously tragic; the Aboriginal must sing the appropriate bits of song for the location, and the cars move so fast that that the singer cannot keep up without assuming an unnatural pace.

> [Limpy's] eyes rolled wildly over the rocks, the cliffs, the palms, the water. His lips moved at the speed of a ventriloquist's. . . . Limpy had learnt his Native Cat couplets for walking pace, at four miles an hour, and we were travelling at twenty-five. (Chatwin, as cited in Abram, 1996, p. 174)

I imagine those of us living in modern Western society, at core, are really not so different from Limpy. Our sensuous bodies are built to move at a walking pace, built to participate with the landscape as we move through it. Yet in the modern world we do not just walk through it, we hurtle at a furious pace along freeways and streets, our attention often divided between what is there in front of our eyes—and usually only our eyes as the car bubble allows little other sensory participation—and the virtual world, whether that world comes through our radios, cell phones, or simply occupies our restless minds hungry for the synaesthetic convergence necessary to experience the self as a unity.

Noticing is essential to relationship, and one simply cannot notice in a way that allows an I-Thou relation at 60 miles per hour. I am reminded of my one other significant excursion into photography. I was 23; I had just graduated from college, and was moving across the country from the East Coast to San Francisco, California where a job as a

computer programmer waited for me. I chose to drive, as I wanted the chance to see the countryside; I even gave myself a couple of weeks in which to make the trip. I had received a new film camera as a graduation gift, and I intended to really allow myself to sink into and study photography as a hobby, something that never happened. But there I was, even with time allocated, careening across the country.

I particularly remember the blur of West Texas, a bizarre, moonlike landscape I had never seen before. I was fascinated by the texture of the land there. I remember a desperate hunger to connect with it somehow, to explore the ridges and mountains in the distance, to come to know the squat and prickly plants that peppered the brown of the desert. I was like a self-created version of Limpy, my senses firing and my being desperate for participation with this myth-heavy land, feature after feature demanding a song, and the lines left unsung feeding a rising discontent. The speed of youth is a cliché, and yet I longed to slow down. I was caught in the unfolding, the appeal of seeing what was just over the next hill outweighing the urge to stop and soak in the terrain. That was me at that time, hurtling towards something and lacking the patience for slower side excursions, but I think it was not just me. I had grown up hurtling along freeways, everybody in a mad rush towards accomplishment, and I believe I was also acting out that cultural lesson.

Stopping did not seem an option. On the long stretches of empty highway, the comic-in-retrospect compromise I finally arrived at was to aim my new camera out of the window and snap pictures of the features that intrigued me as they passed out of sight at 70, 80, or 90 miles per hour. That image seems to capture something core to what this thesis is about. The world was grabbing at me even then, trying to get my attention,

trying to get me to notice. But the cultural models I had inherited combined with my specific temperament ruled out my taking the measures necessary to experience a real participation. My life at that point certainly conformed to Hillman's (1992) speculation that "perhaps, events speed up in proportion to their not being appreciated; perhaps events grow to cataclysmic size and intensity in proportion to their not being noticed" (p. 115). The slowing down that accompanies tending to one's responses can, according to Hillman, have the opposite effect. "An aesthetic response to particulars would radically slow us down. To notice each event would limit our appetite for events, and this very slowing down of consumption would affect inflation, hyper-growth, the manic defenses and expansionism of the civilization" (p. 115).

Here, now almost 15 years later, I have finally arrived at a different relationship to slowness. In a process oriented towards the tending of soul it has become essential to cut out the noise, to just notice in the moment the mutual resonance of my interior forces and the soul of things, a mutuality Kandinsky (1970/1994a) captured. "The internal element of man, or internal man, remains in continuous contact with the internal aspect of the world that surrounds him" (p. 106). The contact is always there, if one knows how to see it.

The Relation to Ugliness

If there is a downside to all of this it is, perhaps, the loss of the numbing defense, what Hillman (2006a) called an-esthesia, "the denied aesthetic response, this ignorance of the psyche's aesthetic impulse" (p. 144). The more I have noticed moments of beauty, the more I have also noticed how much ugliness has invaded our culture. I am regularly shocked at the colorless and texture-less materials in offices, outraged by the aggression

of overhead lighting, depressed by the indifference of cell phone towers, and sent into paroxysms of rage by smug buildings seemingly modeled after prisons. While it is certainly healthier to be aware of those reactions, it is not always pleasant.

These types of settings rob me of that sense of being seen by my surroundings, and leave me with a sense of despair. Buildings especially have this effect—as Hillman (2006b) noted so powerfully, their looming presences cannot be escaped (p. 151); their hostage-taking attitude is at the heart of their criminality. A building on the University of Texas campus exemplifies this. A tall and silvered glass tower serves as a student dormitory. It is crowned with large and unsightly television transmission equipment; at its base is an indoor mall. To the passerby the building is nearly impossible to enter; if one can find an entrance it invariably looks like it may harbor muggers. It sits there, taking up a city block, like a fortress or prison, denying intercourse with the street and casting aspersions on any who dare question it. Projection though it may be, I cannot help but think of this building as ugly, smug, and self-righteous, and the worst part of being near it is my sense that it is accusing me of being in the wrong for daring to question it. It stands there like a bully prison guard just daring me to make trouble, eager for a rumble.

Though I have always been politically aware, that awareness has taken on a different character as I have become more conscious of the ugly. Specifically I have become aware of the intimate relation between beauty and democracy and the ways that the ugly functions to delineate society's fault lines of power. Take that University of Texas building, for example. Living here in Austin, Texas I am stuck with it, and every time I pass it and feel its aggression I am made aware of how little power I have to affect any change in it. It stands protected by a powerful institution, forcing itself on everybody

who has to walk past it, taunting me to try and stop it. In essence that building serves as a reminder of one's distance in both taste and influence from the centers of power. It is just one building, of course, in a city full of them. But when the effect is repeated over and over again as it seems to be in most modern American cities, it quickly becomes inescapable.

The awareness of this building's assertion of power has also made me aware of my options for responding. Avoidance is one—either physical by just not going near the building, or psychological by numbing out. I am fortunate enough that I can mostly avoid the building, particularly in its worst up-close face. But what if that were not an option? What if I had to walk past it or one of its kin every day and be constantly reminded of its aggression and my powerlessness? Then numbing out might seem a quite reasonable solution.

My other option is rebellion. If that building spits at me and dares me to challenge it, then perhaps at some point I will decide to fight back. The low-grade manifestations of this rebellion take the form in our society of petty vandalism and graffiti. It should be noted that graffiti has historically been one of the few available modes for the disenfranchised to strike against the entrenched power structure. "In ancient Athens, the walls served as a safety-valve for citizens' demands and fantasies" (Pereira, 2005, p. 16). Often graffiti serves as a beautification project, in those cases making it an act of aesthetic rebellion. Graffiti can add color to the drab, pleasing shape to the formless, and distinctiveness to the uniform. To me, it often indicates life lurking below the lifeless, hope in the form of un-subjugated life-force, and the hope for renewal.

But regardless of one's mode of resistance to the forces of ugliness, what has become clear to me is that to an increasing degree our things refuse to participate with us while at the same time inserting themselves in our psychic space, and in this way they have become constant reminders of the one-way mirror. A Panopticon dwells in every dominating building and in every lifeless bauble that refuses our affections. When we no longer notice these messages, then we have submitted and allowed our things to become petty tyrants, unanswerable to us, and therefore agents of authoritarianism.

This tyranny of objects plays dramatically into how one relates to the world. Buber (1957/1970) saw the connection.

> In sick ages it happens that the It-world, no longer irrigated and fertilized by the living currents of the You-world, severed and stagnant, becomes a gigantic swamp phantom and overpowers man. As he accommodates himself to a world of objects that no longer achieve any presence for him, he succumbs to it. (p. 102)

To no longer accommodate—in retrospect that seems to have been the personal mission of this thesis. Whether and in what situations that is an appropriate therapeutic move will have to be a subject for further studies, but it is my hope that the experiences and ideas presented in this thesis may help point the way for those called to such a stance.

Chapter IV
Conclusion

The Milk Jug
(The Kitten Speaks)

The Gentle Milk Jug blue and white
I love with all my soul;
She pours herself with all her might
To fill my breakfast bowl.

All day she sits upon the shelf,
She does not jump or climb—
She only waits to pour herself
When ‘tis my suppertime.

And when the Jug is empty quite,
I shall not mew in vain,
The Friendly Cow all red and white,
Will fill her up again.

Herford, 2007, p. 43

This thesis asked the question of how one might utilize a regular practice of photographic meditation to build a more full-bodied connection with the world. This question was cast in terms of Buber’s (1957/1970) breakdown of the types of relations into the categories of I-It and I-Thou. To understand Western humanity’s starting point in regards to this question, chapter II examined the development of the supposedly objective point of view (Romanyshyn, 1989, 2008), and its reinforcement by Calvinist ideology (Weber, 1921/1958). Abram (1996, 2010) and Hillman (1992, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006f, 2006g, 2006h) provided insight into how the senses and their companion, the

aesthetic response, can serve as the deep connecting tissue in a bodily I-Thou relation to the world. To assess the feasibility of this undertaking Chapter II also examined the role of the artistic process in building a sensuous connection to the world.

More personally, the thesis detailed my particular path towards a fuller relationship with the world through photography. For me, a regular practice was found to facilitate the habit of noticia, and therefore to facilitate the cultivation of the aesthetic response, which serves as the sensuous link between an individual and the anima mundi (Hillman, 1992). That link, tended through an active practice of the discernment of particulars, continues to provide me with the sustaining sense that the noumenal energies of the Gods shine through in the world's details.

Further Research

I have focused primarily on the personal and positive effects of such a practice, but further investigation of the widespread, negative ramifications of an environment of ugly seems well worth the effort. The incorporation of a participatory selfobject transference into Kohut's (as cited in Rowe & Isaac, 1991) self psychology theory might serve as a good starting point for such an investigation. Any such investigation should also examine the characteristic pathology that develops from the absence of such a transference, and within that context the role that lack of that transference may play in the pandemic of mental illness that seems to affect modern Western culture. This topic also has significant political implications worth examination, as it reveals the ways aesthetics may be used as a means of social control.

Further, the personal practice described here might be expanded to become more general. It is my belief that a major and largely neglected task of therapy is awakening

the proprioceptive senses that attune clients to the subtleties of beauty and participation with their surroundings. This sort of approach would tend the individual and world souls simultaneously, working towards restoring a person's apperception of the magical through cultivating a sense of participation with the world. A whole host of approaches might work well for this; one could imagine similar approaches that utilize meditative practices of cooking, gardening, hiking, and so forth. At its extreme this idea of restoring the sense of magic through a practice that notices the particulars of place and time might serve as a unifying thread for a variety of psychological disciplines, such as ecopsychology (Fisher, 2002) and terrapsychology (Chalquist, 2007).

The Question of Meaning

Now here, towards the end of this journey, it is time to return to a question that was raised and then sidestepped in Chapter I. Why should reconnection with the world be, in and of itself, a goal? If the fundamental premise of this thesis is the need to develop an I-Thou relationship with the non-human populations of one's surroundings, then from where does that need proceed? In Chapter I the question was brushed off by reference to other writers' laments (Abram, 1996; Hillman, 1992; Sardello, 2004) about the state of the world, but a closer examination of that question highlights exactly why this topic is so important to the world of psychotherapy.

Those answers were, in fact, the only ones that could be given at that point. Without understanding the cultural rootedness of the problem (Abram, 1996; Foucault, 1977/1980; Romanyshyn, 1989, 2008), and the possibilities that connection offered for the tending of soul (Sardello, 2001, 2004), there was really no way to approach the question other than from the external observation and detailing of consequences in the

world. This was causal, materialistic thinking applied to the question of the negative long-term ramifications of causal, materialistic thinking. The approach recalls the tower in my dream, removed from the other towers of the city only to assert its dominance over the figures of the countryside, an ego that has escaped the prison of other egos, but remains incapable of functioning in relation to its surroundings. Only the spirit of God in the form of the air, that essence of breath and root of aisthesis, can topple the tower, and subject the objectifying eye to the scrutiny of others. Only the spirit of God can bring that tower into proper relation to the world around it. In the dream, the relation was frightening, but visceral. The I-Thou relation is not necessarily pleasant, but it is alive. As Buber (1957/1970) wrote,

> primal man's experiences of encounter were scarcely a matter of tame delight; but even violence against a being one really confronts is better than ghostly solicitude for faceless digits! From the former a path leads to God, from the latter only to nothingness. (p. 75)

Courage is required to face the world in full encounter, perhaps more courage today than ever before. In the jungle, forest, or savannah the worst that one faced in full encounter was death, but today one could face erasure.

Having covered the territory presented in these pages, it important to return to the question. For the questions at stake here are not simply ones of ecological disasters, widespread disaffection from the culture and the accompanying mental illnesses, or the death of a democracy buried under the crushing weight of modern ugliness—although all of those are certainly implicated. What is at stake, in its most sublimated form, is the possibility of an authentic sense of meaning in life. The return to the body and the senses, in fact, forces a reexamination of the very notion of meaning, for the whole idea of a quest for meaning grows out of the estrangement of mind from body, the removal of the

objectifying eye from the immediacy of the world it observes. Depth psychologist Wolfgang Giegerich (2004) formulated the idea that

> "loss of meaning" and "search for meaning" have to be seen . . . as two sides of the same coin. Just as it is the sense of loss of meaning that creates a craving for meaning, so it is the idea of the dire need of a higher meaning that makes real life appear as intolerably banal and "nothing but" . . . The search for meaning is the opposite of itself. It is what turns reality into that very senselessness that it intends to overcome; it is itself that symptom or illness the cure of which it claims to be. (p. 2)

That search for meaning is a search for articulation and articulation is a function of the cognitive; implicit in the very question itself is Descartes' split of mind from body (as cited in Abram, 2010). Again, like the tower in my dream, itself fleeing from the other towers that would have crowded in upon it in the dense city but lacking the capacity to relate to its surroundings, the ego that has formulated the question of meaning sets itself apart from the mass of other egos, but remains a subjugating force as long as it cannot relate to its environs. Giegerich (2004) situated the dilemma.

> The search for meaning seeks something that cannot be sought because any seeking for it destroys what is to be gained. Meaning is not an entity that could be had, not a creed, a doctrine, a world view, also not something like the fairytale treasure hard to attain. It is not semantic, not a content. Meaning, where it indeed exists, is first of all an implicit *fact* of existence, its *a priori*. It can never be the answer to a question; it is conversely an unquestioned and unquestionable certainty that predates any possible questioning. It is the groundedness of existence, a sense of embeddedness in life, of containment in the world—perhaps we could even say of in-ness as the logic of existence *as such*. Meaning exists if the meaning of life is as self-evident as the in-ness in water is for fish. (p. 3)

To achieve in-ness, then, is to leave the airy and enclosed heights of the glass tower and find oneself up-close and personal in the world where the color of the dirt, the feel of its texture, the distinctive aroma it lets forth, and the shoots of new life emerging from it may move one to gasp in appreciation or recoil in disgust. Such situatedness does not provide an answer to the question of meaning, but removes the very divide out of

which the question of meaning emerges. This, therefore, is why it is so deadly important to reconnect with the soul of the world, because that is where one finds one's song, and where one can hear the echoing call-and-response songs of every worldly thing. It is not because the world is so desperately in need of a savior, but because the very notion of the world's salvation as personal task cuts one off from hearing the glorious cacophony of life.

Appendix
Photographs

To view the photographs for this thesis, please use the included DVD.

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