

Embodied Alchemy: Transformative Fires Within

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This paper contains images from a remarkable contemporary painter and reflects on them briefly from the perspective of the colors in the major stages of the Alchemical process: The Blackness of the *Nigredo*, the Whitening of the *Albedo*, the revitalizing reddening of the *Rubedo*, and the Gold in the Sacred Marriage. An embodied process, her images also shed light on vital elements of the feminine individuation journey.

Alchemy is most often understood as a primitive scientific attempt to create elemental gold, yet alchemy also sought the 'inner gold'. Modern psychotherapy also has the capacity to transform *prima materia*, the unwanted material of everyday life, into something meaningful, helping us find the 'gold' in the shadow. Alchemy brings awareness to what we least value: unconscious "shadow" qualities, and provides an ancient map of the stages in the individuation process – a framework for understanding the evolving relationship between body, brain, psyche, spirit, relationship, and nature in the transformative process.

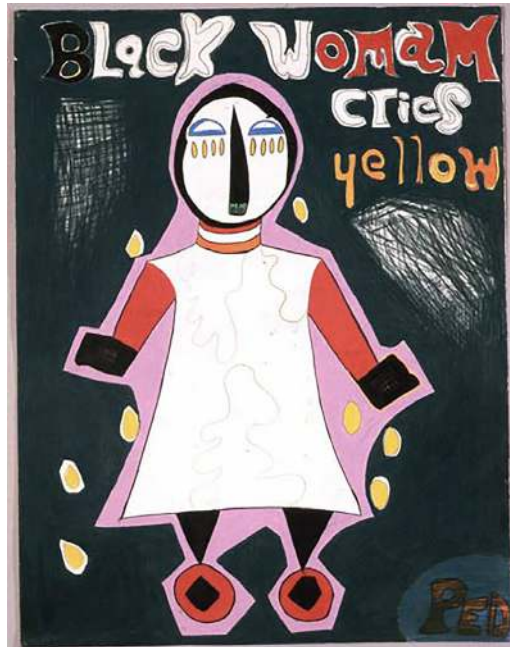
To illuminate this process, I've selected paintings from the work of Penelope Etnier Dinsmore, a wonderful woman, painter, and soul who lives in a house her architect husband, David, built in the woods in Inverness California, north of San Francisco. Penny grew up in a family that was socially prominent, but emotionally distant. Her early experiences of connection with her instincts often went unseen or weren't encouraged, and as she grew older, she grappled with alienation from the Self.

As she describes, "My father was a well-known Maine artist who was married five times. My mother turned to alcohol for help. Mother's mother was an accomplished painter. I grew up in an aesthetic atmosphere. There was not a great deal of feeling." (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 2) A turning point in Penny's development came when she went to art school and, soon after, began analysis with Dr. Joseph Henderson, an analyst who worked with C.G. Jung.

Penny's work with Dr. Henderson initiated a new phase in Penny's life, during which she was able to move inward toward greater authenticity and enter the art of living, reigniting her early sense of the *scintilla* (the flecks of light in the dark that she first encountered with fireflies as a girl, sleeping on her Grandmother's porch) (Dinsmore, n.d., p. 4), and the sacredness of life.

The images in this paper, done over the past 40 years, are among

those I showed at the IAAP Congress that reflect how Penny's work brought forward the experience of a numinous, sacred mystery she felt within. This eventually allowed her to, as she says, "accept myself with some compassion, and to love those close to me as I had needed to be loved." (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 2)



Black Woman Cries Yellow

Penny made this image while studying painting at the San Francisco Art Institute in the 1960s; she was ashamed by it, and felt the content was disturbing. She says "It shows an inner self who was frozen, unable to move; without hands, feet or mouth. I know her heart was frozen as well." (2008, p. 4) Later, Penny painted an image of a woman with a black hole in her abdomen. Though the woman's form is more developed, Penny was aware of the "black empty hole in the center of her body" which she felt with some fear. The figure is "limp and seated", "without bone." (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 5)

Even later, Penny painted an image titled *The Three Judges*. The judges show the absence of warmth in her early beginnings – her father left when Penny was 4, and her mother began to drink – which left no time, and very little emotional attunement or psychic space for her. Penny envied the children of her father's later marriage, which brought pain and doubt about her own worth. Years later as a

young mother she drew inspiration from literature and the painters she studied. “Rilke,” she noted, “observed that *doubt* can become a good quality if you *train* it”; it becomes *discerning*. Of the *blackness* she felt: “For Rothko black represented darkness and fertility, earth and night.” (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 6-7)

These paintings point to the first phase of the alchemical process, the Black phase. It is the *Prima Materia* – the ‘mud’ at the beginning of the journey and the longest stage of the process (though the Alchemical Opus is *not* a linear process; the stages often cycle throughout life). *Nigredo* contains the initial stages of the process: working with undifferentiated, rejected Shadow material – *prima materia*. We can think of this as the ‘somatic unconscious,’ and ‘psychological complexes’ which are rooted in the body, reflected in muscular holding patterns, habitual breathing patterns, unconscious movements, facial expressions, tone of voice and so forth.

We see this in Penny’s paintings – in the wooden body without hands to reach out or receive, feet to stand on or move, or a mouth to express feelings, while tears stream down. Her depression is also expressed in the sense of collapse and hollow emptiness in the center of her body and the critical inner voices that ravaged her sense of self. Here there is anguish, depression, turmoil, surrender – suffering without knowing why, and the destruction of the ‘false ego’. In *Nigredo* there is a burning up of artificial psychic structures and a sense of being reduced to bare essence. Its elements are Fire and Water.



Woman Chalk Figure

In this painting we see the beginning of discernment, a sense of consciousness, and a reaching inside. Penny reflects “This chalk figure in the circle is reaching, and trying from deep within. *Who* is it? *What* is it? *Why* is it?” (2008, p. 8)

We also see the agony she felt in her life at that time; staying on the cross, feeling torn between the opposites: “wanting to be a good mother for her three small children, and her deep longing to be a painter.” She also carried the memory of her older sister who was taken over by manic depression, as Penny calls it, “a cruel condition that throws you between the opposites” so the psychology of the light and the dark in contrast was a danger she observed closely in her life. Though her own experiences were not as dramatic and difficult as her sister’s, they were very dark for many years. (Dinsmore, n.d., p. 3)

The next image in this series is of mud, bones and darkness, and struggling toward the light. Penny recalls how in Lamaist Buddhism the initiate carries a dagger bell and a human femur. In ‘the black meal’ meditation he imagines himself as a small heap of charred human bones that emerge from a lake of black mud. The useless bones symbolize the destruction of his phantom “I” – the ‘false self’ (Winnicott, 1960, p. 145) – and how *dismemberment* is *essential* in gaining a new understanding/experience of the self (CW13, par. 91).

The final painting is titled, *Sitting with Darkness* and speaks to the need for darkness: *inevitable* depression, loss and grief in the process of change. Says Penny, “If I could hold the darkness over time and endure it, then light would come as needed consciousness.” (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 10). This is the transcendent function: light and dark come closer to integration. This experience brought resolution to the pain of struggle in her art/life and movement into the next phase.

All of these paintings move us towards *Albedo*, the whitening phase of alchemy. This stage involves the purification of the matter that survived the *Nigredo*. There is a brilliant white light at the end of the dark tunnel, between death and the afterlife. It is a gradual process of cooking and purification that we see depicted in the white chalk figure, taken down to bone. All extraneous matter, all ideas of the self, have dropped away.

There’s an experience of the underlying duality in substance: opposing positive and negative qualities or other opposites such as Masculinity and Femininity, Yin/Yang, Sun/Moon, action/receptivity, and so forth. This stage combines the pure essence into a new incarnation. The elements are Air and Earth.

Some time later, Penny visited the paintings of the ancient caves in France and Spain, including Lascaux, before it closed. It was here that the feeling of the cave and the magnificent expressions of the truly sacred life in the animals connected her to her deepest self. She

experienced this as man's first connection to the numinous in the psyche, as seen in the outer world.

Her paintings shifted to a series of horses and the color red. The cave horses had been hugely powerful for her; they were "the very essence of the life force, reverentially perceived by man, as the embodiment of the force of nature, both from within and without" (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 14). She felt reconnected to the life force and revitalized!

Red is feeling, emotion, life and blood, multiplying here. Penny quotes Jung, "Not until the Rubedo is the *sunrise*." (CW 12, par. 334) In this phase of Penny's life, dreams become her compass – light in her dark body, pictures painted on the cave walls that reflected her feelings and her spiritual and emotional condition.



Reddening Square

Here we see Red emerging as the transformative life force. It is a new Sunrise, after the darkness of the *Nigredo* and the purification of the *Albedo*/Whitening. "The relation of the love-goddess to red dates back to ancient times" (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 15). This is the blood of new life (after the ordeal); the transformative substance that is the "medium between mind and body; the Union of both" (CW12, par. 209).

The next painting in this stage is a maturation. It contains all previous colors: Black, White, Red, with hints of the 'Yellowing'/'

Gold to come. Penny felt drawn to walls, shards, mosaics, ancient paintings in Turkey, and Jerusalem's Wailing Wall. Henderson told her he dreamt of walls often in his very late life (100-104 years old). "I could not understand it then," she said, "but can now." (2008, p. 19)

She associates it to the "Breaking the vessel (of God's creation) and the work to gather the pieces together again in a new form." (Dinsmore, 2008, p. 17) We might say that this reflects her gradually building a new 'body/psyche container'— strong enough and flexible enough to hold deep feeling, and to channel sacred life energy. This is the alchemical process at work, reflecting greater differentiation, 'squaring' into consciousness, and centering at the core.

Penny is now in the *Rubedo* phase of the alchemical process. This is *Coniunctio* – Sunrise: *living* a new embodiment – *Body* is made spiritual; *Spirit* is made *corporeal* (flesh). There's an integration of opposing and rejected elements into the personality and an experience of one's true Self. There is also a sense of empowerment and confidence, resulting from the psychological integration in the final phase of personal transformation. The *Sacred Marriage* unites the more *fully developed* opposites toward new consciousness and wholeness, and incorruptible integrity.

In the next phase of Penny's paintings we see the unification of contrasting/opposing forces, brought to 'essence' through repeated processes of distillation. This reflects a 'Greater *Coniunctio*', following many 'lesser *coniunctios*'. A famous early Alchemist, Mary Prophetissa (Mary the Jewess; circa 200 B.C.E.), described the process like this: 'Join the Male and the Female and you will find what is sought'; 'thus the two are but One' (CW 12, par.209).

In her *Axiom of Maria* she says, "One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the one as the fourth." One is unconscious wholeness. Two is the conflict of opposites. Three points to a potential resolution and is the transcendent function, described as a "psychic function that arises from the tension between consciousness and the unconscious and supports their Union"; and the 'one as the fourth' is a transformed state of consciousness, relatively whole and at peace; the 'child' of the marriage (Axiom of Maria 2015).



Gold Spiral

Here we see the emerging gold in Penny's paintings. Penny quotes Jung,

"God is *known* in the Gold" (2008, p. 17) and "Gold expresses sunlight, value, and divinity even" (2008, p. 16). Jung says that 'man must help God *repair* the *damage* which creation has caused' (Jung in Lammers, 2011, p. 193). This painting contains all of the colors of the process; coming together in a new way – the Mosaic of the Self.

As Penny becomes more embodied she brings in Earth tones. Following Henderson's death, Penny began analysis with Jungian analyst, Dr. Joan Chodorow. Penny described Joan as "A woman, who is also an author, scholar, and a dancer who became a 'therapist of the body'. 'This was all new to me,' she said. 'It was a very difficult time for me; though Dr. Chodorow patiently led me.... Over time, I understood that it was the way of the Feminine, of Eros, that had been wounded when I was very young.'" (Dinsmore, 2014, p. 12). Through her work with Dr. Chodorow, Penny became more embodied and began taking

'Earthing' walks on her favorite, peaceful beach with husband David and their beloved dog Siri.

Gold is a legendary substance, an experiencing of the eternal, and a transformation of the instincts. It is the birth of insight, meaning-making, and resonant wholeness. In alchemical terms gold is the *result* and is called the 'Life Elixer'; 'Philosopher's Stone'; and 'Pearl of Great Price'. (CW 13, par. 245). It is experienced as a formation of solid inner ground.

On a spiritual level this final 'coagulation' produces an entirely new body for the alchemist; this second body is often described as a 'Subtle Body' or a 'Body of light'. (CW 13, par. 138) In Penny's paintings we see this in light emerging through darkness, numinous golds, centered shapes, colors finding new harmony in Mandala form. Gold is the *Divinity* in matter, in all of nature, and in us. There's Eros here – Spirit illuminating/impregnating the Body – the birth of Soul. For the Medieval alchemists this was the 'Philosopher's Child'; the merging of thought and feeling to produce a highly intuitive state that was considered a *direct* experience of reality. For the Egyptians it was the '*Intelligence of the Heart.*' (Bynum, 2012, p. 125).

As a child, Penny experienced fireflies as "little soul sparks in the darkness" while sleeping on the porch at her Grandmother's house (Dinsmore, n.d., p. 4). Through her work, she has come to see these as early experiences that were not yet integrated, experienced now as part of the "World Soul; the 'spirit of God' in flecks of light." (Dinsmore, n.d., p. 9) This is the culmination of the Work/the Alchemical Opus.

Through her painting and analysis Penny has created her own inner sacred marriage – the 'good father', the 'good mother' and the 'beloved (divine) child' that she has created inside of herself. "You are a spark from my shining," says a Self figure in her book *The Treasure that Came into the World to Find Itself* (2014, p. 72), which signifies that Penny now feels that she belongs; she is her small self, and yet also a part of the larger cosmos.

Her early sense of "I am God," experienced as a bright light she saw while walking down the hallway in her SF apartment as a young mother, has become integrated. This early, direct experience of being part of divinity, of eternity, has become embodied. Penny now feels a part of the larger mystery of coming to earth to become more conscious.

Of her life at that time she says, "The unconscious had broken through. My ego had been confronted with the 'unknown light'. I began to sense the *reality* of the Self as I worked on my personal problems and complexes" (Dinsmore, n.d., p. 6). She has healed her early sense of emptiness: a gorgeous woman from a wealthy, aristocrat yet emotionally impoverished, divorced family, she had lived life in the

fast lane, struggling with outer images that threatened to define her life. Her paintings provided a vehicle for mining her *inner* images, her authentic self.

She's also developed a healthy inner masculine – through education, discernment in her analysis, and navigating life challenges (balancing mothering with studies/life as a painter, and multiple marriages as she sought a more soulful sense of self). Now the animus has become a positive force in her dreams. This is the *Coniunctio*, the final alchemical stage, resulting in a more developed feminine and a more developed masculine. *Both*, coming together at increasing levels of consciousness.

Penny takes us on a journey in which we, too, witness the potency of the soul spark – the *scintilla* – as we discover its presence and home in the body. At 87, Penny says of the aging process, “Age quiets life. I am *grateful* to be who I am now, rather than who I was those so many years ago. To be *really* in life, to have a *real* life, an authentic life. ‘I have an awareness of small moments. Each moment becomes a gift. It is enough, just enough. I have made art, and it has made me. My dreams and Jungian analysis deepened life over time and brought meaning. I am thankful for all I received from art, psyche, and Love – the greatest gift. For me love came slowly, but it did come. Before my art and my dreams, I knew only the dark in myself, and in others. I knew hate, distrust, disaster, anger, and despair” (2008, p. 23).

Jung says “... during the assimilation of the unconscious, the personality passes through many transformations, which show it in different lights and are followed by ever changing moods.” (CW 14, par. 430) Says Penny, “I have felt this over many years. Now I feel the light. I have love.” (2008, p. 23)

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Monday, 29 August 2017
(Breakout Sessions)

Suicide Prevention for Depressed Women in Japan

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I. What made depressed women suicidal ?

When I was undergoing analyst training in England in 1990, I had a female friend, an Argentinean psychiatrist. She left her country for political reasons, first moving to Spain then to France. Remarried after divorcing her first husband, she had just had a baby. She asked me about a Japanese woman in her English class whose attitude was beyond her imagination. The teacher in her class asked the students what time they usually got up in the morning. To her surprise, the Japanese woman said she got up at 5 am, even on weekends. She was shocked at hearing this and asked her: "Why do you need to get up so early every day?" The Japanese woman, who seemed like a very well educated, good looking housewife, replied that she had to get up early because she needed to get ready for her husband and children before they woke up. My friend was still not convinced of her answer and asked her again: "Why do you always need to look after them? Why not your husband?" The Japanese woman gave the same answer, and looked at my friend with an annoyed face. My friend was shattered. She did not think she said anything humiliating and could not understand why this Japanese woman did not understand her questions.

I tried to explain her question and what had happened. She must have been a devoted housewife, fixed in her housewife role, not a person making individual decisions. My friend was not satisfied with this explanation and became angry at the thought of Japanese women not being aware of their dignity. It was not easy for me to explain any further at that time.

Each year in Japan, between 9000 to 10000 women commit suicide (based on data from the past 16 years). Among women in their perinatal period, the highest cause of death is suicide; one in every 3 are pregnant women. When pregnant women get depressed, they hardly imagine that they are in ill health and need to get medical help. The reasons may vary but they tend to have feelings such as:

- I should be happy because I am pregnant, but I am not.
- This is all my fault.

- I am a bad mother.
- I should not ask for help.

During the past 20 years, since my time in the UK, I have been practicing general Psychiatry. I may have seen more than 5000 patients, and perhaps 70 to 80 percent of them have been women.

Despite this, I rarely saw perinatal women suffering from depression. Sometimes I would hear that they were depressed for a long time without getting any help prior to seeing me.

What has stopped those women from seeking help is peer pressure. There is a sheer fantasy in Japan known as "Sekentei".

Sekentei is the Japanese belief of how people should be and what is commonsensical. For example, "all pregnant women are happy" or else they are outcasts. It is not written but everybody knows. Sekentei may change and be different in groups, but one has to be very careful of not becoming an outcast. One has to be always cautious about how other people think and what the main norm is at the moment. If one cannot catch on with this way of thinking, she becomes an outsider. The group may be polite to her only on the surface but talk behind her back.

Japanese people always fear being excluded. If you are not included in the group, you are considered insignificant; whatever you say is not registered and unheard. Therefore, in order to be included, one has to stop feeling and thinking personally. It is far safer to follow the norm and prevent ostracism at the cost of sacrificing one's individuality.

In this state of mind, it is beyond them to ask for help.

The priority in the group is not to rock the boat.

How to prevent suicides ?

Many survived patients said when they were suicidal they did not think and feel.

They were either numb or in unbearable pain and never imagined saying to someone: "I cannot go further."

Death is better than losing one's face. What's more, it is the only way out from this complex condition. Their physical sense has been muted; only suicidal thoughts stay with them all the time. It seems they are in the dark all alone, withdrawn from this world. Our job is to break this dangerous silence. Sometimes they hide their dark idea in public and no one notices.

One way of preventing suicide is to change their suicidal scenario into a different story. When I notice a patient is in serious condition, I tend to circulate this information to people around her and ask them to watch over her with warm concern. However, this is only possible

for patients with family support. If a patient were completely alone, I would call the local welfare section.

As David Rosen has written in his book, *Transforming Depression*, “egocide” might happen when patients are in therapy. But like the patients in those cases who hardly talk about their negative feelings, we have to change them from outside settings and facilitate a way to accept their negativity without feeling guilt.

One woman in her 50s said: “When I first met you I recognized how awful I felt. It was a light. I did not realize how negative I was at that point”.

In general, Japanese people rarely speak negative feelings. What’s more, if they are paranoid, there is little chance for them to express it. In order to find a way to relate to those suicidal patients, I went back to the Japanese Classics whenever there was a good reference. Indeed, the famous story of Amano Iwato Biraki, in *Kojiki* gives me ideas to meditate this difficult issue.

2. Image of Amano Iwato Biraki story

Kojiki is the oldest text book of written Japanese in the 8th century AD. It contains many stories such as the origins of the Japanese islands and the ancestry of many Gods in ancient times.

In *Kojiki*, there is the famous story named “Amano Iwato Biraki”. This story is so well known, it is used in *Kagura*, a Japanese folk music play. I will only tell of this story. There are not many English translations of *Kojiki*, and this is how I understand the story from reading it in Japanese.

In the story, Amaterasu, Susano, Amenouzume, and Yaoyorozuno no kami are the main cast.

Amaterasu: The sun goddess, who was born from her father’s Left eye when her mother had already died.

Susano: The younger brother of Amaterasu, who was born from his father’s nose, and who kept crying loudly because he could not bear his mother’s death.

Amenouzume: Dancing Goddess of Heavenly land.

Yaoyorozuno kami: Eight hundred Gods who were devastated by Amaterasu’s withdrawal.

* * *

Because Susano could not stop crying, his father Izanagi was furious. The father told him to depart from the heavenly land. Susano wanted to salute his sister, but she was suspicious of his manner, as if he had a dark desire to occupy her land. Susano and Amaterasu made “Ukehi” judgement then Susano was recognized innocent. Filled with joy again, he misbehaved, destroying his sister’s place. He hurt one

of Amaterasu's maidens to death by poking her genitals by accident caused by Susano's distractive acts.

Amaterasu was afraid, and opening the Heavenly Rock-Cave door, went in and shut herself inside.

All the land became completely dark, and the crying of the gods could be heard everywhere.

Then Yaoyorozuno kami assembled in a divine assembly in Amano Yasuno Kawara, the river-bed. The gods discussed for a long time and Omoikane, the facilitator of all, gathered ideas and announced the creation of a festival to resurrect Amaterasu.

They made a mirror and other offerings to decorate in front of the cave door, and gave beautiful prayers for resurrection.

Amenouzume gave prayer by dancing, and became divinely possessed, exposing her breasts and pushing her skirt-band down to her genitals. Watching her lively dancing, Yaoyorozuno kami laughed at once.

When Amaterasu heard this strange sound, she opened a crack in the Amano Iwato, the heavenly Rock-cave door, and said "Why is it that Amenouzume sings and dances, and all the Yaoyorozuno kami laugh beside my absence and darkness?" Amenouzume answered, "We rejoice and dance because there is here a deity superior to you," as one of them brought out the mirror and showed it to Amaterasu.

Amaterasu thought this was more and more strange, and gradually came out of the cave door to see the mirror. Then Tejicaroo took her hand and pulled her out. Immediately, Futodamanomikoto tended a rope behind her and said: "You may go back no further than this!" Then the land became light again.

This Amaterasu story made me think of some form of ancient ritual.

3. Case AS, a Divine Child

AS was referred to me from an experienced woman psychologist in her mid 30's. AS had been depressed for 4 years already, and she could not go to her work when she came to me. Her mood swings from mildly manic to depressive states. It was a time when she had just moved to a different section of the local nursery school as a teacher from a child protection agency. Just before this change one morning, she woke up crying and could not stop, and lost 4 kilograms within a week. Since then, I have seen her for 11 years.

Family History

She was born as the second daughter in an old traditional family near Fukuoka. They lived in a huge house with her paternal grandmother who lost her husband during WW2. The family was quite

well known in the area because of their relatives are local politicians. She has two sisters: one older, one younger. Just a few years before her birth, her mother had a son but he passed away at 4 months old. Her grandmother said to her repeatedly that she was born as a Divine child, who replaced her brother, and had a mission to please her depressed mother.

She could not understand why she was the Divine child, not her sisters. One of her old memories was when she assisted nursery teachers to look after younger children. She was always a good girl without freedom. The only time she felt joy was being alone in the forest behind her house.

When she was 18, her father died suddenly at the age of 52. Her mother, who was extremely dependent on her husband, could not cope with this situation and became alcoholic. As in her family, she was the one to take care of her mother, her grandmother told her to watch carefully. AS thought it was beyond her ability so she asked her grandmother to take her mother to a specialist. Her mother vomited very often and said how much she wanted to die. The grand mother did not agree with her idea of taking her mother to a hospital because going to such a place was their family's shame. A year later, her mother disappeared.

Her mother committed suicide by jumping into a nearby pond and was found the next morning. AS could not cry because she thought this would happen.

When she lost her parents, she was 19 and just about to become a nursery teacher. She had kept going on with her life to become a nursery teacher. One day, when she was 30, a mother of one of her ex-students telephoned her to look for her missing child. AS searched all over, similar to when her mother went missing. This event became a top national news story every day. A few days later, the little girl was found dead. It was a murder. After this event, AS began to see a woman psychologist to have counseling.

Case Process

This family history was told little by little, and took a long time to consolidate.

In her early work, I had to make comments such as it is unnatural to smile when she was feeling awful, then she smiled, replying "yes". Her over adaptation was mentioned but she could not understand what it meant. AS continued having counseling with a woman psychologist and came to see me for psychiatric help. I did not treat her as an analytical client but prescribed antidepressants when she needed them.

Her low self-esteem denied her value from her work and made her very sensitive to any tiny negative comments. She felt she was never a good enough teacher. What's more she said she felt as if she

was a slave who never had a chance at freedom, such as death. She said recently if her mother hadn't committed suicide, she would have been at great risk. AS was concerned not to hurt anyone because she knew how it was. She was ashamed of her being single, which was often commented on among her relatives. She didn't fulfill "Sekentei".

AS worked not to be criticized by anyone. After seeing me for 5 years, she agreed to participate in a group of depressed patients who met twice per week for preparation in return to work.

At the beginning of the group, she was passive and conforming. She was so anxious of how others might think of her that she often lost track, and could not make her original comments. AS was under the control of the ideal discipline, her perfect persona prevented her from being herself. But this attitude was commented on by the staff and other members of the group, so that she started wondering about it. She began to say she realized how much she killed her feelings by comparing herself to others.

In this stage, the group took a role of reflection.

Although she complained of nausea and dizziness, she gradually understood how much anger and aggression she had. She could not validate her negative feelings. She was polite as before but often arrived late for the group and left late from the clinic, just staying in the waiting room.

* * *

AS has kept coming to see me and the groups in order to balance her spontaneously in these 6 years. It took time for her to speak her negative feelings, but gradually she was able to say "No" at her work and her family.

Most recently, I saw her at a regular meeting a week ago.

She works fine at the nursery school and has not taken a leave for 2 and a half years without medication.

I asked her permission to present her case materials, and questioned her about what the group has meant to her. She said when she was in individual treatment only, her insight developed but did not change her conforming behavior. Through the group, she encountered other people's despair that made it possible to look at herself from a different angle. She always wanted to be herself rather than behave what had been expected, and through the group, she felt regenerated. The group members' stories became a part of her experience, and made her think "How do I express myself?"

At the end of the meeting, AS said these things slowly, finding words carefully,

"Death is a part of nature. I have a sense of living in a big flow. This flow includes time and timelessness. I feel gratitude to my parents who left me freedom by their death. Their expectations were a

huge burden for me to carry. I feel I was loved in their way, and with being alone made it possible to live on my own. I was in and out of Amanoiwato. I have repeated, and I might do it again. Because I need to hide myself in order to regenerate.”

When her “Sekentei complex” has weakened, she was able to feel, think and speak her own words.

4. Discussions

As we see in case, a negative Animus complex seems very strong in generation to generation. When they are in this complex, such as Kleinian’s Paranoid-Schizoid position, they hardly speak their own words, only maintain surface communication.

Assertiveness may be interpreted as Egocentrism or arrogance. The best attitude is to keep quiet. If they have any negative feelings, they needed to be pushed underground.

Amaterasu, who had lost her mother already and lost trust in her brother, Susano, hid herself into Amanoiwato. In order for her to come out (heal wounded Anima), a dramatic stage and a friendly group (Yaoyorozuno kami = eight hundred gods, and dance of Amenouzume) were needed. They facilitated Amaterasu to make her curious of the outside and succeeded in getting her to come out.

Similar to the story, in a clinical setting, we need to provide a safe place for them to feel at ease. In order to let go of their wounded femininity, we need to be physically present. It seems if it is only individual therapy, the progress is slow. But adding group therapy, where there are also survivors, they find it easier to come out. What’s most important is to share feelings together and being heard by a group rather than what they speak out to a single person.

In the group, they share pains. This sharing experience values their pain and has a positive side, such as helping others to reflect. When they experience their suffering has meaning, it creates an expansion of consciousness and the withdrawn Anima may resurrect.

When Anima begins to emerge, the negative Animus Complex loses its power. They are not so much possessed by Sekentei, and can speak with their own words. They can think and feel again, and ultimately, find freedom in the world around them.

We humans are not like gods, we withdraw, come out, and withdraw repeatedly. We sometimes need a place to hide ourselves in a dark cave such as Amanoiwato. When the sun goddess Amaterasu withdraws (Anima), we realize what was missing and understand deeply what is of real value to us. We need to accept this death and rebirth process as a system.

If suicidal patients understand their suicidal fantasy is just a part of the psyche’s system, there is more chance to prevent their attempts.

In summary, these are important points to wounded Anima rebirth.

- 1) Form a supporting group around the patients.
- 2) Dancing, singing, and music are essential.
- 3) Accept this death and rebirth cycles as a natural processes.
- 4) When suicidal patients find meaning in their suffering, it will become their hope.

5. Summary

In this presentation, I brought one way of prevent suicidal dynamics by setting a dramatic group. It is not easy to facilitate a suicidal patient to a group setting.

But if it succeeds, it helps a great deal.

Bibliography

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