

Chapter Two

Liberating Soul Sparks: Psyche, Classroom, and Community

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[A Hasidic rabbi tells his son's friend] A man is born into this world with only a tiny spark of goodness in him. The spark is God, it is the soul: the rest is ugliness and evil, a shell. The spark must be guarded like a treasure, it must be nurtured, it must be fanned into flame. It must learn to seek out other sparks, it must dominate the shell. Anything can be a shell, Reuven. Anything. Indifference, laziness, brutality, and genius. Yes, even a great mind can be a shell and choke the spark.

Chaim Potok, 263

My path/my location: When I was fourteen years old my parents decided to send me to a private school. The only non-boarding option was a nearby Friends' school. They knew very little about Quakerism and certainly did not choose the school on that basis. To their increasing dismay, I discovered a deep resonance with Quaker values of simplicity, silent prayer, and meditation, the following of leadings, nonviolence, and community service. Alongside these interests, my studies of depth psychology, particularly Jungian and archetypal psychology, and liberation psychologies have evolved.

At present, I coordinate community and ecological fieldwork and research within the masters and doctoral programs in depth psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute and teach courses on the interpenetration of psyche, culture, and spirituality. I think it is less likely that my early exposure to Quakerism *caused* my perception of the interpenetration of these domains and more likely that there are deeply resonant notes in Quakerism, depth psychology, liberation

psychologies, and the practices that issue from them: mystical prayer, depth psychotherapy, participatory research, and liberatory education. Depth psychology refers to the various theories and practices that are based on theories of the unconscious, including psychoanalysis, Jungian, Adlerian, Reichian, and Lacanian work.

In my work as a depth psychology educator with adult learners I continue to try to become aware of the pedagogical practices/habits that choke the divine sparks in myself, each student, our classroom learning community, and the work in the wider world that we are each led to. I am in search of practices and theories that—with grace—have a liberating potential for the soul sparks that are gifted to us, that satisfy their desire for the nurture of being caringly fanned into flame. Formal education has too often choked such sparks, isolating the intellect from the heart and the soul, self from other, and self from community. One way I have come to think about my work of reintegrating these domains as a teacher is through the eyes of a creation story that influenced both Hasidism and Quakerism. It has elements familiar to us from Heraclitus, Stoic philosophy, Gnosticism, and Meister Eckhart (see Scholem 1946, 1965).

Howard Brinton (1952) traces Quakers' use of divine or Inward Light imagery but observes that Quakers have not used the image of sparks so familiar to Hasidism. He interprets this as having to do with a sense of the divine as complete in each manifestation, not as shattered or fragmented. "Spark or Sparkle might imply that the Light was divided, a part being in one person and part in another. There was but one Light. The nearer all come to it, the nearer they come to one another, like radii of a circle when they approach the center, to use a figure from Plotinus" (21–22). We do see in Quaker writings, however, a concern with shedding that which hides the light in oneself, and seeking the hidden light in others.

In 1492 the Jews were exiled from Spain. In the aftermath of this tragic dispersion, the kabbalist Isaac Luria (1534–1572), whose family had been forced from Spain to Safed, Palestine, brought forth this creation myth, drawn between the poles of exile and redemption. The German mystic Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) studied and referred to it. George Fox (1624–1691), the founder of Quakerism, read Boehme with great interest. The vision it presents of spiritual life as a process of co-creation with God is deeply resonant with Quaker faith and practice as well as with Quaker imagery of perceiving and liberating the divine light in each and every aspect of creation.

In the Beginning

God was everywhere. It is said that in order to create, God had to contract and concentrate his being, to inhale as it were, so that space for creation could arise. Just as a garden holds the smell of jasmine, even when the plant is removed, this space of potential creation was suffused with the light of God's being. Creation occurred with a series of inhalations and exhalations. The emanations of God's being first created Adam Kadmon, the primordial man. From Adam's eyes, mouth, nostrils, and ears the light of God's being streamed forth. This streaming created vessels of light in which more divine light could be contained and differentiated. Initially this process went well, filling three vessels. But then, as the divine light came from Adam's eyes, it suddenly surged forth with great intensity, breaking the fourth and the earlier vessels, shattering them, and dispersing their light into all corners of the world. Both light and evil were strewn. The shards of light that lodged in each and every being and thing were hidden by shells or husks, *keliypoht*, that must be removed for the light to shine forth.

Quakers experience this divine light or "that of God" within each being. They often speak of this light as a divine seed. In interactions with others, Quakers attempt to orient toward this divinity within the other. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, instructs, "So feel the seed of God in every particular...and then ye come to be the bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" (Epistle 99, quoted in Brinton, *Ethical Mysticism* 34). This practice, says Fox, allows us to "answer that of God in every one" (quoted in *Faith and Practice* 66).

Through the eyes of Luria's story we can experience the way in which creation is unfinished and, thus, ongoing. This ongoing work of creation is a work of *restoration*, of liberating the hidden sparks of exiled divine light. Once these sparks are gathered, it is believed that messianic time can begin, a time of peace, plenty, justice, love, and at-home-ness. In other words, creation was not finished by God as imaged in Genesis, with man and woman spoiling it, falling from a paradisiacal state. Creation was seen as continuing, requiring us for its fulfillment in ways particular to each of our beings. The restoration that Luria speaks of is not restoration to the past but toward the deeply desired Luria's myth works within an interdependent paradigm of the self, where there can be no final coming home for one until the divinity that has been hidden and exiled is liberated in each and gathered together.

In Quakerism this restoration is likened to mending a world that is tipped and refusing to act in ways that further rip the world, such as war and greedy accumulation of resources. William Penn, the Quaker founder of the Pennsylvania colony, put it this way: "True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavors to mend it" (quoted in Boulding 59).

Holy Converse, Dialogue

In *The Way of Man*, Martin Buber describes the Hasidic understanding that the world is an irradiation of God, with an independence of existence and striving. "It is apt always and everywhere," he says, "to form a crust around itself." In every thing and being beneath this crust or shell lies a divine spark. It is man's task to rejoin each spark with its Origin, a task which is achieved through "holy converse with the thing and using it in a holy manner" (56).

"Holy converse with the thing and using it in a holy manner" entails maintaining an awareness of that spark within each and relating to it in a sacred manner that mitigates against using the other for one's own sake regardless of the negative impact on the other. Quakers aspire to respect the sacred in each human. This has led to testimonies for peace with Native Americans during the colonial period; opposition to slavery, war, and capital punishment; testimonies for prison and mental institution reform; and many initiatives for education. Quakers have a long history of developing dialogical practices that steady interaction in a careful orientation toward the sacred. Notably, Quaker Meetings for Business are approached from this orientation, underscoring the continuity of prayer life with human interactions. Such an attitude has profound implications for dialogue in the classroom, for the dialogical hosting of one's "inner" and imaginal life, and for participatory research and work that fosters cultural and ecological restoration. My life as a teacher feels like a search for an understanding and honoring of these implications, in both the practices I engage in and the theories I work with. First, classroom practice.

When sparks of soul are scattered throughout the classroom, a pedagogy based on *delivering* learning to students, what Paolo Freire calls a "banking model of education," causes further hiding and encasement of the sparks (1989: 72). A teacher who is seeking the sparks in her students must proceed humbly, holding an awareness of how students' projections onto her of greater expertise, intelligence, and value will silence their communion with their own

thoughts and experience and their expression of these in the classroom. Creating an undue focus on oneself as the teacher will also result in students turning a deaf ear to each other, falsely believing that fellow students have little of value to offer, a practice that further silences. Teachers are reluctant to yield space to what they cannot control and predict, partly due to their responsibility for the class. But it is only in such yielding that what has been silenced, marginalized, and unseen can venture forth into the community of learning. This does not mean that the teacher has nothing to share from her own years of learning and experience, but that she must take great care that this sharing opens the space for dialogue rather than closes it down. Too often teachers, like some parents, hold a narrow vision of how sparks manifest, subtly steering students into conformity with unspoken and unreflected-upon norms of their disciplines. There must be room made for students who disturb, who are interested in what others judge to be peculiar, who harbor unique perceptions and sensibilities that the classroom often fails to host. To foster a critical approach to the theories and practices within one's discipline is in the Quaker spirit. Quakerism arose as a critical witness to how the institutions and rituals of the Protestant Church at the time were mitigating against direct spiritual experience and the conduct of lives consistent with such experience. It has maintained its critical role within its own practice as well as with regard to society, allowing it to be in fertile dialogue with other spiritual traditions.

I am seeking a space for exploration and learning in which the not-yet-known can arise, where students will experience their thought growing in complexity and depth as they listen in deeply to the multiplicity of viewpoints present in their classroom. I feel the sweetness of satisfaction when I see their sadness at parting from each other, when they reflect on the profound gifts they have received from each other in the course of our learning together. I also feel joy as a teacher when, at the end of the three years of course work in our program, those initially silent, perhaps uncertain about their capacity for thought and expression, have found the area of study and practice they feel called to and have discovered how to lend their voice to it through being carefully listened into expression. I am thrilled to see how those students initially subtly devalued by others have become seen as teachers themselves and exhibit a glow from having their experience, thought, being, and calling recognized and valued. How do we begin to prepare the space for this?

“The thing is to fight with the text, even though loving it, no?”

I say that reading is not just to walk on the words, and it is not flying over the words either. Reading is rewriting what we are reading. Reading is to discover the connections between the text and the context of the text, and also how to connect the text/context with my context, the context of the reader. But for me, what is indispensable, is to be critical. Criticism creates the necessary intellectual discipline, asking questions to the reading, to the writing, to the book, to the text. We should not submit to the text or be submissive in front of the text. The thing is to fight with the text, even though loving it, no?

Paulo Freire, *A Pedagogy of Liberation* (1011 cf. q. on p.29)

Students first formally encounter our class together through the syllabus. They look for the reading and assignments that are due for the first class. They find this passage from Freire, giving a dialogical sense of reading, with the following assignment:

Begin a reading journal for this class with the following format. This journal will be a place for you to dialogue with aspects of the readings that you find interesting. For each of the authors you read each session (or reading), choose an idea that interests you and write where it leads you in your own thinking (in a page or two). Take Freire's words to heart! Each time we meet copies of this work will be collected at the beginning of class. They may be handwritten. I will not be reading and commenting on each one. The object of this assignment is twofold: to help you work through the readings in a systematic, timely, and thorough manner, and to help you be active in relationship to them—arguing, appreciating, showing the implications (personal and professional), figuring out what exactly rings true or false for you given your own experience, extending a theory into a different domain.

What I look for in the journals is whether a student is engaging the reading. I reflect back to them if they are just listing out the main points or staying on the surface of the reading. I cheer them on as they enter a dialogical back-and-forth with the author and the ideas, as they engage in seeking resonance and discord between their own knowings and experience and what is being presented theoretically.

This practice is resonant with Quakers' insistence that spiritual understanding is not to be accepted on faith from others in roles of authority but is to be sought through one's own direct personal experience. Unprogrammed or silent Meetings for Worship are unencumbered by ritual, sermons, already-written prayers, and gospel interpretations. Rather, a space is made “to wait upon the

Lord and enjoy his Presence” (Whiting, quoted in Brinton, *Ethical Mysticism* 6), to make a clearing in which the sacred can be intimately perceived in one's own experience.

“the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love”

Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (24)

My hope is that this initial direction regarding a dialogical stance toward the readings will be extended to students' relations to myself, other students, the ideas we are working with, and the communities where we practice. Sadly, most teachers and students meet together with a history of being wounded by educational practices. There must be room to acknowledge the legacy of our coming together, and to state our intention and our hope to create a safe *and* spirited space in which learning can take root. Despite years of asking for my classroom to be set up in a circle without a podium, this is never done, so I always arrive early and get my aerobic exercise by dragging the podium out of sight. It is as though the very fixtures of the classroom cannot believe that this representation of hierarchical education/knowing is really not needed. Oftentimes I do find the chairs in a circle, but there is the podium stuck in the circle as well!

For my first session with students in the fall I ask that they read about the process of dialogue and council in groups (see Bohm; Zimmerman and Coyle). These processes are similar to Quaker worship, sharing in their focus on deep listening, speaking from the heart, care toward tending the corporate body of the group, and welcoming what freely arises in a nonhierarchical environment of mutual respect and shared attention to the sacred. In worship sharing, a small group gathers to engage in silent Meeting for Worship together. A query is often given to orient reflection and prayer. Opportunity is given for each participant to share the fruit of his/her meditation. In this nonhierarchical fashion insight and inspiration are enjoyed.

In my classes, after some remarks on the practice of dialogue and council, we sit in council for an hour and a half. I stress that we are together not only to express our thoughts and feelings but to learn how to tend the thought of the group (see Bohm). To do this we must allow for ample silence between speakers so that what another has said can deeply enter us and so that we can listen closely to our own evolving thoughts and feelings. To allow for silence in which

to metabolize what has been shared makes it more likely that what will be said next will relate to what has come before. I suggest that we need to use discernment regarding when and how much to speak. The group as a whole cannot think well if it does not hear from all of its members.

The challenge for those of us who speak often and amply is to deepen our listening and our capacity for holding the spaciousness of silence. This will create room for voices and images that have a more difficult time emerging within the community. Those of us who tend toward silence must make a special effort to lend our thoughts and feelings to the group. M. Scott Peck says (in *Simkinson*) that the greatest sin against communication is to speak when you are not moved and to not speak when you are. To create safety so that what has been marginalized and silenced can emerge, the members need to deeply consider issues of confidentiality. They also need to be forewarned about suspending bad habits that mitigate against the deepening of dialogue, such as using the dialogue space to convince or persuade others, to prove oneself worthwhile, to defend one's own point of view, to derogate the other's point of view, to establish a cozy, polite atmosphere that pretends at agreement and suffocates difference, to air personal problems that are not relevant to the inquiry of the group, or to compete.

In council practice, a talking piece is passed around the circle. When it is in your hands, you may share with the group anything you are led to say, briefly and from the heart. You may also pass. When the talking piece is in the hands of others, you listen from the heart. There is no cross dialogue. Each person has a place and a time to share in the circle. A beauty of the dialogue group is that power is de-centered, delivered to the one with the talking piece, and then yielded.

This is their first chance as new graduate students to listen to their fellow students and to bring forth some things about themselves and the beginning of a graduate program that they wish others to know about themselves. Gradually, students begin to share their fears, self-doubts, and hopes for this experience of learning. One person voices years of discrimination as a Mexican American in school settings that sour his hopes and quicken his sense of vigilance. An older woman shares that she never spoke in her college classes years ago and that she holds a deep desire that she can come to value her own thoughts enough to share them. One student confides that she has a propensity to talk too much, particularly when anxious and insecure. She invites the class to gently interrupt

her if this begins to get in the way. This taste of council, which most classes decide to continue regularly on their own, is linked with the listening into diverse points of view within the classroom experience about to unfold. Students are cautioned against automatic distancing reactions of disagreement and dismissal and invited instead to draw closer to ideas and experiences they would ordinarily flee from or disparage. They are asked to listen in more closely to these and to treat them as potential teachers of areas they may understand least.

This practice is resonant with Quaker practices of tending corporate worship. Quakers attempt to discern whether their impulse to share in Meeting arises from a leading or not, and whether their sharing serves the larger worship body. Those who are listening do not respond directly to the speaker but hold in their own silence what has been offered. When this rhythmic process of silence, sharing, listening, and silence is sustained, a "gathered" Meeting may be experienced, where there is an experienced unity amidst the diversity present. This has been referred to as group mysticism. Friends are clear that the Meeting for Worship provides a crucial container for individual spiritual experience. The gathered attention and intention of the larger group help to steady the individual in his/her meditation, helping "the way to open," allowing the individual (and at times the group) to become clear about the path to be walked.

Margery Abbott relates that early Friends spoke of being "broken" in worship, meaning "self-will and self-deception were broken down by the work of the Light as they sat in silence. As a result their hearts were made tender toward God and one another." The gathered classroom reveals this tenderness, as students learn to listen each other into speech. It is as though the hard shell of the seed has been softened, allowing the small, green unfurled leaves within the seed to stretch out and begin to become themselves.

Just as I am trying to move the dialogical space from the practice of council into the business of the classroom, Quakers try to move prayerful silence from Meeting for Worship into the corporate handling of the Meeting's affairs. One implication of this is that all perspectives are invited when holding an item of business. Quaker Meetings slowly seek consensus in order to move forward. When there is none, the group continues to listen into the differences that inform it on a particular matter. While this can take great patience, it is a practice that avoids the violence of one point of view usurping another. One holds the conflict until "a way opens."

In the classroom we do not seek consensus, but we do want to hold difference with patience, hoping our careful being with it will allow it to offer its lessons to us. For instance, as we discuss the development of dialogical capacities in human development, we study research that looks at girls and women, boys and men. Pretty soon the distance between the class and the research dissolves, and members are sharing their own experiences of how gender acculturation has impacted dialogue in their lives. As emotions rise, some would like to reduce the complexity of experience to a simplistic formula or to change the subject. But as we allow the heat, we can find ourselves not resting on previous knowledge but actually searching for understandings that are new to us.

As we strengthen our capacities to engage in inner and outer dialogue, students study and engage in practices of appreciative inquiry, public conversation amidst divisive viewpoints, reconciliation work, and community visioning. Such work is aimed at holding a space where deep differences in perspective and experience can be hosted, while respect for common ground and humanity can be quickened. As we know, without careful attention to such divides, others can too easily be negated, leading to psychosocial conflict and violence. As the students relate together over their three years of coursework, experiences within their own group, as well as differences among themselves, can be fertile ground for learning these practices. The microcosm of the classroom contains the same racism, sexism, homophobia, competition between viewpoints, power struggles, and silencing of minority voices present in the larger society. When dialogue is available as a resource, such issues have hope for being brought to awareness and worked through.

The Slow Dilation of the Self: Experiencing the Path between Psyche and Culture

The ego's firmness has its virtues, but at some point we seek the slow dilation, to use another term of Whitman's, in which the ego enjoys a widening giv and take with the world and is finally abandoned in ripeness.

Lewis Hyde (17)

When I was a child there was a "sinkhole" on the edge of our yard. If you put sticks and stones in it one day, you could go back the next day and see that they had disappeared beneath the earth's skin. My mother told me that this

would be a good place to dig in order to get to China. As this idea—of going to China—appealed to me, I found myself digging in this hole over years, hoping that eventually I would be able to slip to the other side of the world.

As a Jungian-oriented therapist for over two decades, I witnessed many people slipping down through the hole of depression and other sufferings. Many did pass through the center of being and found the deep connection between so-called "inner work" and the "world work" they felt called to. But I must also share that this was not always the case. More times than I am comfortable with, "inner work" that was initially necessary transformed itself into a defense against deep participation with the world. Some became lost in a cul-de-sac where work with dream, image, and affect became ends in themselves, unrelated to the *anima mundi*, the world soul, of which they are a part. One of the reasons I am drawn to Quakers is the beauty of their rhythmic turning from inward to outward, a rhythm that dissolves these distinctions, allowing the experience of the "Inward Light" to bring them closer to others and the world. Insofar as they experience the Inward Light as one, the closer an individual becomes to it, the closer she becomes to others.

In Luria's creation story, he describes the necessity for two kinds of interrelated work: *tikein nefesh*, accomplished on a mystical plane through meditation and prayer, and *tikein olam*, accomplished on a worldly plane through relations with others and nature. *Tikein olam* can be translated as the restoration of the world. Neither was described as easy, as the sparks of the *anima mundi* are intertwined with and encased in evil. Quakerism recognizes "the *within* that is also the *beyond*," aspiring to the spiritual marriage Saint Teresa described as the union of pure spirit with the world of life around us (Brinton, *Ethical Mysticism* 36, 10).

I have come to believe that the use of inner work as a defense can sometimes mirror a lack of clarity within the various depth psychologies themselves about how the practice of *tikein nefesh* and *tikein olam* are connected. It is this connection that I want my students to experience so that they can feel the way in which "inner" and "outer" work are falsely divided by our Cartesian ways of constructing reality. Brinton suggests that the tension between reflection and action, between being and doing, arises in two strands of Christianity, one reflecting the Greek propensity to seek the Divine in the depths of the soul through contemplation and withdrawal, and the other mirroring the Hebraic

tradition's emphasis on action to bring about the kingdom of God on earth. He stresses that Quakerism combines these "two complementary movements, withdrawal to an inward Source of Truth and return to action in the world. Quakerism is both contemplative and active, both metaphysical and ethical" (58). Science rejected the idea and the experience of an ensouled cosmos. Strengthening the divide between internal and external, it banished to the realm of subjectivity all animating sparks. Depth psychology turned its awareness to this interior cosmos, strewn with sparks, voices, symptoms, sub-personalities, and complexes. Whenever these escaped their culturally sanctioned confines of interiority, the task became to "withdraw projections," to restore the sparks of soul to the interior where they now purportedly belonged.

Depth psychology has primarily focused on the inner work of how to withdraw or gather in scattered projections and how to work with multiplicity as it arises in intrapsychic experience. The stance that is taken in Jungian work to achieve the gathering together of what has been shattered and scattered is precisely the attitude that can be cultivated to do the work of *tikkun olam*, the restoration of the world.

James Hillman, the founder of the archetypal school of Jungian and depth psychology, asks us to imagine the *anima mundi* as "neither above the world encircling it as a divine and remote emanation of spirit, a world of powers, archetypes, and principles transcendent to things, nor within the material world as its unifying pan-psychic life principle" (101). He imagines the *anima mundi* as "that particular soul spark, that seminal image, which offers itself through each thing in its visible form." Through such imagining *anima mundi* indicates the animated possibilities presented not only by each plant and animal but by each event and thing. He asks depth psychology to "break the vessels" that have stored away the sparks of the world within the confines of personal subjectivity:

Breaking the vessels is the return, the turn again to the world, giving back what we have taken from it by storing inside ourselves its soul. By this return we regard the world anew, having regard for it as it shows its regard for us and to us in its face. We pay respect to it simply by looking again, respecting, that second look with the eye of the heart. (129)

Hillman's move, so needed within depth psychology, is prefigured by Hasids and Quakers who never sequestered divinity in a fantasy of personal interiority. Their mysticism oriented them to the world right around them, itself suffused

with the sacred. John Woolman (1720-1772) put it this way: "that, as the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, so, by the same principle, it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world" (8). Woolman argued that it was a contradiction to say we are loving an invisible God, while treating cruelly any creature God kindled life in.

For two decades, while I was intensely involved in doing individual psychotherapy from an intrapsychic and familial perspective, cultural suffering continually bled through in my patients' and my dreams and thoughts. Gradually I began to see that the prevalent paradigm of the self in psychology—an individualistic self—had led to the construction of theories and psychological practice that failed to see how psychological suffering is intimately connected with culture and nature. Thus blinded, psychotherapy often served the inscribing of the status quo cultural arrangements rather than involving itself in an insighting of the cultural changes needed to mitigate psychological suffering.

Nevertheless, the methodologies of depth psychology suggested practices of retrieving what has been marginalized that are as applicable to community and ecological work and to liberatory practices within the classroom as they are to individual healing (see Watkins). What is this depth psychological attitude? Depth psychology is usually defined by its commitment to a theory of the unconscious. In practice this means that due to its partially we hold as suspect the point of view we are identifying with at any moment. We are aware that to focus our attention entails the falling into the shadows of other aspects of a situation. The process of working depth psychologically has to do with awareness of the multiplicity present in any moment and, further, an effort to retrieve that which has been marginalized by dint of exile or neglect. It is for this reason that the contents of depth psychology can never be fixed, for as we bring one subject matter out of the margin and into focus, another recedes into the shadow.

Given this sensitivity to multiplicity and to the ego's penchant for creating hierarchy out of multiplicity, the process of depth psychology must entail a relativizing of the ego and a honing of its receptive capabilities. The way to gather what has been marginalized is to listen for what has been silenced, to look for what has been pushed aside. This listening which brings the silenced into voice and the extruded into image is the foundation for dialogue. It is through the kind of I-Thou dialogue that Jung describes in his practice of active imagination

and which Buber describes in the inter-human and human/nature realms that sparks can be liberated from their shells.

“Motions of Love”

With these thoughts in mind I ask my students to begin or continue a process of self-reflection that includes the following components:

1. Think over dreams you have had and select several that you feel address cultural suffering or cultural and/or ecological issues. Bring one or two of these that you would be willing to share with your classmates. You will not be handing these in to me.
2. Reflect on the issues or suffering in your community or the larger world that have consistently drawn your attention. Have these concerns been present in your dreams and imaginings? How have they lived in your heart and your thoughts? Take notes on this for your own use only.
3. If you do not already do so, begin a journal for dreams and active imagination work. Bring this to class to record your active imaginations around discerning vocation and listening to the call of the world psyche. This will not be collected.

In small groups we share these dreams and then enact them in the large group through a process of dream theater. This enables students to take what they have experienced as most private and intimate and begin to see the way in which it connects them with others, with culture and nature. This practice of sharing dreams with the larger community is well developed in many cultures, though mostly neglected in our own, in which dreams are often derogated as idiosyncratic and merely personal.

We work with Lifton's idea of the double self. There is one part of us that tries to carry on our life, our profession, and our pleasures as though unaware of the larger difficulties we face as citizens and planetary creatures. We divorce ourselves from much of what we perceive and know to be true. This process can easily be observed as we read the newspaper, watching where our attention is drawn and where it is difficult to sustain. Part of the process of making the unconscious conscious is to become more focally aware of what we know and to integrate those knowings into our life choices and commitments. As we work on different aspects of psychology, we try to be mindful of things we actually know from our experience but which we do not speak about or act from, silenced by prevalent cultural norms, that may themselves be mirrored by psy-

chological theory. Quaker testimonies of simplicity and integrity have been developed to nurture this process of claiming our knowings and the calls that arise from them. Care not to over-accumulate material goods and to engage in simple entertainment is understood to serve the purpose of not diverting one's attention from that which is sacred and its claims on us as well as encouraging peace and the tight sharing of world resources (*Faith and Practice* 141).

Students are asked to become aware of issues in the world that are trying to speak to them. Sometimes one notes this by the quickness with which one turns away from certain topics: the pollution of the ocean, services for battered women, ecstatic dance. Oftentimes as one becomes familiar with Jung's process of active imagination, of imaginal dialogue with what arises in the field of consciousness, one becomes more aware of the call of various things in the world: the silent homeless woman on the curb, the prison one has passed each day for twenty years, the possibility of nurturing leadership within the gay community, the abuse of animals, the small flower that offers itself in an abandoned lot.

It is often through our personal history—particularly our personal wounds—that we hear a particular voice of what has been called the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world. It is the openness and vulnerability created by our wound that give us a sensitivity to hear into particular issues in the world, to bear beauty and to protest what we know is wrong. When this is so, there is no distinction between “inner” and “outer” work. There may not initially be a conscious link between what has chosen us and our sense of our history and wound, and yet in time the close intimacy is revealed.

Through the first nine months of our program students listen on this level as they read the news, participate in the community, and work with dreams and active imaginations. While listening in this way students also explore their community and the larger world to learn more about the contexts that are available to their participation. By the first summer each student has allowed a community or ecological issue or context to choose him or her. Through the summer each student engages in the activities and work of that site. One engages in a particular way. Rather than entering the fieldwork with heroic ideas ready to hand as an “expert” from the outside, one is asked to enter in a listening mode. The latter allows the wisdom and the difficulties of the various parts of the field to emerge. The first summer is seen as practice in being alongside of, in listening and dialogue, in lending one's hands to what the community is

working on, in bracketing an ego that is heroic or colonizing. The students are extending the space of listening and hosting they have practiced internally and interpersonally within the classroom into their apprenticeship in a community or ecological context.

Early Quakers often spoke of their own attempts to listen for vocational calls, "Divine leadings." Isaac Pennington (1617–1679) advised us this way:

Give over thine own willing, give over thine own desiring to know or to be anything, and sink down to the seed which God sows in thy heart and let that be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion. (138)

Perhaps no Quaker has written so movingly about the process of waiting for a Divine opening, a leading or leaning, as John Woolman:

[A]t times this desire arose to a degree of fervent supplication, wherein my soul was so environed with heavenly light and consolation that things were made easy to me which had been otherwise. (1989: 19).

Woolman carefully watched his reactions to slavery and over years tried to keep close to the Divine opening that informed his witness against this oppression. He described this not as an effort of will, but as "a motion of love," "a leaning," "a drawing." He counseled others "to look less at the effects of our labor than at the pure motion and reality of our concern, as it arises from heavenly love" (70). Quakers are noteworthy in their service work for not adopting a stance of superior expertise or of missionary zeal but of trying to place themselves alongside others in a nonhierarchical manner, to work together for desires that are held in common for justice, peace, and liberation.

One cannot restore a world that is not listened to. It is only in sustained, reverential listening that one can hear the exiled—be that endangered species, radioactive waste in the earth, those marginalized by racism, those oppressed by the poverty created by capitalism. In the depth psychology program we ask the students to listen into the world psyche, the *anima mundi*. How does the world present its beauty and its suffering in your dreams? What particular concerns in the world does your psyche resonate with? What is speaking to you? To engage in this one needs to bracket what one thinks one is supposed to be called by as

well as the ways that we have each defined our professional identity. Some students initially fear that on opening themselves to this vocational listening process they will be inundated. Fortunately, we are not each called to listen to *all* the sufferings of the world. We are addressed particularly and, I must add, insistently, often over decades. At times we may not be called by things that our expertise has prepared us for and need to have the courage to humbly begin again.

In the second year of coursework, students are introduced to how these attitudes are manifested in dialogical and participatory research, often of a participatory action research nature. Such participatory research carries on the "alongside" quality I have mentioned. It seeks to listen into a field with others, paying attention to what is marginalized within that field. Through dialogue, critical consciousness is developed of what the issues and sufferings are in that field and what actions might be taken to address common concerns. It should be clear that this kind of research and action is not done by an expert *to* others who are in a subordinate position. It strives for full participation through dialogue. Such wide-based dialogue can then as well provide reflection on and critique of any actions taken, providing a reflective loop between consciousness of a difficulty, action to address it, and reflection on the action to refine subsequent interventions. I am describing the kind of education and research done by Paulo Freire, liberation psychologist Martín-Baró, Rajesh Tandon, Myles Horton and his colleagues at the Highlander Center in Appalachia, and feminist researchers such as Lynn Brown, Carol Gilligan, and Mary Belenky. Their research opened out from solely individual work into group and community work, where individuals could seek insight together into the linkages between their psychological difficulties and the cultural context of oppression in which they struggle. Through the development of critical consciousness about the socioeconomic and political structures underlying everyday reality, people could both begin to analyze their situation and begin to dream how change might occur. Participatory modes of research arose that were dedicated to empowering knowledge and action within communities and ending exploitation by academic researchers who wrested knowledge away from communities for their own professional advancement. Instead, research is seen as a tool people can use in collaboratively inquiring into questions of vital interest to their community as well

as in studying the effects of joint actions taken with the hope of moving toward mutually desired ends.

For example, Deborah MacWilliams, a public health nurse and policy analyst and graduate student, convened a small group in Bend, Oregon, to study their relation to place. Through site visits, artistic approaches, and dialogue these individuals sought to better understand their accumulated psychic numbing to their environment, built and natural. They struggled to clarify what kinds of places foster human-place relations. What kinds engender numbness and alienation? How might such knowledge inform city planning, urban design, and conservation efforts?

"Hundreds of Ways to Kneel and Kiss the Ground"

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down the dulcimer.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.

There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.

Rumi (7)

I did not set out to enact a Quaker pedagogy, nor did I attempt to wrest from the field of psychology that which was "Quakery." It has not been a matter of causation but of strengthening resonance. I have felt a deep connection between practices of listening and love that have pulled me toward Quaker prayer and service, toward the careful listening in depth psychotherapies, toward participatory modes of community and ecological work and research, and toward the joy of liberatory education. One might argue that the subject matter of my discipline lends itself to these resonances. But I trust that other disciplines and curriculums can similarly yield and am witnessing them do so through the work of students in our program as they pursue their varying professions.

One of our students, Mike Denney, a physician, is reconceiving medical education and practice to include the spirituality that has been severed from it through the secularism of modern science, medicine, and hospitals. Imagine medical students' first human dissection beginning with a meditation that honors the being and soul of the person who has shared their body for others. An-

other student, Isabel Bradshaw, a mathematician and forest ecologist, practices Zen and is working on preparing a science curriculum and new science practices that begin to include the body and the soul, healing the way they have been stripped from usual ecological monitoring and conservation in environmental sciences. Anne Davin, a project manager for the California Department of Education, brings dialogical practices from the *pueblo* where she lived into the feedback processes between teachers, parents, special education students, state and local administrators. Brent Blair, a professor of community theater, invites the young men in Central Juvenile Hall, Los Angeles, to rewrite and perform myths such as Orpheus, using their experiences on the streets, in their families, and in the underworld of juvenile imprisonment. The young women of Juvenile Hall are invited to rewrite such myths as Amor and Psyche. Through performing their tales and engaging in dialogue with each other, the young people ferret out their own definitions of soul embedded in their life experiences. Lali Mitchell, listening to a nearby valley and mountain slated for industrial development, draws others in her community into dialogical relationship to this place, out of which ecological stewardship and advocacy evolve. In each context the basic attitude of waiting on that of God in each person, place, and thing is possible. The joy released in doing so confirms the practice. While some of these learning sites appear inhospitable scenes for the liberation of soul sparks, the listening and dialoguing of "holy converse" transfigure them.

"But Each Little Spark Has a Shine and a Song"

When God had made The Man, he made him out of stuff that sung all the time and glittered all over. Then after that some angel got jealous and chopped him into millions of pieces, but still he glittered and hummed. So they beat him down to nothing but sparks but each little spark has a shine and a song. So they covered each one over with mud. And the lonesomeness in the sparks make them hunt for one another, but the mud is deaf and dumb. Like all the other tumbling mudballs, Janie had tried to show her shine.

Zora Neale Hurston (86)

Is not the classroom a place for the dissolving of the mud that Hurston describes here? Is it not a place of retreat where the hum of the song we are each gifted with can begin to be heard? And as its volume increases, is not the world the place to practice this song? The potential community of the classroom has a

vital function in our culture now, of being a place of practice for dialogue and critical thought, of the listening for and nurturing of vocation. When this happens in a learning group, it is thrilling and enheartening. A dialogical way of being with each other and with one's gifts sets the stage for this occurring. The rest is grace. As the holy converse of dialogue unfolds within and between, a few of the angels are sure to get jealous about the beauty erupting in our midst.

Chapter Three

“Wait to Be Gathered”: The Classroom as Spiritual Place¹

Mike Heller

I joked with friends, as I worked on this essay, that a Quaker pedagogy is about being reasonable and sober. As a person who (until recently) has never seen himself as being overly sober, I kidded that I lay awake at night hoping that maybe tomorrow I could finally be reasonable. The joke is useful partly because Quakers sometimes take on a public persona of being somber, overly deliberate, and not very spontaneous, but I doubt that this comical and inaccurate image really defines what it means to be a Quaker.

These essays are important because they attempt to state the usefulness and the limits of bringing spirituality within a Quaker context into our classrooms. Recently, I have come to realize that my teaching has been gradually shaped by my Quaker experience, but it is new for me to acknowledge this influence so directly. Most of what I have to say here is an explanation of how that feels to me in the classroom. But I am not sure that this can be properly called a “Quaker pedagogy.” Quakers can claim no ownership of a pedagogy any more than they can own worship in silence. I don’t believe we can point to fixed elements and say, “See that over there: That is a Quaker pedagogy.” Also, the classroom and the Quaker Meeting for Worship have important differences in purpose. One is a gathering for learning; the other is a form of worship with Christian origins. As we define what we mean by a Quaker pedagogy, it is good for us to question the extent to which spirituality has a place in education.