The Therapeutics of Extinction Anxiety: A Depth Psychological Approach

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(A YouTube video of this lecture and powerpoint presentation can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHvHmmIg8gU)

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"Upterrlainarluta." Yup'ik, VERB: "to be wise in preparing for the unknowable." -- James Barker, trans.

We are in the soup that is going to be cooked for us, whether we claim to have invented it or not…. We are threatened with universal genocide if we cannot work out the way of salvation by a symbolic death." -- C. G. Jung (CW 18, 1661)

It is the most awake, the most visionary and the most courageous among us who are being called to play the role of the imaginal cells for humanity. -- Paul Levy

Welcome

Welcome everyone! So good to see you. It's always a special thing to gather together in a small group of thoughtful individuals and reflect on what's happening in our world today. As Co-President of the Seattle Jung Society I bring greetings from your sister organization in the great Pacific Northwest. If you go to our website, you'll see that our tagline is 'liberating soul in service to the great turning'. Our mission statement reads as follows: *"As a thoughtful learning community, we strive to make Jungian and depth psychological thought available to the general public through workshops, seminars and other resources that help liberate the soul and transform culture."* (www.jungseattle.org) I like to think that whenever a circle gathers in service to Jungian depth psychology, that circle is working to liberate soul in service to the great cultural transformations that are happening all around us. I like the way that cultural historian Richard Tarnas frames learning communities like ours as 'heroic communities', understood as communities that are consciously oriented toward a framework of values, or a vision of the good, which fundamentally challenges that of the larger mainstream society. (1) Such communities are needed more than ever as the evidence that we are living in the midst of a global psychic epidemic of epic proportions becomes more apparent.

Perhaps, like me, you are looking for a place where you can reflect upon your deepest concerns about the fate of humanity and its role in the ongoing continuity of planetary life in a community of like-minded souls. Or perhaps, like me, you are wondering, as do the Yupik Eskimos, "how to be wise in preparing for the unknowable." We here in America are relatively lucky, depending on our socio-economic status. We're not crouching in basements waiting for the next bomb to drop or fending off starvation as crops burn or flood. Most of us in first world countries are only now beginning to experience the ravages of climate change, as we witness climate refugees at our borders, forest fires burning out of control and strange weather patterns. Our challenge, as relatively conscious people interested in the insights of Jungian depth psychology, is how to stay mentally healthy and spiritually whole in these brutal times. How can we avoid the contagion of this psychic epidemic of anxiety, living in the midst of fundamentalism and fascism, avoiding the

temptation to become suspicious, hate-filled, desensitized? Or worse, according to the poet William Butler Yeats, 'full of passionate intensity'?

Whenever I am charged with the responsibility of facilitating a circle like this, I think of a dream that came to me early in my teaching career. It was on an Easter morning and I awoke with the voice of Mother Teresa in my head. I didn't know much about Mother Teresa at the time, but her voice was insistent. She said, *"Randy the point is not to save people. The point is to create the conditions for the possibility of grace."* This teaching from the great Avatar of Compassion, Mother Teresa, has remained at the center of my teaching life as it has evolved over my 40-year career. It reminds me, in this very moment, to tell you that I'm not trying to change anyone's mind with my words tonight. I'm not arguing about anything. I'm not trying to save anyone. My only job is a poetic one -- to create conditions for the possibility of grace – hoping there might be a moment during my presentation where you experience some new image, some new emotional field, some new idea you haven't previously considered – in hopes that it will make you more conscious of the sacred task before you, before us all, namely, to be an agent in the great work facing humanity, to facilitate a Global Initiation into a new kind of psychic reality, and therefore a new kind of human being.

I will attempt to create this container of grace by telling some of my dreams and stories, and speculate about what Jung would say about these times. In this sense, I am doing a form of 'spiritual activism' wherein I risk sharing my own interior life in service to the healing of the collective. Because I am making statements about possible futures through the medium of depth psychology, I am also speaking in a 'prophetic voice' -- not the kind of judgmental prophet from the Old Testament who criticizes the profligate ways of the people and exhorts them to do better, but the kind of prophet who tries to puncture the trance of numbness and despair that afflicts our collective consciousness. By naming the darkness, the prophet seeks to advance the dignity and power of awakened consciousness. He or she wants to penetrate despair by offering new futures that can be believed in and embraced by the people.

Invocation

So whatever brought you here tonight on the dark topic of 'extinction anxiety', it's important that you know that you are not alone. No one should expose themselves to images of genocide, nuclear war and climate chaos in isolation. We have to face these issues in a community of trusted allies. Whenever I talk about extinction anxiety and the dark night of the species soul, I always invoke the words of Carolyn Baker and Andrew Harvey from their book Savage Grace: Living Resiliently in the Dark Night of the Globe: "*Our work as awake human beings at this time then, is to be willing to descend into the dark night of the globe as well as the dark night of the individual soul and to do so in connection with trusted allies. Going downward and inward is the only way we can open to the mystery of the Self and be guided by it through whatever unfolds*." (2)

So let's align ourselves with the need to form heroic communities of trusted allies when faced with the imagination of global psychic epidemics and the dark night of the species soul. And let's not limit our trusted allies to the people on this Zoom call, but open it to our ancestors, including the indigenous people of the land upon which we live. At the Seattle Jung Society, we begin every event with our land acknowledgment. As I read it, I invite you to say silently in your

heart or typed into the chat, the name of the indigenous people of the land upon which you stand, whose lives and stories laid down the psychic structures of the landscape where you live. For our bio-region here in the Pacific Northwest, it goes like this:

We, members of the C. G. Jung Society of Seattle feel privileged to live in the spectacular landscape of the Salish Sea, shaped 10,000 years ago by glacial ice a mile thick. As the ice receded, peoples moved in. They cared for this land, fished its waters, built longhouses, and carved canoes from its majestic trees. We honor those who called this place home; the peoples who lived, loved, fought, and died here. Their children played upon its shores, and their stories covered the land and laid the foundation for the ancestral Soul of Seattle. We acknowledge their thousands of years of caretaking and their contributions to the physical and psychic structure of this landscape. We recognize the pain and trauma visited upon them through colonization. We dedicate ourselves to re-connecting to this land and its ancestors, human and non-human, and commit to restoring our relationship to the Anima Mundi of the Salish Sea. In turn, may we be good ancestors for those who follow.

Who else is in our community of trusted allies? What about the future beings, the ones for whom we want to be 'beloved ancestors'? Let's invite them into our gathering circle. After all, are we not in a partnership with them to make it possible for them to be born? Who else can we count as trusted allies to go downward and inward into the topic of extinction anxiety and the dark night of the species soul? Let's not limit our circle to human beings, but open it to the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms as well. Let's call in the weather beings and the water and mountain beings. In fact, let's call a "Council of All Beings" to witness our deliberations today. They all have a stake in the topic of how humanity is going to respond to this tsunami of extinction anxiety. After all, human beings are the single most significant geological force on this planet and will determine the fate of the earth as it moves toward the next stage of its evolution. As we imagine the various beings of the earth gathering around our circle tonight, encouraging us in our efforts to become more conscious about the plight of the planet, I will light a candle and, in a moment of silence, invite you to see their faces and silently, in your heart, say their names. What ancestor -- human or more than human -- do you want to invite into our learning circle this evening? .... *May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our heart be always acceptable in their sight. ,,, May it be so*!

The Hermeneutic of Depth Psychology

Now that the Invisibles are here to support and guide us, we can proceed with our topic tonight – "the therapeutics of extinction anxiety: a depth psychological approach". But first we need to align our language so that we are in the same community of discourse. After all, my imagination of who Jung was and the meaning of depth psychology, may be different from yours. So I am going to begin by talking about what I think a depth psychological approach means. Then, once I sketch out my understanding of depth psychology, I'll turn to the question of extinction anxiety. Such a strange category! You may have heard of eco-anxiety or death-anxiety, but why privilege this term extinction-anxiety? To approach this topic with both head and heart will require some careful ritual work. The imagery of extinction is intense and we have to prepare ourselves to enter that dark territory. Once the necessary words are spoken and the sacred circle of our understanding has been demarcated, we will go to the crux of the issue, namely, what do I

mean by ‘therapeutics’? How do we live a life dedicated to the good, the true, the beautiful and the just in brutalizing times?

Now, these are heavy topics and you may wonder by what authority I am qualified to be speaking about such matters. After all, I am not a clinical psychologist nor a Jungian Analyst. I am not an expert in climate change nor a political scientist. Not only that, but I am a privileged, white, heterosexual, middle class male! That said, my Ph.D. is in Liberal Arts, which means I am intensely interested in who I am and who I can become in the midst of this historical moment in which I find myself. Since its golden years in the 12th century school of Liberal Arts at Chartres Cathedral in France, the ancestors of my craft of the Liberal Arts have been on a singular quest -- to align their inner life with the harmony of the cosmos, to live a life of meaning in an enchanted cosmos. (3) As a liberal artist in that tradition, I am acutely aware that the methods I use to analyze anything will determine what I can see. As a result, I am a student of hermeneutics, of interpretive frames, and how they limit and condition what I can know. So when I turn my gaze to this historical moment – a moment rife with trauma, fear, injustice and dread -- it matters how I approach the task.

My chosen hermeneutic, the spectacles through which I am going to look at this topic of the therapeutics of extinction anxiety, is Jungian depth psychology, that tradition of inquiry that harks back to the Orphic mysteries and the Neo-Platonists, the alchemists and the grail seekers, the romantic poets and Goethean scientists, and all lovers of beauty and the imagination. In late nineteenth century Europe, this tradition took on the veneer of a ‘science of the soul’ in the work of Freud and Jung. There are many other approaches one could take to this topic, and they would reveal other insights, but I prefer depth psychology. Why? In answer to that question, I want to describe what I consider the ethos, the mood or the emotional atmosphere in which the work of depth psychology is conducted. And then I want to sketch out four key ideas that I think will prove useful in approaching the topic of extinction anxiety.

The Ethos of Depth Psychology –

First, depth psychology is about the generation of meaning. As Jung pointed out, what happens to us is only half the story. The other half is the meaning we make of it. I am reminded of the work of Viktor Frankl, the founder of Logotherapy, who spoke from his own experience when he said that even concentration camps are bearable if one can find meaning in the suffering and death. (4) When considering extinction anxiety, it’s not only that bad things are happening to us. The other half is the meaning we make of this suffering. For example, extinction anxiety could be the just desserts for a species hellbent on destroying itself. On the other hand, that level of suffering could be the only way the larger systems of the earth can get our attention in order to communicate to us about their needs, waking us up to specific instructions on how we can create a more hospitable and sustainable ecological niche for the human species.

Second, a depth psychological approach is always about interiority. It is always about going ‘down and in’, of deep reflection upon the currents of our own souls as well as on the interiority of the beings of the outer world, the Anima Mundi, the soul of the world. Looking within, we see an incredibly rich world, with whole communities that demand our attention. These are not mere fantasies or disordered sense impressions, but the inner dimensions of the outer world appearing

in the mirror of our soul, and they deserve to be recognized and given life too. When given a space to speak, what do the voices of interiority have to say? Perhaps they have the answers to the causes of our suffering that the outer world cannot even formulate.

A third quality of a depth psychological approach is 'reverence'. The great Irish poet and philosopher John O'Donohue says it best, "*A reverence of approach awakens depth and enables us to be truly present where we are. When we approach with reverence, great things decide to approach us. Our real life comes to the surface and its light awakens the concealed beauty in things."* (5). An approach of reverence is essential to a soulful life. If we approach our inner worlds seeking flaws and defects, we will never get beneath the surface where the beauty and inner communion reside. An approach of reverence invites revelation, intimacy, and awe to enter our soul and reveals its sacred depths. In the midst of the ugliness of a world that is undergoing a traumatic transformation, an attitude of reverence allows us to see the beauty of the larger patterns at work as the earth goes about her sacred work of evolving.

A fourth attribute of depth psychology is its ongoing quest for healing, for the restoration of Soul to its rightful place of dignity and wholeness. This requires a nose for the wounded places in the world and in ourselves, a task that requires the courage of the ER doctor in the midst of treating a ravaged body. Like that doctor, looking away is not an option. A life force hangs in the balance and depends on us, whether it is a wounded imaginal being in our personal soul or a wounded impulse in the collective. In either case, we bring our compassion and skill to bear on what it takes to return that bloodied and broken soul-part back to wholeness. This cannot be done without a long apprenticeship to the broken parts of ourselves. This is the work of the archetype of the wounded healer who knows how to be at home in the midst of darkness and suffering and who has the patience to wait for the light of healing to miraculously appear.

Four Key Ideas

So, if this is the spirit or mood with which depth psychology operates, what are its key ideas? What a complex question. Of course, there are a zillion ideas in the Jungian lexicon. And yet for our purposes I want to draw our attention to four key ideas of Jungian Depth Psychology that I think are most relevant for our work this evening.

- **Psychic Reality**

First, the basis of all of Jung's thinking is the idea of psychic reality. At first, I only understood psychic reality as a concept: 'Consciousness is a precondition of being" (6), whatever that means. It was only when I felt myself moving into Jung's own discovery of psychic reality that I could understand what he meant by that statement. You may be familiar with the story as recounted in Memories, Dreams, Reflections when Jung is traveling in Africa in 1925. Let's hear it from Jung himself:

"From Nairobi we used a small Ford to visit the Athi Plains, a great game preserve. From a low hill in this broad savannah a magnificent prospect opened out to us. To the very brink of the horizon we saw gigantic herds of animals: gazelle, antelope, gnu, zebra, warthog, and so on. Grazing, heads nodding, the herds moved forward like slow rivers. There was scarcely any

sound save the melancholy cry of a bird of prey. This was the stillness of the eternal beginning, the world as it had always been, in the state of non-being; for until then no one had been present to know that it was this world. I walked away from my companions until I put them out of sight and savored the feeling of being entirely alone. There I was now, the first human being to recognize that this was the world, but who did not know that in this moment he had first really created it.

There the cosmic meaning of consciousness became overwhelmingly clear to me. "What nature leaves imperfect, the art perfects", say the alchemists. Man, I, in an invisible act of creation, put the stamp of perfection on the world by giving it objective existence. ... (I) had been looking about without hope for a myth of my own. Now I knew what it was, and knew even more: that man is indispensable for the completion of creation; that, in fact, he himself is the second creator of the world, who alone has given to the world its objective existence -- without which, unheard, unseen, silently eating, giving birth, dying, heads nodding through the millions of years, it would have gone on in the profoundest night of non-being down to its unknown end. Human consciousness created objective existence and meaning, and man found his indispensable place in the great process of being." (7)

I never tire of imagining myself sitting next to Jung as this revelation pours over him. And I never tire of re-creating it in my own experiences in nature. It makes it clear that the purpose of human life is the creation of consciousness, a purpose that endows human consciousness with the dignity of a cosmic principle. As Jung puts it, *"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being."* (8) Understanding psychic reality is crucial to a meditation on extinction anxiety because human extinction means that this capacity for reflective consciousness would be extinguished. Creation would lose its mirror, and it would plunge back into a state of what Jung calls "non-being".

- **Ego-Unconscious Dialogue.**

A second idea crucial to the depth psychological perspective is that in some deep and mysterious way, we are divided against ourselves. The individuation process is about overcoming this separation through dialogue with the unconscious. Perhaps St. Paul said it most succinctly, "For I do not do the good I desire, but rather the evil that I do not desire. Now if I should do what I do not wish to do, it is not I that do it, but rather sin which dwells within me." Now here is an image of estrangement, what Paul called "sin", that accounts for many of our strange behaviors. How often do we commit an act in perfect consciousness, but with the shocking sense that we are being controlled by an alien being within ourselves?[2] And how can we claim to know much about the motives of other human beings, much less the intentions of the body politic or even the cosmos, if we cannot even know why we do the things that we do? This "I" that thinks it knows what it is doing, depth psychology calls the "ego", and that strange force in my limbs that compels me to do things I do not understand, it calls "the unconscious". Depth psychology is the study of the relationships between the ego and the unconscious. Its goal is for the ego to establish a conscious relationship with the unconscious. When this happens, forces are released from within the unconscious that guide an individual to individuate, that is, to fulfill their destiny by becoming the person that they were always meant to be.

Over a hundred years of clinical research into the nature of the unconscious suggests that there are three layers to it – a personal unconscious that contains repressed material from our personal lives, a collective unconscious that contains contents derived from our evolution as a species, and a third level that some call the world unconscious that contains contents at the edge of the psyche/soma boundary and which gives us access into the interiority of the beings of the outer world. So, while the unconscious is the repository of the best and worst of ourselves, it is also the place wherein we meet and converse with nature and the divine. Understanding the layers of the unconscious is crucial to discerning a therapeutics for extinction anxiety by providing a direction to go, namely, down and in.

- **Psyche is Intentional**

And thirdly, depth psychology asserts that the push of the unconscious into the affairs of the ego has an intentionality about it. Thoughts and images do not simply appear on the screen of awareness randomly. What "shows up" in our minds is regulated by an intelligence that informs the core of our being. That intelligence is akin to the ancient Greek notion of the *Logos*, one of the most enduring and generative principles of Western thought. According to Richard Tarnas, the idea of the *Logos* assumes that *"the universe possesses and is governed according to a comprehensive regulating intelligence, and that this same intelligence is reflected in the human mind, rendering it capable of knowing the cosmic order."* (9) This *Logos* expresses itself within psychic reality as patterns of images that Jung called archetypes.

Different religious and philosophical traditions have different names for this cosmic intelligence. Mainstream Christians use theological categories and call it God or the Holy Spirit. Esoteric Christians personify it and call it Sophia, or Holy Wisdom. Some scientists objectivate it and call it a heavenly clockwork. Jungians psychologize it, calling it the Greater Self. They say it is the driving force behind the individuation process itself. The archetype of the Self generates images that shape the development of individual lives, drive the history of nations, and determine the fate of the earth. This Cosmic intelligence uses everything within its dual powers of creation and destruction to move the universe toward greater complexity and wholeness. It is truly an extraordinary idea! With an insight like this into the *Logos* of the individual and world soul, it is no wonder Jung spent the last part of his life psychologizing about the nature of the God-image, hoping that a new and more adequate God-image would emerge from the bones of our broken stories to lead humanity and the earth away from extinction and toward a new imagination of human meaning and purpose in an enchanted cosmos.

- **Archetype of Initiation**.

A fourth idea of Jungian depth psychology that is central to our deliberations this evening is the archetype of initiation. From a somatic point of view, archetypes are a form of instinct, a pre-formed intelligence handed down from millions of years of ancestral wisdom. When an archetype is constellated in the life of an individual, it is experienced as a kind of hunger that needs to be satisfied. The archetype of initiation is easiest to see in adolescence as the young person seeks to shed the skin of their childhood and emerge as a fully empowered adult. In traditional cultures, the youth are guided by elders through various death and re-birth ceremonies and emerge as empowered young adults. In Western cultures, who live in a time of an aimless

mythlessness, the youth are mostly fed junk food – drugs, sex and rock and roll. As a result, we live in what the eco-psychologist Bill Plotkin calls a 'patho-adolescent society'. The archetype of initiation constellates again in mid-life and in elderhood, as well as any time there is a need for a powerful death and rebirth experience to advance the individuation process. As a vision quest guide for many years, I am heartened to see the hunger for initiation being re-imagined in a modern context so that once again we can feed people the nutritious images they deserve in order to become whole human beings and contribute to the transformation of culture.

Extinction anxiety is making us more aware that a similar death and rebirth process is taking place at the collective level. Humanity itself is experiencing the constellation of the archetype of initiation, creating a profound hunger for images of renewal. In the midst of this global initiatory process, we need to learn how to 'die well' in order for the new story to enter. As Jung once said, "*We are in the soup that is going to be cooked for us, whether we claim to have invented it or not…. We are threatened with universal genocide if we cannot work out the way of salvation by a symbolic death." (10)*

Extinction Anxiety

Now we have these key ideas – psychic reality, the ego/unconscious dialogue, psyche is intentional, and the archetype of initiation -- to help us approach our topic of extinction anxiety. But ideas are never enough. In fact, ideas are often used as a defense mechanism to rationalize distressing feeling states. If we are going to get into the imagery and feeling states of extinction anxiety, we have to approach with great care. It's important to acknowledge that turning away from horrific images is a form of natural self-protection. It is useful and necessary to life. My invitation to draw aside the veil to look directly at the terror of extinction is to risk trespassing on inhibitions that are a part of our humanity. On the other hand, the closing of our hearts to the consequences of our actions is destroying the planet. A hundred years of depth psychology insists that the truth will set us free. If the truth leads to an 'immersion in death' as Robert Jay Lifton calls it (11), then that is where we need to go. Tonight, we are going to 'microdose' our exposure to extinction imagery. Longer immersions require more time to create stronger boundaries.

That said, I would remind you that we have cast a protective circle in our invocation. We are with the people on this call, the ancestors, the future beings, the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms. It is as safe as can be expected to approach what Joanna Macy means when she says we need to 'sustain the gaze' of Hiroshima's terror, which is the terror, not only of our own death, but the extinction of humanity as a whole.

Let's begin our descent into extinction anxiety using the first part of my description for this talk: *It is my thesis that as a culture we are swimming in a psychic soup of apocalyptic stories, images and symbols of nuclear war, social injustice, anthropogenic climate change, and global pandemics. As a result, we are experiencing high levels of anxiety about the human future, which I am calling 'extinction anxiety'. This anxiety is so strong and pervasive that mighty engines of cultural repression are at work to numb our feelings and prevent recognition of the object of our fear and our worst nightmare -- the extinction of the human species.* Let's see what stories I can tell that might unpack some of the threads of this statement. I will have to speak about my

personal experiences in order to avoid the tendency to move toward abstractions when talking about emotional material.

Working with extinction anxiety has been a part of my mythopoetic identity since my birth in 1950 in "Atomic City", the town of Richland, WA, home of the Richland High School "Bombers", where cheerleaders wore the image of the atomic bomb across their chests. Like many my age, I practiced 'duck and cover' drills as a grade schooler and many of my friend's fathers worked in jobs they couldn't talk about, way out there in the mysterious desert where they were creating an equally mysterious substance, Plutonium, named after the god of the underworld. The Hanford Nuclear Reservation is now the most polluted place in North America, with liquid nuclear waste leaking into groundwater heading toward the Columbia River. Billions of dollars are being spent to contain the waste. But that's another story.

The story I want to tell is how, when I was presented with the opportunity to teach at the Hiroshima International School in 1982, it felt like a call of destiny. This was a time of heightened nuclear anxiety – Reagan had just been elected, the cold war was at its peak of intensity, and the movie The Day After was broadcast to a national audience, illuminating in considerable detail the horrific effects of an atomic bomb blast on Kansas City. So much so, they wrote this disclaimer at the end of the film in which nearly every character dies a horrible death*: "The catastrophic events you have just witnessed are, in all likelihood, less severe than the destruction that would actually occur in the event of a full nuclear strike against the United States. It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this earth, their peoples and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day."*

When I arrived in the city of Hiroshima in the summer of 1982, I thought I was prepared to deal with what I would see there, but I was not. The scale of destruction by the 15-kiloton bomb on Hiroshima, which now would be considered a small, tactical nuclear weapon, was catastrophic. Two days after my arrival, I was touring the famous Peace Park near ground Zero when I approached a grassy mound before which was an altar for burning incense sticks. Pretty, I thought to myself. But then my friend informed me that it was the repository for the unidentified ashes of 70,000 human beings. I began to cry. And in some ways, I've never stopped.

I cried again while listening to a *hibakusha*, or a-bomb survivor, who had responded to my call for nuclear dreams. Here is what she told me:

"Ah, Randy-san. I will tell you this dream. You see many years ago I went to America to talk of peace and every night I had this dream, sometimes two or three times a night. I couldn't get any sleep. We travelled all around the country giving talks and I was very tired. Finally I couldn't stand it anymore and I came back home. I didn't leave again for twenty years because I feared this dream.

You see in this dream I was twelve years old again and I woke up on a fine morning. I was walking to school when this big bomb exploded all around me. I was screaming and my dress was on fire as was the land all around me. People were yelling and running every which way. I tried to make it to this bridge that would lead me back home. As I crawled over the bridge, I heard my name being called: Tomoko! Tomoko! I looked into the water where all these bodies were floating. And there I saw my friend Akiko. She was still alive, slowly turning in the current. "Save me, Tomiko, Save me!" Ah, but Randy-san, you

see I was too weak to do anything. I couldn't save her. I turned away and walked on, walked on. And then I wake up feeling terrible! This dream kept happening to me, over and over and I couldn't get any sleep."

Listening to this dream I felt the familiar chill that alerts me to the presence of forces larger than myself. However, even while I was still full of the grief of the dream, I thought to myself that, aha, I finally had the dream of an *hibakusha* with which to work! Then Tomoko turned to me, her eyes burning in her lovely, scarred face. She whispered in a low voice full of memory and pain, *"You see, Randy-san, that is what really happened to me. I dream about what actually happened. I cannot escape. I wish I could have saved my friend Akiko, but, you see, I was too weak and was barely able to help myself. I never saw her again." (12)*

And in this experience, I was given insight into how the collective psyche of the city of Hiroshima was trapped in a purgatory of nuclear images, haunted by re-living the events of August 6th on a nightly basis for the previous 35 years. I was being initiated into the suffering of the Hiroshima Mysteries.

I didn't stop collecting nuclear dreams, however, and after reviewing many dreams, over time a typical scenario emerged, an archetypal pattern, if you will, in which a nuclear missile would streak through the sky and land just on the other side of a low mountain. The people who were out walking or going about their business that day would stare up at the streaking missile and emit a collective gasp as it landed. The beginnings of a mushroom cloud could be seen forming above the ridge and everyone knew that the outer ring of the blast would reach them in the next 30 seconds or so. Knowing they were doomed, the question on everyone's mind was this: how do I want to spend my last moments on earth? And then, in multiple dreams and across cultural divides, people would gather in circles of 8-12, silently put their arms over their neighbor's shoulder, lean their heads into the circle and await the arrival of the blast that would incinerate them. It is a stark image, sobering in its intensity. It gives a picture of the human instinct to move toward community in the presence of mass death. And not just any kind of community, but a 'community in the round', that is, a community in the shape of a mandala.

In the nearly 40 years since this archetypal image presented itself to me, I have often wondered what would change if the time frame were expanded. What if it were 30 minutes before the blast hit? What about 3 hours? What if it were 3 days? 3 months? 3 years? How would I want to spend that time?

Now you may wonder why I am speaking so much about nuclear images when trying to define what I mean by extinction anxiety. The answer is simple: because of my personal story, I can approach nuclear anxiety through my own interior – I have opened my heart to it, I have felt its dread, I have immersed myself in its death imagery. I have accepted the call to be an initiate of the Hiroshima Mysteries. I want to suggest that in the course of <u>your</u> life, you may have felt yourself drawn to some collective trauma that has alerted <u>you</u> to a destiny thread that personally connects you to a wounded place in the world and therefore to the suffering of the Anima Mundi.

Of course, in addition to the nuclear crisis, there are many other threats to human survival. There is also climate change, ozone depletion, ocean acidification, not to mention threats to our democracy. To read the news these days is to re-traumatize oneself to what many are calling the 'polycrisis'. I'm sure most of you are quite familiar with the factual basis of the polycrisis. We are not here to discuss or debate those facts. It's enough to know that they are bad. Why is that

enough? Because the facts of the polycrisis are not the same as the felt sense of extinction anxiety. Extinction anxiety is a feeling state, a set of psychic facts, whereas the data of the polycrisis are scientific facts. In other words, extinction anxiety is the subjective experiencing of the scientific facts of the polycrisis.

So how does the psyche respond to the tremendous anxiety, grief and despair produced by the scientific facts of the polycrisis? Depth psychology suggests that there are two ways the psyche reacts – splitting and conscious integration.

The psychodynamics of splitting in the face of trauma are well described in the work of Jungian Analyst Donald Kalsched's description of the 'self-care' system. (13) Simplistically stated, in this model, the negative emotions that are typically generated in everyone's lives are repressed in the unconscious in order to protect the ego. As a result, the ego can go about its business undisturbed. But if the trauma is strong enough, ego consciousness can no longer repress the feelings. The ego is overwhelmed and its moral container unable to function. With the ego unable to accept as its own the powerful affects welling up from the unconscious, they dissociate or split, and are projected onto the 'other,' who then becomes the object of hate. Hating the other is a way for the shameful and disagreeable contents of the inner world to discharge and cover up painful contents.

How are these difficult feeling states managed under normal conditions? At the individual level, these volcanic affects are humanized in early childhood through the love and boundary-setting of the parents, who create an adequate moral container for infantile rage. At the collective level, the projected feeling states become the noise and hubbub of democracy, wherein the shouting and jostling of normal political discourse allows for the healthy discharge of psychic conflict. Political campaigns may get nasty, but violence is avoided. In this collective situation, the love and boundary-setting are provided by allegiance to the constitution, which eventually becomes the moral container for the collective rage of losing an election.

In describing his own country, Jung writes, *"In Switzerland we have built up the 'perfect democracy,' where our warlike instincts expend themselves in the form of domestic quarrels called 'political life.' We fight each other within the limits of the law and the constitution, and we are inclined to think of democracy as a chronic state of mitigated civil war. We are far from being at peace with ourselves: on the contrary, we hate and fight each other because we have succeeded in introverting war. ... We have a tolerable social order in Switzerland because we fight amongst ourselves."* (14)

So, what happens when this psychic energy is no longer bound by a flexible ego and is let loose as a collective epidemic? With the breaching of the constitution as a valid container for holding the introverted warfare of politics, the blood-tide is loosed. We see it in the rise of fundamentalism, as people desperately seek rigid containers for taming their wildly out of control affects. And we see it in the rise of fascism, the dynamics of which are so succinctly described by Jung in his essay 'After the Catastrophe', written in 1946, but just as applicable today. Reflecting on the rise of Hitler and National Socialism in the 1930's, he wrote:

"... the tide that rose in the unconscious after the first World War was reflected in individual dreams, in the form of collective, mythological symbols which expressed primitivity, violence, cruelty: in short, all the powers of darkness. When such symbols occur in a large number of individuals and are not understood, they begin to draw these individuals together as if by a magnetic force, and thus a mob is formed. Its leader will soon be found in the individual who has the least resistance, the least sense of responsibility and, because of his inferiority, the greatest will to power. He will let loose everything that is ready to burst forth, and the mob will follow with the irresistible force of an avalanche." (15)

So at the collective level, the body politic is dissociated and polarized due to various forces of trauma, leading to the projection of an un-transformed hate that seems to come straight from the 'kill or be killed' reptilian brain. The result: all pretense of reflective, nuanced thinking is gone, replaced by stereotypical binary thinking that reduces complicated realities to simplistic categories of good (us) and evil (them). Kalsched writes, *"In this way, complicated human and inter-human realities are reduced to totalistic categories and stereotypes. The difficult emotional fact that we are all both good and bad and in a constant conflict with ourselves is eliminated. The nuances, difficulties, and complications of human life, human tragedy, human choice and human freedom are denied. Once the object is stereotyped and painted 'bad' (as in 'all Muslims are dangerous') hateful action feels justified. When the object gets angry and attacks back, or aggressively defends herself, this proves her 'badness' and justifies more hate. ... In America today this polarizing 'us-them' narrative has taken over much of our common culture. We see it on both the left and the right of the political spectrum." (*16)

The alternative to psychic splitting is the conscious integration of the distress. In words that we should take to heart today, Jung writes in 1946, *"The integration of unconscious contents is an individual act of realization, of understanding and moral evaluation. It is a most difficult task, demanding a high degree of ethical responsibility. Only relatively few individuals can be expected to be capable of such an achievement, and they are not the political but the moral leaders of mankind. The maintenance and further development of civilization depends on such individuals."* (17)

So, if the symptoms of extinction anxiety are all around us, what does healing look like? How do we escape the deadening of our own heart, the slow descent into depression and despair, the dark voice that says it is all meaningless, that we are doomed? How can we make sense of what I have called "a psychic soup of images of endings?" How do we sustain the terror of the gaze of the polycrisis and use it to guide us into the next stage of human evolution? To answer these questions is to enter into a therapeutics for extinction anxiety.

Towards a Therapeutics for Extinction Anxiety

The turn from the existential despair of extinction anxiety to any kind of positive message is dicey at best. The fact is that the kind of crisis we are facing is unlike anything we have seen before. There are no cultural precedents for it. We have to humbly admit that the future is a blank canvas for our imagination. No one – from the most ardent exponent of a positive future to the most pessimistic doomer -- knows how it's going to turn out. If there is hope, it is going to be of the kind that Vaclav Havel spoke about just after he was released from four years in prison: "*The kind of hope I often think about (especially in situations that are particularly hopeless,*

such as prison) I understand above all as a state of mind, not a state of the world. Either we have hope within us or we don't; it is a dimension of the soul; it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. The more unpropitious the situation in which we demonstrate hope, the deeper that hope is. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. In short, I think that the deepest and most important form of hope, the only one that can keep us above water and urge us to good works, and the only true source of the breathtaking dimension of the human spirit and its efforts, is something we get, as it were, from "elsewhere." It is also this hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and continually to try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now." (18)

In my own quest to heal from the nightmarish images of nuclear holocaust, I was fortunate to run into the work of Joanna Macy in 1983, beginning with her first article on 'Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age" in a magazine called Evolutionary Blues. Joanna was the first person to address directly the emotional turmoil constellated by my Hiroshima experiences. Instead of dismissing them, she challenged me to gaze more deeply into the terror of Hiroshima. I followed Joanna's work through the decades, attended many of her workshops, became friends. Her work went through several iterations before settling into a basic set of ideas for what she calls 'The Work That Reconnects". This diagram can provide our first glimpse into a therapy for extinction anxiety.

First, we never go into the domain of despair and empowerment work without first bathing ourselves in gratitude for the gift of being alive. It is the root activity. We are so fortunate to be living in these bodies at this most propitious time in the ongoing story of earth. Only when we can feel the love and gratitude coursing through our veins can we enter into the dark domain of honoring our pain for the world. In this phase, we learn what it means that we only grieve what we love. This is the hard part, and Joanna has created many exercises to help groups move through their despair for the state of the world. But somewhere, somehow, the emotional field turns, and we begin to look with new eyes upon issues that previously seemed impossible, intractable. Armed with this new insight, we go forth into the world to do the work we have been given to do.

The great mystery of the Work that Reconnects is located right there in the turn from 'honoring our pain for the world' to 'seeing with new eyes'. What wisdom resides there? I know the felt experience of it from many workshops with Joanna and in my years as a vision quester and vision quest guide. But what is the mechanism? What can this mysterious, liminal place teach us about the therapy of extinction anxiety? Can it help us bring about the new world we seek?

The next step in my understanding of how despair turns into empowerment came from reading Miriam Greenspan's book, Healing Through the Dark Emotions: The Wisdom of Grief, Fear

and Despair. As the daughter of two holocaust survivors and an experienced psychotherapist, Greenspan knows well the fear of falling into darkness and not being able to return, that the more we lock up our dark emotions, the greater the fear they will devour us. Her therapeutic advice is to listen to what the dark emotions have to say, and then listen some more, since we get better at it the more we practice it. When we are able to be in the presence of these emotions with awareness and receptivity, they become our teachers. Greenspan writes, *"They bring us information and supply us with energy – the raw material of spiritual empowerment and transformation. When we know how to listen to them, we can ride their energy, like a wave, with awareness as our protection. Emotional energy flows, and a hidden doorway in the heart opens. Something shifts. A transmutation occurs: a movement through the pain to spiritual power. ... Finding the power of the sacred, not despite suffering, but in the midst of it: this is the alchemy of the dark emotions."* (19)

Yes, riding the energy of extinction anxiety like a wave, with awareness as our protection! If we stay on board, a hidden doorway in the heart opens. In my experience and in the experience of those with whom I have worked, that door leads into the deeper layers of the psychoid unconscious, into the earth herself. And there, she speaks! Using the voice of what Thomas Berry calls 'spontaneities' – the dreams, visions, synchronicities, and intuitions that are so much the stuff of Jungian psychotherapy – the voice of the earth, in her generosity, offers us the seeds of a new revelation. In other words, I propose that apocalyptic imagery and extinction anxiety are promptings from the sentience of the earth herself, inviting human beings to walk through a threshold toward personal, cultural, and planetary renewal.

Yes, She speaks, and this is what She told me! Humanity is embarked on a generations-long, collective initiation process guided by the 'birth-death-rebirth' dynamics of the archetype of initiation. Furthermore, this process is being instigated by a sentient earth in her yearning to restore herself to a dynamic equilibrium of systemic wholeness in compensation to the one-sided degradation of the planet by the greed and myopia of the human species. Our capacity to 'sustain the gaze' of the threat of extinction has the power to wake us up to new stories and worldviews capable of sustaining human beings on a regenerated planet Earth. The suffering that will take place during this transformation of consciousness will be immense – is immense in many parts of the globe -- and Jungian Depth Psychology offers a profound way to navigate these rough waters with courage, resilience and grace.

And what is at the heart of Jungian depth psychology that makes it so helpful for working with extinction anxiety? Jung writes, *"The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neurosis but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character."* (20)

Yes, extinction anxiety is itself a *numinosum* that is meant to drive us to the new revelation at hand. I wouldn't presume to know what numinous revelations await you in the difficult Soul work of turning towards extinction anxiety with awareness while navigating the ocean of suffering that awaits you. I can only speak truly of my own journey, and I can attest that it's not darkness all the way down. There is love of a cosmic sort, immense joy in the simple things of

life, wisdom enough to sustain the suffering, and the possibility of living the most meaningful lives ever lived in human history.

Four Therapeutic Approaches to Extinction Anxiety

Let me conclude my talk tonight with four therapeutic images that have appeared to me in my ritual work with extinction anxiety. I didn't know there were four until I had a dream a few months ago when I first began to turn my thoughts to what I might say tonight. *The dream begins with an image of the Peace Dome in Hiroshima, the last physical reminder of what happened there. In the dream I am being told that this is the foundation of all our work. As I look at the image of the Peace Dome, it begins to split, as though the surface of the picture was a kind of snake's skin that is splitting and beginning to slough off. Beneath the outer skin appears a black metal material that undergirds the entire structure. It is indestructible. I am told to build on this inner structure. And then another voice appears and says that there are four therapies – a therapy of depth, a therapy of time, a therapy of dream, and a therapy of God.* End of dream.

Now I could give a separate lecture on each of these four therapies, but in the interests of time I will briefly sketch out what each therapy entails, knowing that *therepeia*, like Jung says, means that we return to the gods as the source of all healing.

A Therapy of Depth

Let's turn first to what a therapy of Depth might look like. One of the consequences of living in a culture riven by extinction anxiety is the spiritual disease of *apatheia*, the deadening of the heart. Apatheia is a Greek word meaning 'non-suffering'. It is the inability or refusal to experience pain. In Joanna Macy and Molly Brown's masterful analysis of *apatheia* in their book Coming Back to Life, they ask, *"What is this pain that we feel, but desperately try not to feel, in this moment of history?"* They say it is of another order altogether than what the Greeks could have known. It pertains not just to privations of wealth, health, reputation, or loved ones, but also to losses so vast we can hardly name them. It is our pain for the world. As Macy and Brown write, *"The very danger signals that should rivet our attention, summon up the blood, and bond us in collective action, tend to have the opposite effect. They make us want to pull down the blinds and busy ourselves with other things."* (21) Huge, billion-dollar industries have arisen to support our need for distraction. It is the Disneyfication of America.

If the disease is a deadened heart in the midst of a suffering world, then one way to respond is to re-enliven the heart. In a class I taught for many years at Antioch University Seattle on 'The Spiritual Psychology of the Human Heart', we explored through reading and experiential exercises, the incredible powers of the heart and its capacity to communicate with the *Anima Mundi*, the Soul of the World. The *Anima Mundi* is a concept that appeared long before the subject-object split of Cartesian consciousness that withdrew the soul of the things of the world and located them inside the human mind. The Cartesian way of thinking, which deadens the world and opens it to the ravages of capitalism, is the metaphysical underpinning of our Western way of life. It is all surfaces and horizons, commodities and hierarchies. It has no depth. By engaging in the heart as an organ of perception, we are re-introduced to the interiority of

everything. We go down and in – to the interiority of our favorite plant, the hummingbird that visits us, that favorite tree, the neighbors we don't yet know, the suffering of strangers. Cardiac consciousness allows us to perceive the inner qualities of the outer world. Through radical empathy, it draws us into the story of each individual thing and sensitizes us to its beauty and its suffering. This heart-based perceptual capacity is already known in the esoteric traditions of East and West, as well as in the indigenous traditions. *Extinction anxiety is a call from the sentience of the earth to restore the perceptual capacities of the heart in order to align ourselves with the deep intentions of the Anima Mundi, the soul of the world.*

A Therapy of Time

I remember my first felt experience of cosmic time. In 1967 I was a junior in college majoring in Biology. It was a clear Saturday morning and some friends and I had done some psilocybin at the park. It had rained the night before and mud puddles were everywhere. I was wandering about by myself, admiring the beauty of all things, when I walked through a small mud puddle. I didn't think much of it and took a few more steps. But then I turned around to look at the consequences of my actions. The mud puddle was swirling with the silt that I had kicked up. I slowly realized I had created a holocaust in the ecosystem of that small world! I went back to look more carefully and spent the next twenty minutes staring at this puddle as the silt slowly settled and some degree of homeostasis was restored. But my imagination was on fire as I recalled what I saw in the pond water samples we had just been studying in the bio lab under microscopes. Rotifers! Those gorgeous, luminescent beings were everywhere in this water. Who knows how many of them I had already killed? But those that were still alive were now settling down, returning to their business of swimming, feeding, mating, dying. I could feel, in a kind of radical empathy, what it was like to be a rotifer in that situation. The physics of the swirling water, the chemistry of the inorganic and organic compounds and the biology of the luminous living creatures in this eco-system created a numinous moment of sheer awe. And then, I stood up. I looked down and saw my tracks in the muddy ground and realized I was creating holocausts everywhere I stepped! Then I looked up at the canopy of trees, the nearby streams, the movement of air and clouds, the sun and the stars that were hidden by the light. I had what Bill Plotkin calls an Eco-Awakening. I realized that, like a rotifer, I was part of a larger ecosystem and that there were expanding ecosystems all the way out. These ecosystems were created through billions of years of evolution and required vast experiments in extinction and re-creation. And someday, everything I see would all be swallowed by the gigantic expansion of our star, the sun, as it entered its dying process as a red dwarf. I was stardust, and to stardust I would return! This revelation of systems theory and cosmic time has been integral to my mytho-poetic identity ever since.

Bill Plotkin writes quite eloquently about the nature and consequences of eco-awakening: *"Eco awakening occurs when we have our first conscious and embodied experience of our innate membership in the earth community. All other affiliations then become secondary and, in fact, derivative of our inherent participation in the larger, more than human world. … Eco awakening rocks your world. You now realize you had previously been a kind of refugee, existentially and ecologically homeless. The restlessness, anxiety, alienation, and displacement you had experienced all your life disperses like mist in morning sunshine. You feel at home in the world in a deep, rich, and unprecedented way, a way you hadn't known was missing, hadn't even*

known was possible. Each natural thing is no longer an object but a subject to whom you are related and have always been related. Separation has ended. You've escaped the conformist-consumer "matrix" and returned consciously to the world into which you had been born, an animate world in which everything is alive, everything speaks, everything is related to everything else." (22)

Yes, it rocks your world to know that you are a part of a 13-billion-year grand experiment by the creative forces of the cosmos in its urge to move to ever higher levels of consciousness. While 99.999% of all the species that have lived on this planet have gone extinct, at the same time, that same creative process has managed to converge in an instant of time to create your body, mind and soul. The Universe Story, as told by Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, (23) becomes the new origin myth of our age, and the source of a true spiritual democracy uniting the human species with the more-than-human world in a cosmic time stream of immense beauty, depth and meaning.

A Therapy of Dream

In his terrific essay entitled *The Dream of the Earth*, from his book of the same name, Thomas Berry addresses the very question we are asking: where do we go to get the guidance we need to navigate the confusion of our times? He begins by saying we are unlikely to find guidance in our cultural traditions, what he calls our 'cultural coding', because those traditions are themselves the source of our current difficulties. Instead, he says, *"It appears necessary that we go beyond our cultural coding, to our genetic coding for guidance."* (24) He goes on to explain that this genetic coding is grounded in the creative processes of the earth itself. The earth, he says, shapes not only the physical structure of the human being, but its psychic structure as well. This is what Jung meant when he said that the archetypes are not within us, we are in the archetypes. Those archetypes are the patterns of the earth's processes mirrored in the human psyche.

So how does a sentient earth communicate with us? In words reminiscent of the Greek idea of the *Logos*, he writes, *"The new cultural coding that we need must emerge from the source of all such codings, from revelatory vision that comes to us in those special psychic moments, or conditions, that we describe as "dream." We are, of course, using this term not only as regards the psychic processes that take place when we are physically asleep but also as a way of indicating an intuitive, non-rational process that occurs when we awaken to the numinous powers ever present in the phenomenal world about us, powers that possess us in our high creative moments. Poets and artists continually invoke these spirit powers, which function less through words than through symbolic forms."* (25) We experience these numinous powers of revelatory vision in what Berry calls 'spontaneities', that is, the dreams, synchronicities, intuitions, intense feeling states, body symptoms, epiphanies, and other psychic phenomena that we experience as visitations from something sacred outside of our ego, something 'other'.

And what would be the subject matter of the symbols that appear in those spontaneities? What would they be trying to tell us? In Jung's theory of psychic energy and dreams, the answer is clear. The dreams are trying to tell us what we need to know in order to heal, that is, to eliminate the blocks that prevent us from experiencing a free flow of psychic energy that is in harmony with the formative processes of the earth. Those blocks may come from the trauma of our

personal circumstances, but there are also blocks that come from the trauma embedded in the collective memory of our culture. Increasingly, now, the blocks to the free flow of psychic energy are coming from the trauma of the earth herself.

So extinction anxiety, understood as a call from the earth to break us out of the dysfunctional trance that is destroying the planet, is awakening us to ways in which our dreams serve as compass, not only for our own personal individuation process, but for the collective individuation process of the human species.

A Therapy of God

I was hoping I wouldn't have to take on the God question, but the dream was clear. Here's what I make of it so far. Let's begin with Jung's recognition that all humans, by virtue of their instinctual make-up, carry within them the impulse to form what he called a 'God-image', the content of which is shaped by cultural and psychological predispositions. Behind the local variations of specific images lies an overarching pattern, an archetype, which might last for generations before slowly shifting into a new shape. Jung wrote mostly about the archetypal transformation of Western God-images from Old Testament times to New Testament times, when fundamental patterns of a judgmental and wrathful god transitioned to a forgiving and loving God. But now, the threat of the termination of the human species opens the possibility of perceiving a new God-image forming in the human psyche. In response to extinction anxiety, the awareness of what changes when consciousness is no longer extant, has the power to awaken us to the power of consciousness itself. Like a fish discovering that it is swimming in water, we are becoming aware that humans are carriers of consciousness, and that this consciousness is the means by which creation observes itself and comes to know its place in the cosmos.

And what a world it is that humans now observe! New discoveries of billions of galaxies and trillions of stars, new technologies capable of destroying all life at the push of a button or creating telescopes that can see back into the origins of time, new insights into how animals and plants communicate with each other and with the wider world. And there is the most iconic discovery of all -- the earth as seen from outer space, a living, breathing organism, without political boundaries, a blue-green jewel that is our *ecos*, our home, shimmering in the vastness of space.

Jung further developed his insights into a new God-image in Answer to Job, written in the 1950's, when atomic weapons had gone thermonuclear. He came to realize that we had now 'humanized the eschaton'. The end of the world would not come about through a theistic God acting in history, but would come about through the choices of human beings. By exercising the apocalyptic imagination to witness a world with no human beings in it, we gain insight into how humans are a crucial advancement in life's efforts to know itself. However, with this awareness comes an awesome responsibility -- we are now co-creators of the future of earth. Our partner in this creation story is what Jung has called the unconscious, a transpersonal reality that was formed in the womb of the earth herself. In other words, our partner in co-creation is the earth, who makes her will known, as we have seen, through what Thomas Berry calls 'spontaneities' – the intuitions, dreams, and visionary experiences that are the way the world unconscious communicates with the ego. If we wish to stop being the affliction of the world, its demonic

presence, we will need to be in deep dialogue with the intentionality of the world unconscious, discern the guidance being offered, and make an ethical obligation out of the new consciousness that has been created by the encounter.

So the new God-image, whatever shape it takes, will recognize the entire universe as a unified organism of extraordinary design, reflecting a massive Creative Intelligence. It will recognize that human beings are a bit of that Creative Intelligence recognizing itself. And that Creative Intelligence will become a willing partner to the human species as it navigates its way through its dark night of the species soul.

A final question lingers: if we accept the challenge of sustaining the gaze of extinction anxiety, realizing we are both hospicing the end of the world as we know it, and yet midwifing the birth of something we can't yet know, how then shall we live? I offer you these suggestions that have emerged out of my own experience. Hopefully, you will add some of your own:

- Track your individuation symbolism
- Name your mytho-poetic identity
- Find your tribe of 'trusted allies'
- Don't try to change people, rather, create conditions for the possibility of grace
- Cultivate the heart as an organ of perception and use it to listen to the voice of the earth
- Understand hope as a state of mind, not a state of the world
- When acting on behalf of future generations, don't be concerned with the outcome of your actions
- Micro-dose encounters with extinction anxiety, ritually
- Innovate in ways that prefigure the world to come
- Live as if you have no fear of dying
- Practice random acts of kindness and beauty
- Learn how to design community rituals, especially grief rituals, that use music, poetry, art and dance
- Bury your illusions with dignity
- Know where your water comes from
- Think globally, act locally
- Cultivate, always, an attitude of gratitude for the gift of being alive!

These are the contours of a therapeutics for extinction anxiety from a depth psychological point of view.

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