

**Embracing Ignorance, Chance, and the Opposites:
The Coincidentia Oppositorum through Cusanus, Jung, and Morin**
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A profound shift in human consciousness is occurring. Jean Gebser called it the mutation from the Deficient Rational to the Integral stage of consciousness. Marilyn Ferguson referred to the shift as the Aquarian Conspiracy. Carl Jung, if pressed, may have called it the *unus mundus*, or One World. Teilhard de Chardin would have used the term Omega Point. Edgar Morin said that humanity was entering the Planetary Age and embracing Complexity. Thomas Berry claimed that the Cenozoic era is ending and the Ecozoic beginning. Whatever term one chooses, one could view the shift as having an essentially alchemical nature, in that a transformation is taking place that seems to have no traceable causality, but seems to be due to certain combinations of elements and their resultant (but unpredictable) transmutations. Morin said, “Humanity is caught in a tragic and uncertain struggle in which symptoms of death and birth wrestle and fuse with one another. A dead past refuses to die, and a future is stuck in the throes of labor.” (Morin, 1999, pg. 76) Aside from his prophetic account of the current state of human affairs, Morin captures, in this quote, the very foundation of humankind’s existential quandary – the clash of opposites in an otherwise unified cosmos. How can one be both finite and infinite; simultaneously living and dying; spirit and matter? Philosophers throughout the ages have attempted to transcend the opposites, and though the contents of the arguments have changed, the spiritual tenor has not. The concept of grappling with the opposites has had many names – the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the *conjunctio oppositorum*, and the *complexio oppositorum* – but I believe that, within the current shift in consciousness, the *goal* will have changed from something spiritual or metaphysical to something more

pragmatic. I do not believe that the fruit of the argument will terminate in some version of eternal rapture, but in the acceptance of the *oppositorum*'s role in the evolution of consciousness as a process as opposed to an endpoint. Edinger claimed, "The opposites are truly the dynamo of the psyche. They are the motor, they're what keep the psyche alive." (Edinger, 1994, pg. 12) Edinger's perspective, in this case, is through the lens of the individual, but one could apply the same idea to the collective psyche.

Humankind is now faced with paradoxes of incredible existential importance: we have created technologies which have enabled us to see the outermost reaches of the cosmos and, at the same time, are destroying our own planet; we can view the natural world in both grand systems and minute atomic detail, but in so doing have removed ourselves from its very vitality; nations of incredible wealth have been born all over the globe, but only at the expense of the impoverished periphery. These are opposites of a most immediate sort. We desperately need a thinking that transcends itself. We need a thinking that incorporates the mystical, the magical, *and* the logical/rational. We can no longer afford to deny the existence of the numinous in our hyper-rational attempts to conquer the unpredictability of nature. We must embrace the opposites, embrace chance, and embrace our ignorance as a starting point for the next phase of our evolution as a species.

Embracing Ignorance

"I show at the outset that learned ignorance has its basis in the fact that the precise truth is inapprehensible." (Nicolas of Cusa)

Nicolas of Cusa begins *De Docta Ignorantia* by likening an inscribed polygon to an inscribing circle. He says, "The more angles the inscribed polygon has the more

similar it is to the circle. However, even if the number of its angles is increased *ad infinitum*, the polygon never becomes equal [to the circle] unless it is resolved into an identity with the circle.” (Cusa, 1981, pg.8) This type of asymptotic logic is key to Cusanus’ approach to truth. The stage was set for Cusanus’ thinking four hundred years earlier by a Benedictine monk named Anselm. Famed for his proof of the existence of God as “a being than which nothing greater can be conceived”, Anselm transcended experiential and rational thought by bringing into question the very nature of thinking itself. Though Anselm, perhaps, did not fully realize the limitations of attempting to attain the infinite through finite means, his true genius shone forth in his attempt to reconcile the two prevailing systems of thought at the time – the Platonic (the universals are real) and the Aristotelian (the universals are mere names). “To Anselm the most natural kind of thinking is that which does not lose itself amid the emptiness of mere discourse or let itself be confined by representations, but rises to the essential.” (Jaspers, 1966, pg. 22) In the following expression of Anselm’s argument, object and thought are brought into direct contradiction so that the thinking itself is transcended:

If I think of the being beyond which no greater is thinkable as non-existent, by that same token I have not thought of the greatest thinkable being. As soon as I conceive of the greatest that can be thought as existing only in my idea, it also vanishes in my idea; it is no longer the greatest. Either I must abandon the idea, or I must conceive of its contents as real. (Jaspers, 1966, pg. 5)

Where Anselm attempts to transcend logical object thinking (God is or God is not), one is left with the feeling that his proof takes on the quality of a prayer or an invocation.¹ But while stretching his own limitations of thought to encompass and embrace the infinite he

¹ See Jaspers, page 8, part 6 – “*Teach my heart where and how it may seek thee.*” “*I was created to see thee, and not yet have I done that for which I was made.*”

opened the door to a more profound, thorough, system of thought based on a quite opposite assumption: God is *and* is not.

In a vision of prayer, Nicolas of Cusa saw God as being surrounded by a great wall “girt round by the coincidence of contradictories.” He said,

The spirit of discursive reason guards the door, and unless he be vanquished, the way in will not lie open, Thus it is beyond the coincidence of contradictories that Thou mayest be seen. That which seems impossible is necessity itself... This is why for him who approaches Thee, they meet in the wall surrounding the place where Thou abidest in coincidence. (Jaspers, 1966, pg. 33)

From this rather Kafkaesque starting point we can see that the only way to come to *any* understanding of the divine is to be willing to fully abandon what one thinks one knows. In his discussion, Cusanus translates “that which nothing greater can be conceived” to the coincidence of the Absolute Minimum and the Absolute Maximum. This pair of opposites becomes the substance upon which his whole system is built. Proceeding through a series of brilliant proofs – from impossible and infinite triangles coinciding with infinite lines, to the coincidence of an infinite triangle and a circle – Cusanus leads the reader, eventually, to the infinite circle which he likens to the Absolute Maximum. The infinite circle, he claims, is “infinitely more one, or more identical, than any oneness expressible and apprehensible by us. For the identity in an infinite circle is so great that it precedes all oppositions. For in an infinite circle *other* and *different* are not opposed to identity.” (Cusa, 1981, pg. 35) In the context of time, past becomes future, future becomes present, and all become one eternity – beginning and end meeting in oneness. The infinite circle is the perfect representation for the Maximum as its center is everywhere and its circumference is nowhere. By taking a circle to its Maximum, to

infinity, each part of the circle therefore becomes identity – its diameter, its circumference and its center – and loses its separateness.

It is the Beginning of all things, because it is the center; it is the End of all things, because it is the circumference; it is the Middle of all things, because it is the diameter. It is the efficient Cause, since it is the center; it is the formal Cause, since it is the diameter; it is the final Cause, since it is the circumference. It bestows being, for it is the center; it regulates being, for it is the diameter; it conserves being, for it is the circumference.
(Cusa, 1981, pg. 36)

Within the space of one paragraph, Cusanus embraces both Platonic and Aristotelian thought, while, simultaneously, pushing past the limits of human understanding, and pointing to divine revelation. Modern cosmologists struggle to comprehend the very same findings embedded in the story of the Big Bang and the expanding universe – all of creation proceeded from an enfolded Singularity, whose existence was everywhere and nowhere. From any point in the universe, all matter is expanding rapidly from that point; therefore the center of the universe is all points in the universe simultaneously and its periphery extends to infinity. How do we begin to comprehend this level of reality?

Cusanus might say that we begin by realizing that there exists a contracted Maximum within each of us – that for any understanding, there must be contracted *seeds* of the essence of the thing understood within the intellect – and so we begin by looking inside. “Universals exist contractedly in the intellect before the intellect unfolds them by outward signs for them – unfolds them through understanding, which is its operation. For it can understand nothing which is not already contractedly in it as it.” (Cusa, 1981, pg. 75) But it is only through learned ignorance that one may realize the intellect’s infinite immortality. “Since the intellect’s desire does not come to an end, the intellect – on the

basis of its temporally insatiable desire – apprehends itself as beyond corruptible time and as immortal.” (Cusa, 1981, pg. 148)

It is important to keep in mind that it is not through reason (*ratio*) that the incomprehensible is made comprehensible but through the *intellect*. Reason requires categories, comparisons, and distinctions for it to function properly, but “the absolute cannot be adequately conceived of in rational categories, but only in the *coincidentia oppositorum*; and yet the moment the absolute itself is expressed in words, it is reduced to rational opposites.” (Jaspers, 1966, pg. 35) The distinction between *reason* and *intellect* is an important one for Cusanus - by *intellect* he is pointing to something beyond the brain. For him, the work was not about flattening his experience to a two-dimensional plane where it could be discerned and apprehended. To interpret his work in this way would be missing the point – which was full *participation* with the *mysterium tremendum*. In this way Cusanus was more a phenomenologist², and thereby a product of the Middle Ages, than the type of *rationalist* who would appear just around the corner in the Renaissance, leading to the extreme dualism of the Enlightenment. To examine Cusanus simply in light of his mathematics and geometry, even his theology, would not be doing justice to the level of complexity he contemplated. A careful study of Cusanus’ work will reveal a thinker who did not fall into dualism (finite/infinite, spirit/matter), and did not dispose of difference through some sort of convenient holism.

The relation between God and the world, as conceived by Cusanus, is dominated by this fundamental idea: The bottomless gulf between the infinite and the finite is bridged by the idea that the finite participates in the infinite. Plato speaks of participation (*methexis, participatio*), of how indefinite Becoming participates in the eternal ideas. Participation means

² By *phenomenologist*, I am not referring to the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, et al, but to a thinker concerned with *experience* above all.

to be an image, i.e. to be informed by an Idea. Everything that the world is or that is in the world is, in so far as it is, an image of the original Form. (Jaspers, 1966, pg. 87)

Though in some ways a man *out of time*, Cusanus was a man *of his time* and therefore thoroughly steeped in the European Christian tradition. Therefore, God, Christ, and the Trinity remained the basis for all of his work throughout his life. To the post-modern mind, this could be off-putting, possibly even to the point of utter dismissal, because, from the post-modern perspective, God has become a rather impotent starting point. I would suggest, however, taking a more phenomenologist stance. If one reads *De Docta Ignorantia*, not to *understand* the arguments or even to follow the logic, but to *experience* the tremendous power of going deeply into the opposites, one will surely begin to feel the stirrings of awe, wonder, humility, and even humor regarding our limited understanding of all things divine. Cusanus *participated* in the mysteries of the *coincidentia*, and though a few centuries of flattening, dualism, and reason took Western culture onto a detour that would bear the fruits of modern science and the schism of body, mind, and soul, the spirit of his work was not lost. It would go underground with the Rosicrucians, reappear again in German Romanticism, and then, rise to the surface, more fully realized, in the twentieth century through the work of Carl Jung.

Carl Jung: Embracing the Opposites



“The ego keeps its integrity only if it does not identify with one of the opposites, and if it understands how to hold the balance between them. This is possible only if it remains conscious of both at once.” (Carl Jung)

Where Cusanus explored the inner experience of the opposites by projecting them upon the abstractions of math, geometry, and religious experience, Jung uses alchemical symbolism to explore the entity manifested by successfully uniting the opposites – Consciousness. The process of alchemy represents, for Jung, a path to wholeness. He sees the process as pointing to the Self as a *complexio oppositorum*. Though extremely difficult to pin down, and not the main topic of this paper, Jung uses the term Self “to designate the totality of man, the sum total of conscious and unconscious existence.” (Jung, 1966, pg. 100) Psychologists in Freud and Jung’s time asserted the presence of a *limen*, or a threshold between the conscious and unconscious. Hence the term: *subliminal*. According to Edinger, “The world has to be rent asunder and the opposites must be separated, in order to create space in which the human conscious ego can exist.” (1994, pg. 12) This motif appears in creation myths the world over. The Book of Genesis is a beautiful illustration of the division of the One into the Many – light and dark, water and land, man and woman. Even forming Adam from the mud of the Earth and breathing life into him via the Spirit could be interpreted as a separation of human consciousness from world/Gaia consciousness.

Medieval alchemists were attempting, through their work, to create a *unio mentalis* – a reunion of human consciousness with divine consciousness - an interior oneness. To the modern mind this could be interpreted as the union of the conscious mind with the unconscious. Rationalism, being the realm of light and reason, pushed the unconscious further into darkness. The modern human, swept up in the zeitgeist of the

era, slipped into a solipsistic struggle with duality, where the tremendous power of symbolism, myth, and dream has manifested into a nightmare of global collapse, psychopathology, and neurosis. As opposed to modern times, the medieval alchemist could plainly see that events could occur simultaneously with no physical causality (what Jung would call “synchronicity”, what in physics would be called the quantum). A symbol was not simply a disembodied sign, but an entity that *is* what it represents.

According to Jung,

For a man of those times there was no intellectual difficulty in postulating a ‘truth’ which was the same in God, in man, and in matter. With the help of this idea he could see at once that the reconciliation of hostile elements and the union of alchemical opposites formed a ‘correspondence’ to the *unio mentalis* which took place simultaneously in the mind of man, and not only man but in God (‘that he may be one in All’)
(Jung, 1970, pg. 470)

The difference between modern people and the people of the Middle Ages that I am attempting to illustrate here is one of great importance in coming to an understanding of how rational Western consciousness has lost a sense of connection to the *mysterium tremendum*. Through its reliance upon empiricism, the relationship between phenomena has become like so many billiard balls rattling around upon a flattened plane of existence. The mystery of the *coniunctio* has been submerged and all of those aspects of it we wish to deny are now in the realm of the shadow. Jung believed that by accessing the unconscious, and thereby owning one’s shadow, one could activate great psychic healing. He said, “If only a world-wide consciousness could arise that all division and all fission are due to the splitting of opposites in the psyche, then we would know where to begin.”
(Edinger, 1994, pg. 25) Edinger added to this,

These individuals with insight into their own actions are those who have, to a greater or lesser extent, experienced the *coniunctio*. They are carriers of the opposites. If society is to be redeemed, I think it will be done through the cumulative effect of such individuals. And when enough individuals carry the consciousness of wholeness, the world itself will become whole. (Edinger, 1994, pg. 25-26)

The Mysterium Coniunctionis is based upon an arcane collection of ten pictures from an alchemical text called *Rosarium philosophorum*. For my purposes I would like to start at picture five which is shown at the beginning of this section. But to summarize briefly what has come before we'll take a quick glance at pictures one through four:

- 1) The Mandala Fountain – This picture is really outside the sequence in a way. It represents the *prima material* and the *ultima material* – so both ends of the process. It is likened to the primordial One (which is not considered a number as counting starts with having more than one). “Psychologically it would signify the foundation of the psyche prior to the birth of the ego.” (1994) So no real independent consciousness exists here.
- 2) Emergence of the Opposites – “This represents the *separatio* corresponding to the original act of creation that separated light from darkness... consciousness has been born, consciousness means human beings.” (1994)
- 3) Stripped for Action – The opposites are actively pursuing a relationship. They have been stripped to their “naked truth”.
- 4) Descent into the Bath – The couple is now united by the medium of water. “They have begun a state of *mutual solutio*.... *Solutio* is an image of a descent into the unconscious that has the effect of dissolving the solid ordered structure of the ego. For the alchemist, the *solutio* meant the return of differentiated matter to its original undifferentiated state, to the *prima material*.” (1994) This is the symbol for rebirth.

5) Union, Manifestation of the Mystery – If one had a map of the evolution of consciousness in the West, this is where we might find the arrow with the words “You are here”. Our ability to hold onto our dualistic, rational view of the world and our place in it has been shaken both on the microcosmic and the macrocosmic levels. On the macro, one can no longer draw any delineation between space and time. On the micro, all conceptions of Newtonian causality have been shattered by quantum physics. What we assumed were the building blocks of all matter have turned out to be a never-ending series of smaller substances with greater amounts of empty space. Our manifest reality is basically at war with a new emerging paradigm; what we once held as opposites are melding in some bizarre coupling that is beyond our understanding. The next card is called “*In the Tomb*”. It is the image of the *mortificatio* – death. The ego has been dealt a fatal blow. “Because when the opposites are united and when one sees behind the mechanism of the opposites, then the dynamo of the psyche is broken.” (1994) What does this imply on a collective level? In my opinion, it means that the prevailing Cartesian paradigm must die in order to give birth to something new. We see the struggles of death throes all around us: huge monetary bailouts for a capitalistic system that is hobbling on its last legs, catastrophic effects of climate change, and the use of more technology to fix problems created by technology, are among the most dire symptoms. Finding a way out is like traversing a Celtic knot – we either find ourselves hopelessly lost, or back where we started. According to Edinger, “Commonly (the fifth step) would be the cut-off, the place of the short-circuit, and there’d be no going on to Stage 6 but rather a reversion to Stage 1.” (1994)

We stand poised in this 10th year into the 21st century at the brink of great change. What it will entail on our part is as yet unknown. Fortunately some of the groundwork has been laid. Edgar Morin has provided the world with an elegant and humble method for entering this new era of the Manifestation of the Mystery – Complexity.

Morin: Embracing Chance

“One must understand that, as everything that lives is bound to die, each culture is worthy of living but must know how to die.” (Edgar Morin)

As I mentioned earlier, the two main breaches of the scientific paradigm in the 20th century cannot be understated: In microphysics we lost the interdependence of subject and object, and in its place have arisen randomness, a de-reification of matter, and (most importantly for this topic) the eruption of logical contradiction in empirical description. Emerging in macrophysics is the unity of space and time. We can infer from history that scientific paradigm shifts have not restricted themselves merely to the discipline of science, but have pervasively seeped into the collective consciousness of Western culture, which is now, for better or worse, global culture. There is barely a single area on the globe left unexplored and therefore touched by the West. Any area that is not being used to *house* Western culture is being used to feed it, clothe it, supply it, medicate it, and is therefore subsumed by it. When one also takes into consideration the fact that information itself can travel to the ends of the Earth in microseconds, we must come to the conclusion that we are truly living in a Planetary Age. The dominant western paradigm, however, is a far cry from planetary. Morin would call it a paradigm of simplicity. Morin says,

The paradigm of simplicity puts order in the universe and chases out disorder. Order is reduced to one law, one principle. Simplicity can see

either the one or the many, but can't see that the One is perhaps at the same time Many. The principle of simplicity either separates that which is linked (disjunction), or unifies that which is diverse (reduction). (Morin, 2008, pg. 39)

If 20th century science has taught us anything, it is that the universe is a trickster; its overriding laws forever escape our grasp. The idea that our existence is governed by something perfect and eternal – be it God or the laws of physics – is a powerful myth. As long as science denies its own mythology, it will continue to run blindly into the ineffable. We really have no choice but to eat what is on the table - the paradox of order and disorder – yet another *complexio oppositorum* - and embrace the qualities of chance and chaos as a natural part of the process.

Edgar Morin's method is far too complex to do justice in these few pages. We must therefore content ourselves with examining just a couple of key points. In Morin's work, the subject (which according to Kuhn is an inextricable part of any scientific process³) is recognized as reciprocal to its object so that "subject and object emerge like two ultimate, inseparable consequences of the relation between the self-organizing system and the eco-system." (Morin, 2008, pg. 23) From this stance the subject is immediately put into *relationship* with the object. In a sense the idea of subject and object disappear under this kind of scrutiny, as there can be no subject without an object, and therefore no object without a subject. It is the field of experience that begins to come into focus rather than elements of distinction. Morin goes beyond cybernetics and even systems thinking by using the them as platforms for more complex ways of approaching phenomena in terms of self-organization and relation of subject and object. In considering Morin's work it is important to keep in mind that he is not attempting to

³ See: *The Structure Of Scientific Revolutions*, by Thomas Kuhn.

offer up a “theory of everything”, he is simply giving us a roadmap in order to more effectively deal with what is already here. He says,

In one way I would say that the aspiration to complexity carries in it an aspiration to completeness, because we say that everything is interdependent and everything is multidimensional. But in another way, consciousness of complexity makes us understand that we can never escape uncertainty and we can never have total knowledge because ‘totality is nontruth’. (Morin, 2008, pg. 48)

The roadmap is more of a *strategy* than a *program*. A beautiful illustration of the difference between the two can be found in the world of the musical “compositions” of John Cage. The most infamous example of musical strategy verses musical program is his piece 4’33”, during which the pianist seats himself at his piano, lifts the keyboard cover, places his hands in his lap and waits... for four minutes and thirty-three seconds; after which he closes the keyboard cover, stands up, and takes his leave. The “music” is the uncomfortable, confused sounds of the crowd waiting for something to happen. By setting up certain parameters, Cage allowed space for something unexpected to happen. From the perspective of someone anticipating a series of notes, played in some sequence, with some level of melodic/harmonic activity and structure, 4’33” is simply noise. To Cage, however, it was relatively *predictable* noise that had its *own* structure, an organic structure defiant of any programmatic style of music. With this in mind, I’d like to look at three basic principles of Morin’s system of complexity – the dialogic, organizational recursion, and the holographic principle - and explore how they relate to the *complexio oppositorum*.

The principle of the dialogic is based upon the idea that there are always, in any given system, at least two valid logics at work. These two logics are not simply

juxtaposed to one another but are actually necessary to one another. The current theory of cosmic evolution clearly is dialogical: both order and disorder have been instrumental in both creation and destruction. From Brian Swimme's perspective, it takes the cataclysm of a star giving up its life (disorder) for life to have emerged at all (order). Morin says, "Order and disorder are two enemies: one abolishes the other but at the same time, in certain cases, they collaborate and produce organization and complexity. The dialogic principle allows us to maintain duality at the heart of unity." (Morin, 2008, pg. 49)

Organizational recursion unifies the two principles of product and producer. Here Morin uses the concept of a whirlpool, where in every instant the action of the whirlpool allows the whirlpool itself to remain in existence. He also uses the illustration of the individual and society: society creates individuals through structures like education, culture, and knowledge; but individuals, in turn, create the society which then feeds back upon them with its influences. "The recursive idea is, therefore, an idea that has broken away from the linear idea of cause and effect, of product/producer, or structure/superstructure, because everything that is product comes back on what produces it in a cycle that is itself self-constituting, self-organizing, and self-producing." (Morin, 2008, pg. 50)

The holographic principle is inextricably linked to both the dialogic and recursive principles. It states basically that the whole is in the part *and* the part is in the whole. The old adage - "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts", is transcended by the holographic principle. The adage implies a certain linear, evolutionary style of thought that still derives its logic from a Cartesian worldview. Morin likens it to an idea

formulated by Pascal: “I cannot conceive the whole without conceiving the parts and I cannot conceive the parts without conceiving the whole.” Morin says, “This apparently paradoxical idea immobilizes the linear mind.” (Morin, 2008, pg. 50) Meditating on this quote reveals both the dialogic and recursive principles, and their interweaving.

In studying Morin’s work, one feels the expansiveness of the complex unity of all phenomena. One feels a sense of freedom and transcendence rather than the confines of a grid of causality. “Every system of thought is open and contains a breach, a gap in the opening itself. But we have the possibility to hold meta-points of view. The meta-point of view is only possible if the observer-conceiver integrates himself or herself into the observation and the conception.” (Morin, 2008, pg. 51) Systems open to systems open to systems – ad infinitum. There is duality at the heart of unity and unity at the heart of duality. This is the *essence* of the *complexio oppositorum*. Morin’s system of thought gives us a way in, some rules to play the game, a way to embrace what we would normally perceive as chance operations or chaos, and a way *out* of the atomistic paradigm which has captivated the West for so long and at such cost. There is a caveat however.

A paradigm, although it must be formulated by someone – by Descartes, for example – is fundamentally, the product of an entire cultural, historical, civilizational development. The paradigm of complexity will come from the collection of new conceptions, new visions, new discoveries, and new reflections that will align and come together... One can be the Saint John the Baptist of the paradigm of complexity and announce it is coming without being its Messiah. (Morin, 2008, pg. 51-52)

You Are Here: 

Admittedly, the precipice of birth and death is far from where most of us would choose to be perched. It is, however, the truth of the matter and we can choose to be stupidly happy - denying or justifying all that we see and hear, or we can choose to ride

the collective wave, and surf it, rather than be swept away by it. Western culture has projected its collective identity onto a false paradigm. That paradigm has been slowly crumbling for at least the past 100 years. It is like the painful termination of a long and “blissful” relationship, which was based not on honest and healthy reflection but upon unconscious, unhealthy projection. “If one’s life has resided in a particular external object and then that life, that energy, leaves the object, then nothing is left of that connection. But then the missing life has to be located and it’s rediscovered within. The projection has a chance to be integrated.” (Edinger, 1994, pg. 70) When one wakes up to the falsity of one’s projections, it can be literally a soul-shattering experience. Everything that one believed about oneself and the other is suddenly revealed as a fiction that one based one’s whole life upon. What’s worse is that through one’s co-dependent merging one has lost one’s identity.

Let us return now to the Rosarium pictures, particularly *Step 7: Separation of Soul and Body*. Edinger says, “As long as we have pieces of our psyche deposited, like bank deposits actually, in various objects or activities or people {or paradigms}⁴ in our outside environment... and one of those containers of one’s psyche dies, one goes through a grief reaction because a piece of one’s self dies at the same time.” (Edinger, 1994, pg.76) I believe, as do others such as Christopher Bache and Joanna Macy, that the collective psyche is grieving – but perhaps we are grieving not only for humanity and the biosphere, but also for the loss of our paradigm – a paradigm that had become an integral part of our collective identity. The next picture holds some hope though: in *Picture 8: Gideon’s Dew Drips from the Cloud*, a purification takes place. The story of this card is based

⁴ Author’s note.

upon a verse from Judges where Gideon is asked by Yahweh to lead an insurrection against the Midianites and deliver Israel to freedom. Gideon asks for proof of God's allegiance by a sign: that dew is left only on a fleece, but the ground around the fleece be left dry. Jung interprets Gideon's dew as "a sign of divine intervention, it is the moisture that heralds the return of the soul." (Edinger, 1994, pg. 84) Cusanus likens this to the Christ event, "And this (resurrection) was not at all possible apart from death. For how could what is mortal have put on immortality otherwise than by being stripped of mortality? How would it be free of mortality except by paying the debt of death?" (Cusa, 1981, pg. 129)

From purification, we arrive at *Picture 9: Reunion of Soul and Body*. The illustration by William Blake is a lovely representation:



Perhaps through making transparent our deep interconnectedness to our cosmos, our planet, and one another; through coming to terms with the infinitude and ultimate complexity of the design of existence; allowing synchronicity, chance, and ignorance a place at the table of our thinking, we can purify the death of the fragmented ego and allow ourselves to reconnect with our body and with our soul. The last picture in the Rosarium series is number ten – *Resurrection of the United Eternal Body*. According to Edinger, "It's a picture of the third stage of the *coniunctio*...It (is) a kind of cosmic

union... the idea that the whole cosmos is a simple organic process.” (Edinger, 1994, pg. 96)

I believe that we have come face to face with a God-image of our own creation and have been receiving hints of a grand nature that it is a false God. Whether these hints are from our dreams, the collective unconscious, or from the planet, matters not at this point in history. As Jung says,

It is the task of the conscious mind to understand these hints. If this does not happen, the process of individuation will nevertheless continue. The only difference is that we become its victims and are dragged along by fate towards that inescapable goal which we might have reached walking upright, if only we had taken the trouble and been patient enough to understand in time the meaning of the numina that cross our path. (Jung, 1973, pg.98)

There is no quick fix to the array of problems we now face as a suffering species inhabiting a suffering planet, but I do believe that engaging the *oppositorum* offers a fruitful dialogue from which to begin.



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