

Eucalyptus rubida

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Left: August, and the wattles are a riot again. November
and the Bearded Orchid (below) is flowering.



Soul of the Earth

Have you ever wept with joy or compassion for the beautiful world you find yourself in? Notice I used the word 'in', because truly we are in and amongst the world and not separate from it as some cosmologies would have it. And just how are we to consider ourselves 'in' the world?

Quite a number of previous essays have looked at what we are to make of human consciousness, and some have explored notions of a greater consciousness in which we participate. I would like to look again at the ancient notion of the *anima mundi* (Latin for *soul of the world*) and Jung's collective unconsciousness.

There is increasing evidence that the human is experiencing a spiritual homecoming to our mother Earth. It has been a long journey for Homo sapiens since we left our original Eden-like consciousness many thousands of years ago, when we saw ourselves as one with the natural world, and virtually ego-less. It has been a hero's journey into desert and wilderness, marked by epic experiences across cultures as our ancestors struggled to cope with the emerging ego-consciousness with which the human was gradually endowed. It was only about 40,000 years ago when, science tells us, the human pre-frontal cortex of the brain allowed us to develop language, and thus a new way to deal with the exciting experience of human mindfulness.

Once again, and this is an idea I return to frequently, evolution has a seamlessness about it, in that novelty does not arise from nothing, but gradually emerges from a primordial state. In other words, the experience of the human is continuous (ontologically) with the experience of the world. Our experience is the external manifestation of the 'innerness' of the universe.

I do not need to remind some readers of the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin about the inner aspect of all matter. Readers of previous essays (see [Rubida no.41](#)) might recall the title of Jean Gebser's magnum opus *The Ever-Present Origin*. We have already referred to the collective unconscious of Jung. I have previously noted the implicate and explicate orders of quantum physicist David Bohm, and how he continued the ideas of mystic St Nicholas of Cusa's ideas about the *implicatio* and *explicatio* of the divine (see [Rubida No.40](#)). Readers of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme will remember the idea that we are the universe come into conscious awareness. Process theologians like Alfred North

Whitehead, Charles Hartsthorne and John Cobb have written about the notion of a primordial (transcendent) godhead and well as a consequent (immanent) godhead. Rupert Sheldrake has suggested the idea of morphic fields which manifest themselves in a species behaviour.

Maybe it is the time to look at another implication (pun not intended) of this style



of thinking. To put this on a temporary theological level, I think we are on the cusp of a rediscovery of the Gods. As our human consciousness developed through its Archaic, Magic, and Mythical stages (see [Rubida No. 41](#) article on the website), we - the universe - have been a participant in the process by which the core and ground of our being has come into conscious self-awareness. We are the Great Soul of the World come into ego-awareness. It is this inner divine-ness that we are dealing with all the time. And it is this divine realm that is continuous with, and the ever-present source of what we call our life.

I simply must quote here a favourite passage from Teilhard de Chardin which to me shows this great mystic gradually drawing aside the veil of mystery which surrounds us.

..And so, for the first time in my life perhaps (although I am supposed to meditate every day!) I took the lamp and, leaving the zone of everyday occupations and relationships where everything seems clear, I went down into my innermost self, to the deep abyss whence I feel dimly that

my power of action emanates. But as I moved further and further away from the conventional certainties by which my social life is superficially illuminated, I became aware that I was losing contact with myself. At each step of the descent a new person was disclosed within me of whose name I was no longer sure, and who no longer obeyed me. And when I had to stop my exploration because the path faded from beneath my steps, I found a bottomless abyss at my feet, and out of it came - arising I know not from where - the current which I dare to call my life. (The Divine Milieu)

Even Vatican II speaks of the inner dimension:
God dwells in the innermost depths of the human heart and awaits our discovery of him there. (Gaudium et Spes)

And what do the poets say in their vision of the unity of things. Rilke speaks of the shepherd:

*With slow and steady strides, his posture is pensive
and, as he stands there, noble. Even now a god might
secretly slip into this form and not be diminished. (Trilogy 3)*

David Whyte in his *Self Portrait* hints at the mystery of which we are speaking.

*. I want to know if you are willing
to live, day by day, with the consequence of love
and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat.*

I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even the gods speak of God.

What are the implications of such thinking? Put quite simply - no man is an island - we are not alone - we all come from the very same source - the kingdom of God is within. We try our best to describe this in words, and always fall short of the task. Pondering this in a recent visit to the Flinders Ranges, where ancient nature is eloquent, the following lines arrived for me.

The Secret

*Time is not something you can buy in a shop.
Time is something you use when running a race.
It is always there, waiting for you;
It is free, and anybody can have it;
Time is the space where you become;
Time and space is a happy marriage
And the offspring is now,
Is you, holding in one moment
The origin and destiny of the universe;
But holding it sacredly, lovingly, pregnantly,
This is the secret.*

Trevor Parton