

# DREAMING THE DARK

*Magic, Sex & Politics*



STARBUCK

Beacon Press

Boston

1982

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Beacon Press books are published under the auspices of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108  
Published simultaneously in Canada by Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited,  
Toronto

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Printed in the United States of America

(paperback) 9 8 7 6

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Starhawk.  
Dreaming the dark.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

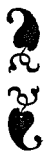
1. Witchcraft. 2. Sex and religion. 3. Religion and politics. 4. Women and  
religion. I. Title.

BF1572.S4S7 1982 299 81-70485

ISBN 0-8070-1001-4 (pbk.) AACR2

*For Alicia, Bethany, Caitlin, Christopher John, Deirdre,  
Delaney, Guthrie, Ian, Justin, Lelania Dawn, Marika,  
Morgan Sean, Natalia Rose, Robin, Rio, Ruby, Silas, Vanessa,  
and Yarrow.*

# Chapter Five



## Goddesses and Gods: The Landscape of Culture

Magic has often been thought of as the art of making dreams come true; the art of realizing visions. Yet before we can bring to birth the vision of an integrated culture, we have to see it. We have to see new images in the mind's eye, venture forth into a changed landscape, tell new stories. But the stories of estrangement have shaped our minds; how do we break free of them unless a new vision is already there to help us?

The images, the stories of immanence, do abound — in our own cultural past, in myths and religions of many present-day cultures. So our vision-seeking lands us inevitably in the realm of religion, however unwilling we are to go there, because what we term *religion* is the soil of culture, in which the belief systems, the stories, the thought-forms upon which all other institutions are based are consciously or unconsciously grown.

When we turn to the religions of immanence, whether we call them Witchcraft or Paganism or polytheism or spirituality, whether we draw on sources from Celtic, Greek, Native American, Eastern, or African mythology, we encounter paradox. We encounter the God/dess: the all, the interwoven fabric of being, the dance, the weaver — we say — and the web of connection,

the pattern, the spiral. "She," we call her. But She is before sex; She whose name cannot be spoken because She is the circle — before it is broken by a name that separates-out.

Yet the Goddess has many names: Isis, Ceridwen, Astarte, Miriam, Oshun, White Buffalo Woman, Kuan Yin, Diana, Amaterasu, Ishtar, Changing Woman, Yemaya . . . And She has many aspects: Maiden, Mother, Crone, moon, earth, tree, star, flame, Goddess of the cauldron, Goddess of the hearth, Healer, spider, Lady of the Wild Things. And the God who is Her male aspect, or, we could say, the other pole of that once-unbroken unity, also has many names: Pan, Dionysos, Osiris, Dumuzi, Baal, Lugh, Coyote, Alegba . . . And He too has many aspects: child, dancer, father, sower of seeds, Horned God, Hunter, Dying God, Healer, Green Man, sun, tree, standing stone.

Since Jung, most thinkers who explore mythology have looked at the Goddesses and Gods as *archetypes* that represent underlying structures of the human psyche. Archetypes are then organized into dualities — they tell us how to divide the world and its powers, how to divide our nature, into masculine and feminine, in spite of the fact that historically the aspects of Goddess and Gods overlap and are interchanged.<sup>1</sup> She may be sun and He may be moon; She may be sky and He may be earth; both have roles to play in the drama of birth, growth, and death.

The concept of archetypes is itself a symptom of estrangement, derived from the Platonic notion that the world itself was not the real, but only a shadow, an imitation of perfect preexisting forms. To a Witch the world itself is what is real. The Goddess, the Gods, are not mere psychological entities, existing in the psyche as if the psyche were a cave removed from the world; they too are real — that is, they are ways of thinking-in-things about real forces, real experiences.

"Would you like to have a vision of the Goddess?" I ask groups when I speak in public. When they nod, I tell them to turn and look at the person sitting next to them. The immanent Goddess is not abstract.

The images, the symbols, the aspects, are doorways, not definitions. There is no underlying feminine nature or masculine

nature — there is the reality of what we experience, in our differing bodies, in the differing impact that culture has on each sex. Yet what we can envision, we can experience; and what we experience, name, make conscious can be integrated. The symbols tell us, "Look at this. Experience this thing; become this thing; open a channel so that the power can flow through you." And though the symbols, the images, do not exist outside of us who perceive them, the forces, the powers-from-within, are real. But when we speak of these powers, we mean power in the sense of *to be able*. The Goddess, the Gods, are our potential.

So I speak of the Goddess as weaver, as spider, and I begin to pay attention to the spiders who build their webs in my corners. I experience the web as a rhythm of strands and spaces. I see that there are points of connection and openings, and that this interplay of stuff and space gives the whole web a tension that is taut, yet elastic; that springs. I meditate on the web and it is the feel of that tautness that I take in, that I savor until I know it, can call it forth at will. I search in my own life for those points of connection, for those spaces — in words, in relationships — and knowing the *feel* of the web gives me the power to be able to feel for that same tautness in the knots and the spaces of my life.

And because the spider, the web, are real and contain all the richness of reality, they may give me other powers on other days. As I see the spider draw threads from her own body, I can learn to draw cords of energy from my body, to weave these into new forms; to draw words from my head, my hands — to weave on this page.

The imagery of the Goddess, of the God, can become doorways leading out of patriarchal cultures, channels for the powers we need to transform ourselves, our visions, and our stories.

The imagery of the Goddess points to the power of the mother in our lives. Symbols of the Goddess and the God can help us to be able to integrate that power, to make it conscious and available instead of denying it and fleeing from it.

As infants, we share an energy-field with our mothers. At first we know no sense of difference, only a shifting ground of as yet undifferentiated feelings/sensations: warmth, coldness, pleasure,

satiation, the smell and taste of sweet milk, pain, gnawing hunger, aching frustration, rage, love. Slowly we come to consciousness, helpless and dependent; slowly, as we master our limbs, our voices, our senses, we develop the awareness of an I-ness that separates-out from the engulfing field.

Yet that field, *mother*, remains for a long, long time the ground against which we see ourselves. We become separate, congeal into our own being, but she remains amorphous, omnipresent. Her presence evokes the ancient feelings, the deep longing for infant bliss — to be held, to be rocked, to be taken care of, as we lie passive. At the same time it evokes that ancient terror, the ground under our feet may disappear for good as it does in those moments when we cry and are not soothed, when we hunger and are not fed. And it evokes rage against our own helplessness, against our own powerlessness, against her overwhelming power to give or to withhold comfort.

As we grow, as we learn to walk and talk, to play, to handle objects and tools and toys, we develop a new source of pleasure in the feeling of mastery, of control, that strengthens the sense of I-ness. We become slowly conscious of more than self and ground; conscious that the world is peopled with I-nesses. These others are different from us, and different from the mother-ground, and as we grow we find that, more and more, we can make connections independently of mother, we stand out more distinctly to ourselves, we move a step further from engulfment; we assuage that terror of being sucked back into helplessness, the terror that is so strong because it is partly a desire for that early bliss.

Here culture steps in to make the experience of the girl-child very different from that of the boy-child. For as the girl struggles to emerge from the mother-ground, to find others whom she can imitate and become like, to become a person truly distinct from her mother, culture reminds her of her essential sameness — she is the same gender. In our culture, gender is the basic division, the primary duality.

In a thousand subtle ways, culture discourages the girl-child from pleasure in mastery and rewards her dependence. As she

looks at the world of adults, she sees, over and over again, that the world of mastery, the rewards of effort, belong to men. But the seductive promise patriarchal culture makes to her is this: you will be taken care of; you can recapture that luscious passivity, that sensual dependence, and as for your terror of helplessness, your fear of slipping back, of being swallowed by the ground, why, you yourself will become the ground, a better ground, a more fertile ground. You yourself will grow into the magical, powerful mother. You will be the earth herself. Although men play at being masters, it will be you who supports them. So the girl, in patriarchal culture, does not have to differentiate herself fully. She never has to learn to see her mother, not as the ground, but as another I. She can remain fluid, indistinct, flowing around another, enfolding or engulfing, taking the position of ground rather than self-being, perceiving others' feelings rather than knowing her own, adapting to others' needs and desires. She becomes the support that gets walked on.

For the boy, patriarchal culture has another message: you are different, you are distinct from the mother-ground. You are a different gender. And what is more, you are superior. The world of mastery, of control, the pleasure that arises from your own distinctness — all this belongs to creatures like yourself.

But the price is high. Patriarchal culture's promise to the boy is that he can build a self around the core of his difference from the mother-ground — a self whose deepest pleasures come not from the soft enfoldment of the body with flesh, the soul with caring, but from mastery, competence, control — untainted with dependence and terror of abandonment. "And at the same time," culture whispers, "you can own a source of those good, nurturing feelings, a mother-creature of your very own."

So the boy trades terror for terror, and dependency for dependency. For competence and mastery can fail. In building his sense of self around his difference from his mother, the boy is asked to cut the ground from beneath his feet, because in the push and pull of longing/fear, desire/terror in his connection to his mother, is the source of *feeling* that goes far deeper than the pleasures of performance. Fleeing the threat of death, he will cut

off the source of life. Never will the boy develop his own source of the magic mother-stuff, his own source of self-nurturing. He will be dependent on the woman he possesses, as the small boy was on his mother. He will desire her and be terrified of her. And always there will be the gulf he can never afford to bridge — because the core of his identity is based on his difference.

Nature, the world itself, will come to feel to him like the mother — alluring, threatening, desirable, dangerous in a way that it is not to women. Again and again, over and over, he will need to assert his fragile mastery, his control, his power-over others. He will take his revenge on the body of the earth.

Our culture is shaped by the images and the realities of that revenge. The icons of pornography, the reality of our technology that destroys and pollutes, the reality of rape, of institutionalized violence against women, of violence in all the institutions of domination, all these reflect that revenge.

The split between culture and nature determines the character of work itself. It is no coincidence that so-called industrial discipline began to be imposed on labor in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the workplace began to be split from the home, when women were gradually driven out of many types of productive work, and when the revenge against nature was played out in the Witchburnings. In a mechanistic society, whether capitalist or communist, our underlying conception of work is that mothering, nurturing, *feeling* should be excluded.

The time structure of work and the lack of childcare facilities make it difficult for someone who is entrusted with the primary care of a small child to work a full-time job; these problems also make it impossible for the majority of men who are full-time workers to share equally in childcare, even if they wish to do so. We assume that personal concerns should not intrude upon work, that neither a child's illness nor a broken love affair should impair a worker's efficiency. It is the rare workplace where coworkers can genuinely offer each other comfort and emotional support; most often, they are in competition with each other. The work itself that we do often demands that we stifle feeling, ignore our bodies' demands, deny boredom and exhaustion.

Mastery and control, not feeling or nurturing, determine one's place in the work hierarchy. Jobs with high-status are those in which the worker controls things or people. The work of nurturing — childcare, teaching, nursing — does not win society's rewards. Those whose work involves control are better paid, and access to money allows them greater control in all areas of life.

Dinnerstein, Chodorow, and other theorists have suggested that bringing men into childcare on a basis equal with that of women might heal our cultural split. Yet, at present, that is an option available only to a privileged few whose jobs allow great flexibility. Implicit in this idea is a much more radical demand: in order for men to share in rearing children on more than a token basis, we would need to restructure the nature of work, i.e., our entire economic and social structure.

Let us imagine, for a moment, a different type of restructuring: we bring the care of children into the work world. They would no longer be isolated in childcare centers, but part of our daily activity, as they are in a tribal village. (In the fantasy that follows, I have deliberately not changed the conventional distribution of power by gender, only childcare arrangements).

You arrive at the corporation for your meeting. The receptionist who greets you is nursing her two-month-old baby. Its crib lies beside the typewriter. She directs you down a corridor where two seven-year-olds on skateboards careen past you. The meeting takes place in a conference room with large glass doors overlooking the playground, which is equipped with slides, swings, games. One member of the committee is appointed recorder (to take notes); another is appointed to handle any crises that might arise among the children. In general, the children play well together — the older children keep an eye on the younger and intervene in any dangerous pursuits. At the end of the meeting, you set up another appointment with the Chief Executive Officer. "Friday afternoon is my time with the kids," he says, checking his appointment book. "Why don't you meet me at the zoo — we can talk this over at the monkey cage."

In such a world, productivity might fall — or it might be measured on a different scale, one that takes into account the quality of relationships in people's lives, in which the bottom line is no longer profit, but the needs of people and the well-being of the next generation. The decisions taken, hand-in-hand with one's child while observing the elephants and tigers, might be fewer, but more grounded in humanity, than those taken hand-in-hand with the third martini over an elegant, childless lunch. They might also be more protective of life.

It is unlikely that such a scenario will ever take place. Before receptionists are encouraged to nurse their babies in corporate halls, we will have to do away with the hierarchy of executives and receptionists, with the corporate structure itself, which is maintained by the split that separates work and nurturing. For only our denial of feeling keeps us willing to submit to the authority of power-over.

We are in a double-bind. We struggle to end culture's revenge against nature, to take a new position. Yet we ourselves are mother-raised, and we carry within us the deep ambivalence, the unspoken wish for revenge that leads us to acquiesce, that leads us, even in our own struggles, to separate mastery from nurturing, to isolate our feelings, our children, our deepest terrors and desires.

So we turn to the imagery of the Goddess for healing, because the images of the Goddess say to us, "Remember. Re-member the power of the mother — re-own the ground upon which you stand, the longing and the terror — make it yours with consciousness that pushes deeper than the triumphs and failures of your own personal mother, that allows you to know in yourself the movements of the great powers of life and death, of nurturing and limitation, of which your own infancy, your own mother, was only one expression."

We can name that ground, that nurturing power, *Gaea*, and the name separates Her from our infant/body memory of Her power, lets us experience *Gaea* as separate from *Mommie*, distinct. Because She becomes distinct from *Mommie*, we can develop our

own relationship with Her. When we have our own connection to the ground, we no longer need Mommie to be the ground; we can separate, let her become a distinct I-ness in our eyes, a distinct self.

For a man, the personal relationship with Gaea is a way out of the cultural trap, because a man who embraces his own connection with the Goddess experiences the power of nurturing within himself, independent of his tie to a living woman. Just as, once the ground has been named, a woman can no longer remain completely merged with it, so, too, a man, once the ground has been named as a living reality, can no longer remain so comfortably split from it. Gaea makes the power of the mother a conscious force, something with which we must come to terms.

That coming to terms, the making of connection, we call *invoking*. When we invoke the Goddess we awaken Her imagery, Her symbols, in our own minds; we hold them there, let them draw forth the power (the ability to do) that they contain. They take root in Younger Self until they become new patterns of subtle energy within us that manifest as action. I might invoke Gaea with a poem, a song or a chant:

The earth, the water, the fire, the air,  
Returns, returns, returns, returns.

Within a ritual or celebration:<sup>2</sup>

"Sink down," a voice says, "Feel your knees getting weak, and your body heavy. Let yourself sink to earth. Touch your hands, your arms, your face to the earth. Rest there. And as you rest, you begin to dissolve. Your skin, your bones, your eyes, your very breath drops away. You are formless, resting in the earth, rocking in the dark breast of the mother. Everything you knew, everything you were, all the little worries you carried in your mind, the things that seemed so important — they are gone now. Let them go. You are nothing — a space in the dark.

"But now, in that nothingness, that space, you begin to feel a spark. Something pushing upward. A heat. A power — the power of earth. Something flows through you again — you hear a beat,

a rhythm. It is your heartbeat. You take a breath. Slowly, slowly, you begin to rise"

Powers of the earth  
Powers taking form  
Rising to rebirth  
Rising to be born

We rise as the chant builds. We return to form, singing, breathing, swaying, dancing with each other in the circle.

She changes everything she touches  
And everything She touches changes

We sing. Joyfully. We are whole again, separate, ourselves. But we are changed.

But most important, the Goddess is invoked in our awareness of our lived experience. So, I plant my garden, and I know Gaea in my hands and under my fingernails, I know Her as the seeds push up, the leaves unfold, the fruits swell and ripen. And because I have named this power, awakened to it, chanted for it, placed its images in my psyche, my experience of it is deepened and enriched.

That experience encompasses death, as well as nurturing. The lettuce seedlings sprout thickly — I have to pull many of them out, and it saddens me to destroy the shoots, waving so bravely, so new. I dig into the earth and find a nest of earwigs, or uncover brooding snails, which I smash. The garden is full of things that have to be killed so that other things can grow — and some of what I want to grow gets eaten down to the stem before it has a chance.

Annihilation is present in the midst of life: it is not separate from life, as the presence of terror was not separate from our first experience of love. Yet in naming the death-force as one of Gaea's aspects, calling it Hecate, Kali, Anna, the Crone, I become both less merged with it and less removed from it. The Crone, too, becomes a source of power — to end, to limit, to destroy. As I invoke that power, as I savor it in my experience, it too becomes

less alien — not so much an outside force that overpowers me but more my own.

Hecate is called the Goddess of crossroads, i.e., choices. I must choose which of the lettuces to pull, which to leave. I wield the terrible power that I, as an infant, attributed to my own mother: the power to annihilate. I can, I must, choose that power again and again: for every choice I take annihilates some other possibility.

Invoking that power instead of fleeing it, I develop a sense of mastery that is not based on denial of feeling. It is the mastery of art, which is based on feeling — the erotic interplay of the strands and the spaces, that tells me what to spin, what to cut; the limit set by the Guardian that strengthens; the frame that makes the picture stand out.

To choose is also to begin. The Mother, and the Crone, are almost always seen with a third aspect: the Maiden, who is birth, the renewal that comes from the choice. To invoke the Maiden is to invoke the power of the self emerging from the ground.

The many faces, the qualities of the Maiden become pointers, saying, "Experience this — and make its power your own."

The Maiden is Athena, patroness of art and culture — not the patriarchal Athena, born from Zeus's brow, but the ancient, primal virgin, complete unto herself, whose power is to create herself, to create the works of art and culture that differentiate self from nature — not out of revenge, but as a way of being at one with nature in creating beauty. Athena is also the warrior; She can fight, She protects Her own. For in order to be selves we must be able to fight, to protect our boundaries and our creations.

The Maiden is also Artemis, Lady of the Wild Things. To invoke Her is to awaken the wildness of self, the feelings that will not be tamed, and the integrity of self that upholds our right to feel, to be different, to be the people we are and to walk the path that we do. That freedom comes with being Virgin, as Artemis, too, is Virgin, complete within ourselves, having our own independent relationship with the Mother and the Crone, the forces of life and death. Artemis lives in the forest, in the wild. She is not bound by city walls, and through Her we can invoke our own power to escape the walls and strictures of culture, the rule of the

self-hater, so that we are bound not by rules and authorities, but by our own experience of balance, by the consequences of our actions.

Artemis is the Bear Goddess — and we remember what the bear promised Joy: immortality and the ability to growl. We can see Joy's freeing of the bear as her willingness to unleash the power of Artemis, the wild self, to make it her own instead of caging it. In return, the bear restored to Joy her wild feelings, her growl, her ability to protect herself — Hand-in-hand with immortality comes freedom, not from the cycle of birth and death but freedom from the child's relationship to birth and death, the relationship of fear and helplessness. For the power of the Maiden, of the self, is that of renewal, of beginning.

And so the Maiden is Kore—who-becomes-Persephone, She who descends into the underworld, into death, and rises again, eternally renewed. Kore is kin to Isis, Inanna, Astarte. The story of the rape of Kore is a late addition, an historical reference perhaps to the destruction of the early Goddess Culture,<sup>3</sup> or a patriarchal attempt to subvert the power of the myth. The myth itself is a story strung together around the original experience, which was a ritual, the celebration of the Thesmophoria, in ancient Greece. The ritual was one of descent and rising. On the first day of pigs, cakes of dough, and pine branches were cast into the sacred cracks of the earth, and on the third day, the day called *Kaliggenia* (Fair-born), the previous year's decayed grain was drawn up again, to be mixed with the new seed-corn. The ancient Kore shows us the power of life and death united; teaches us the secret that renewal cannot be separated from decay, that it is death that makes life fertile.

The phone rings, as I sit here writing of Kore. A friend's neighbor has disappeared. Two days ago she left for work — and hasn't been seen since. He calls to ask me to do a ritual for her.

I stop writing, and invoke Kore — not only the early Kore, but the later Goddess, the Kore who is a survivor, who rises from rape, who offers hope and the promise of renewal even in the underworld. We need Her too, in a city where every day women are raped, beaten, murdered in the parks and on the streets. We can know Her power in ourselves, in our friends who have sur-



vived rape, and beatings, and the damage inflicted by this culture. We can find Her in women who enter the domain of the dark, who work within the regions of pain to transform them. I think of the daughter of one of my teachers, who after being raped worked to establish a rape crisis center. I think of a seventy-four-year-old woman who counsels dying patients.

We need the rage of Kore's mother, the rage that will not submit, that rises out of despair, that brings results. Demeter, who called the first sidown strike in history, who invented passive resistance, who said, "Nothing will grow until my daughter is returned" — whose demands must be met. Demeter — who always refuses to ignore the horror of Her loss and continue with business-as-usual; Demeter — our own power to grieve and yet make that grief a force that compels change, that brings about renewal.

For the Goddess, who is immanent, reveals herself in living women, and so She changes. Today Demeter reveals herself to me in Helen Caldicott; now She is present in my own rage at the planned licensing of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant's reactor, on a site close to an earthquake fault. I go to a meeting to help plan the blockade, and Demeter appears as a man, who, together with his teenaged daughter, plans to risk arrest by blocking the road to the plant. For Demeter's power, the rage that heals, is not sex-specific. Her image, Her presence, can unlock that power in any one of us who opens to it.

So we return to the God. The God is a problematic figure today; His many names, His many aspects seem somehow less satisfying, less transforming to many people than do images of the Goddess. It is difficult for many of us to respond in new ways to male images, when all our lives we have been asked to respond in male frameworks. The old myths — even those of the Craft — often seem too firmly heterosexual, based in a vanished world in which everybody comes neatly coupled, two by two, like animals in the Ark. It is too easy to see the Goddess and God "dividing the work of divinity by sex roles" as a student of mine once complained.

Yet the symbols of the God can have great transformative power, a power that reaches below words, beyond reason, that

shatters the constrictions culture places on men and women. But this power does not come from the god as a role model — someone to be imitated. The faces of the God point to experiences, they too say, "Look at this. Feel this. Know this within yourself and name its power so you can draw it forth." The God, like the Goddess, can become one of "the symbols of another reality-principle." He can be the "image of joy and fulfillment; the voice which does not command but sings; the gesture which offers and receives; the deed which is peace and ends the labor of conquest; the liberation from time which unites man with god, man with nature."

Just as naming the nurturing-mother-force lets us, at the same time, separate from it and reconnect independently with it, so giving a name and a face to maleness lets us, both men and women, establish a connection that is independent of the false roles and destructive stereotypes of masculinity — independent even of identification with the men in our lives who themselves have been shaped and molded by the false expectations.

By *maleness*, I do not mean any of the qualities that have been arbitrarily assigned to men as if they didn't apply to women. I do not mean such things as aggression, assertion, activity, yang-ness, rationality, and logos. I mean only the power of being at home — strong, potent, and awake to feeling in a male body.

Many women today would argue that they do not need any connection with maleness, regardless of the way it is transformed or defined. For some, that may be true. For other women and men, maleness has been so tainted by the male roles our culture offers that it cannot be approached cleanly.

It is the culture, rather than any specific individual, that needs transformative images of maleness. Some would even argue with that statement, defining maleness, men themselves, as the problem, maintaining that men are flawed at a deep, perhaps genetic level. But that analysis is too simple, another Good Guys/Bad Guys story, trapped in a dualistic thought-form. It ignores the conditions that make men and women what we are — and ignores the way those conditions vary in their pain in different classes and races.

Images of the God should not be seen as dualistically assigning

powers according to gender. Instead, they are a way of thinking-in-things about questions of sameness and difference. In a culture in which gender is the primary division, we need images of both genders to enable us to come into all of our powers.

As small children, we spend an enormous amount of energy working out questions of sameness and difference. Who are we like? Who are we unlike? Thus we gradually come to have a sense of who we are, to shape ourselves. It is simplistic to think that little girls identify with Mommie exclusively, and little boys with Daddy (always assuming there is a daddy on the scene). We each make a complex nexus of interwoven identifications and dis-avowals. I am: a girl (like Mommie), thin (like Daddy), brown-eyed (like Mommie), and who loves salami (like Daddy), and good at art (different from both). In that complex, difficult work of differentiating, of forming a self and pulling away from the ground of mother's being, we use whatever other important people are around us. Often (in patriarchal culture), for girls as well as boys, that separate self, the part of us that feels free and autonomous, out of the realm of mother's control, comes to be identified with maleness. This may hold true even for women who consciously — emotionally, sexually, and politically — commit themselves to an identification with women.

This might change, of course, if our childcare arrangements changed so that men as well as women became associated with the fears and pleasures of infancy, but only if all the elements of our culture that again and again reinforce the identification of self as male and the *other* as female also changed.

The male self, in a culture in which men rarely care for young children, comes to seem pristine, clean, uncontaminated by the dark mixture of desire and fear that the power of the mother evokes. In a culture in which mastery is the realm of men, the male self comes to be identified with all that represents competence, control, adventure, spirit, light, transcendence of the body's dark demands. Yet that so-called freedom is actually denial — of the body, of feeling, of vulnerability and mortality.

Denial is reinforced because our political and economic system depends on it. The structure of work, we have seen, is based on

that denial. War — another activity reserved for men, also requires men to deny fear, to deny the natural instinct to run like hell from danger. That denial makes possible the closing off, the numbing, that lets men commit atrocities, torture, murder, rape. A man, identifying selfhood with himself, can easily see anyone who is different as the other — as not fully human, as ground to his swaggering figure.

The images of God that may prove liberating are those that point firmly back to the feeling-body, to sex, to the power of mortality. It is not any individual person or group that needs those images; it is the culture as a whole that needs to reconnect maleness with earth, with flesh. Otherwise, we are not forced, as a culture, to come to terms with earth, with flesh; the figure of the pristine, transcendent male is always there to take the load off, to promise escape into some better place. He is also always there to offer the false promise that the self can entirely free itself from ground, that mastery and control can win entirely over the deep forces of life and death, that nature can be tamed.

Alan Acacia, friend and my co-teacher in a class on Magic for Men, spoke of the need for images of Father Earth. At first I found the phrase jarring, almost offensive. It seemed the power of the father had raged on too long without being revived now, within the Goddess religion. But as I thought about it, as I allowed myself to experience the Earth-God — I realized that this image is indeed prevalent in the mythology of earth religion. Father Earth is the Green Man of the Craft, the God who is pictured crowned with leaves and twined with vines, the spirit of vegetation, growing things, the forest. The image says, "Experience this: you are rooted in earth, know the force that twines upward — how it is to flower, to swell into fruit, to ripen in the sun, to drop leaves, to ferment, to be intoxicating. Know the cycle, over and over; you are not apart from it. It is the source of your life."

The God is an animal: stag, goat, bull, boar. He is the Horned Shaman in the prehistoric cave, He carries the bird wand, He smiles through owl eyes. His image says, "Remember — that mastery is not all; remember the deeper part of yourself, still untamed, whose strength is that of instinct; remember that you

bleed, smell, feel — that you can be in your body with animal grace, that there is an elegance, a control not imposed by the mind on nature, one that rises from the body, that arises from being in the world, in the moment, as if we belonged, just as an animal belongs where it is."

The God is the Hunter. I think about the hunter as Ed and I are camped in the wilderness by a lake high in the Sierras. The water is so clear we can see the trout pass by as we look down from the white granite rocks where we sit. In the evenings, the trout rise to feed. They, too, are hunters. As I watch the one we have adopted as our trout, watch it glide smoothly back and forth near the rock, and then leap, in a flash, grabbing a whirling insect as it hits the water's surface, I realize that being a hunter is a state of consciousness, a relaxed alertness, a readiness to move in an instant, to take without hesitating. It moves in an instant because something in the trout's mind is shaped like an insect; something in the hunter's mind must reproduce the prey, must know it so well that the hunter becomes the prey. And while hunting is not a male quality (Artemis is a Hunter, too), perhaps the Hunter is telling us that this consciousness is a doorway men can use to attain what women do more easily. They can develop the ability to merge, to let another being in as part of oneself, to flow around that being, to become ground as well as self.

The Hunter becomes the agent of mortality; he wields the terrible power of annihilation, and yet the part of him that becomes the prey gives way to that death. So something else is given life. And the powers of life and death are united in Him as well as in Her; they are not exclusively the powers of women, and so they cannot be contained by controlling women. They are the powers that underlie all of life.

The God is phallic. He is the maypole, the hermstone, the penis — the dying and reviving God. Pan is all — desire and terror — panic. But the God is more than just physical fertility. As phallus, He says, "Experience this — pleasure. Know, in your own body, how it peaks and fades, and give way to it, not as the pleasure of performance, of mastery, but as the deeper pleasure of the

unfolded body, the deep desire you can know again when you no longer deny the dark." The penis, when it is no longer the instrument of control, becomes the emblem of vulnerability, of feeling. As such, it is freeing to men — because the penis-as-weapon is a dead, wooden instrument that brings no true pleasure.

The God, too, descends into the underworld. The image of the God who grows and dies with the year says, "Look — experience the seasons, the endless round of birth, death, and renewal." What He sacrifices is the male potential to remove himself from the realm of birth and death, as the Goddess who descends sacrifices Her potential to remain the ground of birth and death, instead of the self who suffers death.

In estranged culture, the image that links the male with mortality is, of course, Christ crucified. The iconography of Christianity is hardly different — as many have pointed out — from that of the ancient Virgin Goddess and her sacred child, who dies only to be reborn into immortality. Perhaps that similarity explains some of the power of Christianity — its hold on the heart and the mind. For the image of the tortured male body on the cross confronts our unconscious hope that maleness itself can remove us from the sphere of mortality, from death and pain. But instead of forcing us through that confrontation to a deeper connection with our own mortal flesh and life, Christianity cheats us with the false promise of an otherworldly resurrection. Whatever potential for integration the Christ-figure may promise, it has too often been lost in the hierarchies of the church and chapel, in the authority of dogma, in the thought-forms and stories of estrangement.

Because the Gods reveal themselves in living women and men, they change. The myths change. Perhaps they revert back to their original forms. Perhaps they take us to places we have never been.

So we see that Kore descends, not because She is carried off, but because She herself knows that it is time to leave Her mother, to explore beyond the domain of sunlit earth that Her mother

rules. She searches for the crack, and when She finds the chasm that leads downward, She enters — fearful, yet moving ahead, bearing Her torch to light the way.

Demeter mourns, She searches, She rages. Kore walks, deliberately, of Her own free will, into the dark. Does She go to offer comfort to the twittering ghosts of hell? Or to gain knowledge deeper than the surfaces of things? Or does She enter the dark to change it — to dream it into the new forms She holds in Her mind?

And the God descends. Beautiful Boy, He is named Adonis, Osiris, Dionysos. The women mourn: the Goddess mourns, their tears stain the ground; His blood runs in red carpets of flowers. Kore is the poppy; He is the anemone. He chooses to go down because, like Icarus, He has flown and found that His attempt to escape earth brought only another sort of destruction. Now He wants to know His body. His bones from the inside. He feels life stirring in Him, rising up from below, and He wants to know its source, to abandon Himself, to be one with that source. For that, He is willing to sacrifice.

So they descend, each winding their own way down through their own path, maze. The labyrinth.

And so they meet, at center, in the womb of the dark, the heart of earth. Their meeting is a shock; they are shattered. For He sees that She is not the encompassing earth but a self, like His own, moving through the labyrinth. And she sees that He is no shining immortal; He has grown bulls' horns on His way down, He is animal. They are forced to look into each other's eyes.

They feed on the fruit of the dead, the pomegranate. Fruit of Persephone, fruit that bleeds, that stains their hands and their fingers. This fruit is crowned with a flower like an open cunt, peel it back and find the clitoris. Or it is a ball filled with seeds. The seeds are red and also white like the moon. Like flesh. Like the poppy, the anemone. They are sweet; they stain the lips. They are red crystals, embedded in a matrix.

They are clear as water. Tears. Seeds.

The fruit of life.

Like all seeds, their instinct is to rise, to push their way upward.

As Goddess and God feel that power move in their bellies and their limbs, so we feel it arise inside us, as our own power to call them forth, to bring up the mysteries of the dark and renew the light. We invoke them, we become them: He who goes down and arises, She who changes everything She touches.

But we have eaten of the fruit of Persephone, and we are changed. We can never again be wholly severed from the dark, the earth, the flesh. Within us, Persephone dwells, not as queen, but as friend — of the underworld. Within dwells the Dark God, not as demon, abductor, overlord, but as comforter who consoles us with the promise of renewal. They are the open-eyed dreamers, and what they dream into being in the underworld are the visions that rise to restore the earth. Our visions. Our power.

# Notes and Sources

## NOTES AND SOURCES

The notes for this book include both traditional footnotes and listings of general sources and resources. Often my thinking has been influenced by a particular writer, or by conversations with a particular individual, and I feel credit is due them even if I do not cite any specific passage in the text. On certain subjects, I suspect the reader may also appreciate a short list of resources for further reading. The lists I have provided are not exhaustive but can serve the interested reader as a beginning.

### Prologue

1. I use the word *matristic* ("mother-oriented") rather than *matriarchal* because for many people matriarchy implies a reverse image of patriarchy. Academics debate endlessly about whether cultures ever existed in which women exercised power over men. But the point that I am trying to make about Goddess-centered culture is that power was based on a principle different from that under patriarchy.

Judith Ochsorn argues convincingly that in early, polytheistic cultures, power was not based on gender in the same way it is under patriarchy. Ochsorn, Judith. *The Female Experience and the Nature of the Divine*. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1981

2. Ancient Goddess religion is an enormous subject. Two good resources, presenting different perspectives, are: Ochsorn, Judith. *The Female Experience*; and Stone, Merlin. *When God Was a Woman*. New York: Dial Press, 1976.

3. Resources on witchcraft include: Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1981. Gardner, Gerald. *Witchcraft Today*. Cavendish, Suffolk, Great Britain: Ryder, 1954.
- Murray, Margaret. *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979.

#### Chapter One

An earlier version of this chapter was published under the title, "Consciousness, Politics and Magic," in Spretnak, Charlene, ed. *The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Women's Movement*. New York: Doubleday, 1982, pp. 172-184.

1. Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. San Francisco, 1979, p. 1.
2. These circles describe the effects of a one-megaton hydrogen bomb. Most weapons in stockpiles are far more powerful.
3. San Francisco Chronicle, 23 June 1980. (This description was given in an interview with a mother from Love Canal, an area contaminated by chemical wastes.) Byline Beverly Stephens.
4. DiPrima, Diane. *Revolutionary Letters*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1979, p. 98.
5. This is a term I borrowed from Marx, although I use it in a broader sense. See Marx, Karl, "Private Property and Alienated Labor," in Selsam, Howard, and Martel, Harry, eds. *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*. New York: International Publishers, 1963, pp. 296-303.
6. Engels, Friedrich. "Humanism Versus Pantheism: On Thomas Carlyle," in Selsam and Martel, *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, pp. 234-235.
7. White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," in Spring, David and Eileen, eds. *Ecology and Religion in History*. New York: Harper and Row, 1964, p. 25.
8. See the essays, "Timber: What Was There for Them," pp. 56-64; and "Forest: The Way We Stand," pp. 220-221, in Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature*.
9. I include Jews among people of color because anti-Semitism functions like racism. Many Jews are dark-skinned and Jews have always been viewed as dark, with all the associated connotations.
10. Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Woman, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
11. Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization*. New York: Vintage Books, 1955, p. 41.

12. For a more complete critique of Jung's work, see Goldenberg, Naomi. "Jungian Psychology and Religion," in *Changing of the Gods*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979, pp. 46-71.
13. For a deeper psychological understanding of why we blame women for death and decay while we see men as clean, pure, and abstract, see Dinnerstein, Dorothy. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
14. "Witch" and "Witchcraft" denote the Pagan, pre-Christian religion of Europe based on the immanent Goddess and Her Consort. This should not be confused with Satanism, Devil worship, so-called black magic, or any other Christian heresy.
15. The Handbook Collective. *The Diablo Canyon Blockade Encampment Handbook*, p. 45. This may be available from Abalone Alliance, Northern California Preparers/Trainers Collective, c/o Pandora's Box, 127 Rincon Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

#### Chapter Two

1. Stone, Merlin. Personal communication based on unpublished research. Two Aryan texts that specifically describe light as good and dark as evil are the *Zend Avesta* of the Aryans in Iran, and the *Book of Manu* of the Aryans in India.
2. Rubin, Lillian. *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family*. New York: Basic Books, 1976, p. 19.
3. Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978, pp. 75-79.
4. The next seven paragraphs describe the Tree of Life meditation, often used to begin a ritual.

#### Sources:

- This chapter was strongly influenced by my reading of several works on systems theory, of which the most valuable are:
- Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York: Bantam, 1979.
- Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine, 1972.
- The male/female, culture/nature split is developed as a theme in the following book: Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Griffin, Susan. *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.
- Two useful resources on the convergence of the new physics with mysticism are: Capra, Fritjof. *The Tao of Physics*. New York: Bantam, 1975, and Zukav, Gary. *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*. New York: William Morrow, 1979.

My thoughts on hierarchy were influenced by reading this book: Bookchin, Murray. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1971. Important investigations into structures, stories, spirituality, and politics are found in:

Christ, Carol. *Diving Deep and Surfacing: Women Writers on Spiritual Quest*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1980.  
 Goldenberg, Naomi. *Changing of the Gods*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.  
 Rosman, Michael. *New Age Blues*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979.

For an excellent discussion of how ideas and concepts have shaped American cities, see: Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1961.

A wonderful collection of Goddess stories is found in: Stone, Merlin. *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddess and Heroine Heritage*, Vols. I & II. New York: New Sibylline Books, 1979. This book is available from: New Sibylline Books, Box 266, Village Station, New York, NY 10014.

My thoughts on language owe a debt to years of friendship and ritual-making in company with Lauren Liebling.

### Chapter Three

An earlier version of this chapter was presented as a paper entitled, "Ethics and Justice in Goddess Religion" at the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Religions in New York City in 1979.

That paper was published in *Airitia: An Experimental Journal* 7:1, pp. 61-68; in *Fortfreedom*, Ann and Julie Ann, eds. *Book of the Goddess*. Sacramento, Calif.: Temple of the Goddess Within, 1980, and in Spretnak, Charlene, ed. *The Politics of Women's Spirituality: Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power Within the Feminist Movement*. New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982, pp. 415-422.

1. Conversations with Donna Warnock, whose perceptive development of integrity as a unifying concept helped shape and focus my own thinking in this area, were influential in the preparation of this chapter.
2. Commoner, Barry. *The Closing Circle*. New York: Knopf, 1971, pp. 45-46.

### Chapter Four

1. In most esoteric traditions, what I call the *underworld* is named the *astral plane* or the *higher plane*. Sometimes it is called the *inner plane*. I have deliberately chosen metaphors that stress going deeper into the world, rather than getting out of it, to remind us that our framework is immanence.

2. Obviously, being in professional training myself, I have a certain amount of ambivalence about this point.

3. Lessing, Doris. *The Four-Gated City*. New York: Bantam, 1970, pp. 518-519.
4. Green, Hannah. *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. New York: New American Library, 1964, pp. 55.

5. Lerner, Michael. "Surplus Powerlessness." This is an article available from *Social Policy*, 33 West 42nd Street, Room 1212, New York, NY 10036.

6. You may prefer to use another term, such as *parents, guardians, primary caretakers*.

7. My thoughts on despair are influenced by unpublished writings on "Despair Work" by Joanna Rogers Macy of the Inter-Help organization.

8. Dinnerstein, Dorothy. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977. She uses the phrase "animal-poetic" throughout.

In general, the psychology in this chapter is derived from that obscure branch of knowledge known as object-relations theory. In particular, it is influenced by Margaret Mahler's theory of child development, as presented by Gertrude and Rubin Blanck in: *Ego Psychology: Theory and Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, and *Ego Psychology II: Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

I have also found some of Jean Piaget's formulations useful, especially as presented in: Ginsburg, Herbert, and Oppen, Sylvia. *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

My thoughts on fear were influenced by conversations with China Gallard. Joy, herself, of course, was a primary source for the material in this chapter, and I am grateful for her willingness both to travel the dark paths of the underworld, and to let me publish an account of her journey.

### Chapter Five

1. See Ochsdom, Judith. *The Female Experience and the Nature of the Divine*. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1981.

2. This invocation approximates the one done at the Summer Solstice Ritual (at the Pagan Spirit Gathering in Northern Wisconsin organized by Circle Network) held from June 18 to June 21, 1981.

3. Spretnak, Charlene. *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1981, pp. 21-41.

4. Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. New York: Vintage, 1955, p. 147.

Other sources for this chapter are:

- Brown, Norman O. *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959, pp. 202-304.  
 Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

- De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Bantam, 1970.
- Dimmerstein, Dorothy. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Translated by James Strachey. New York: W. W. Norton, 1961.
- Griffin, Susan. *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.
- Perera, Sylvia. *Descent to the Goddess: A Way of Initiation for Women*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books, 1981.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Bantam, 1976.

#### Chapter Six

1. Visual cues may help when incurable bores are present in a group. For example, suggest that everyone in the group quietly raise their hands when they stop listening to someone. The message is soon clear. Try this in classes and at public lectures, too.
  2. A good resource for understanding communication styles and group interactions is Virginia Satir. She writes about families, but her material can also give insights into the way people behave in small groups. See Satir, Virginia. *Peoplenaking*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books, 1972.
  3. Mander, Jerry. "Kit Karson in a Three-Piece Suit: Forced Relocation of 9634 Indians—Happening Now," *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, No. 33, 1981, p. 59. (Box 428, Sausalito, CA 94966)
- An excellent and exhaustive resource on creating non-hierarchical community is: Couver, Virginia; Deacon, Ellen; Esser, Charles; and Moore, Christopher. *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*. Philadelphia, New Society Press, 1977. This is available from Movement for a New Society, Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143.
- The body of material in this and the following chapter comes from experience rather than written sources.
- Mickey Sanders introduced me to Quaker Dialogue in the Santa Rita Country Jail, after the Blockade of the Livermore Weapons Lab on February 1, 1982.
- Comments and perceptions expressed about the Diablo Blockade or any other actions or groups are purely my own, in this and succeeding chapters.

#### Chapter Seven

1. An excellent resource with an ongoing discussion of these ideas is the maga-

zine, *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, Box 428, Sausalito, CA 94966. Subscriptions are \$14.00/year. Especially pertinent articles are:

- Hess, Karl. "The Politics of Place," *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, No. 30, 1981, pp. 4-16.
- Bookchin, Murray. "The Concept of Social Ecology," No. 32, 1981, pp. 14-22.
- Berg, Peter. "Devolving Beyond Global Monoculture," No. 32, 1981, pp. 24-28.
- Dodge, Jim. "Living by Life," No. 32, 1981, pp. 6-12.
- Mills, Stephanie. "Planetary Passions," No. 32, 1981, pp. 4-5.
- See also: Berg, Peter, ed. *Reinhabiting a Separate Country: A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California*. San Francisco: Planet Drum Foundation, 1978. Planet Drum Foundation also publishes a newsletter, available by writing to Box 31251, San Francisco, CA 94131.

A good resource on class is: Rubin, Lillian. *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family*. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

A fine source on racial and ethnic diversity is: Moraga, Cherrie, and Anzaldúa, Gloria. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1981.

My perceptions of Reclaiming express my personal perspective, not that of the Collective. Other members would, and will, undoubtedly disagree on many points. As a group, we are constantly struggling and evolving in many areas touched on in this chapter.

Discussions with Keyvin Lutton have helped me understand the importance of class differences better.

#### Chapter Eight

1. See Appendix A for a fuller exploration of this subject.
2. Lord, Audre. "The Erotic as Power," *Chrysalis*, No. 9, Fall, 1979, p. 29.
3. Lord, Audre. "The Erotic as Power," p. 30.
4. Califia, Pat. "Feminism and Sado-Masochism," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics*, 4:1 (Issue 12), pp. 30-34. Heresies Collective, Inc., 225 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012. This entire issue focuses on sexuality, and is an invaluable resource.
5. Carol, a Wind Hag (the name of a coven), suggests that many people may find it easier to begin with the trees—and work up to human beings.
6. Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979. (The Tree of Life is described on p. 44; the Salt Water Purification on pp. 59-60.)

Other resources include:

- Griffin, Susan. *Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981.