

Running Head: Haiti's Earthquake

**Haiti's Earthquake:
Seeing Through That Which We Deny**

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Milton wrote: "*First there was Chaos, the vast immeasurable abyss, Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild*" (as cited in Hamilton, 1942, p. 77).

Background

In March 2010, I traveled with the production company Bay of Rainbows as part of the documentary team composed of Posie Currin and Nicole Vulcan. We spent a week with newly formed Team Noramise in Limbé, Haiti. Relief work was new to Team Noramise. Their individual skills are in permaculture. As Noramise member Marisha Auerbach describes, "Permaculture is the art and science of creating community ecosystems in which plants, animals, and people interact to produce a fecund, ecological system that has the means to support itself indefinitely" (<http://www.herbnwisdom.com/Permaculture.php>). My undergraduate B.A. is in transpersonal psychology and cultural studies with a minor in photography. The cultural components spanned political, spiritual, agricultural, community, and artistic realms. I was involved in various cross cultural reconciliation projects with the nonprofit C.A.S.A. (Inter-American Center for the Arts, Sustainability and Action) in Caribbean and Central American nations such as Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guatemala, and Belize. This was the first time documentation was my main intent. Due to a busted spine, I can no longer engage in the physicality of such endeavors. This was also my first time amongst the 10 million Haitians. My team flew into Santiago, Dominican Republic and we took a bus across the boarder to Haiti. Once I entered the lands of Ayiti, the Knowing began to stir.

Prelude

I will use Story from my week in Ayiti through which to enter James Hillman's four

polestars of Archetypal Psychology with an emphasis on Seeing Through (to) that which we deny. The stories hold archetypal elements employed by Psyche to stimulate imaginings. For “imagination implies cultivation” and serves to bring the subject(ive) into contact with the beyond (G. Slater, DP 762 lecture, March 22, 2010). Image allows psyche a specific filter through which to be reflected. In *Re-Visioning Psychology*, James Hillman elucidates, “The soul’s first habitual activity is reflection, which in old-fashioned language belongs to the essence of consciousness as wetness to water, as motion to wind” (1975, p. 117). In Ayiti, Archetypal Mother Gaia employed her children Earthquake, Trash Heap, Market, and my Eyes as such Reflectors. Since my birth, the eyes given me by my maternal Irish grandmother call people in and let image out. I know it as *the moment my eyes become their color*. For you see, in that moment people unconsciously start baring their souls, the unknowns start to play, and I am no longer solely of myself. I directly refer to what Hillman terms personifying. “Intentions, behavior, voices, feelings that I do not control with my will or connect to with my reason” are agents of psyche imagined (1975, p. 2).

Introduction

Limbé is a town in the Northern regions of the country known as Haiti, originally called Ayiti by the Tainos. Rosedanie Cadet spent her first decade on earth in Limbé. In December 2009, she heard a Call from psyche to return to Ayiti after 36 years in the United States. Upon her return, she volunteered at an orphanage in Port au Prince. That is where the *notia* for Helping Hands Noramise began. Her mission is simple: to plant the seeds of change, literally and figuratively. Team Noramise is dedicated to building community with a focus on sustainable

agriculture and development. Team Noramise believes in starting with the roots, seeding the earth, and offering people knowledge of how to work the land, create community dialogue and action towards assuring successful living for all. Then the earthquake hit.

Once the Earth Quaked, the dominance of Port au Prince over the rest of Haiti was beyond clear. Port au Prince is the capital, the bureaucratic epicenter, and the feeding source to all other cities and towns in Haiti. If you need a new drivers license, you go to Port au Prince. Now many people are returning to their villages and towns of birth. These towns, however, do not currently have the literal infrastructure to support self sustained living (R. Cadet conversation, March 2010). The financial poverty of Haiti is well documented by the World Bank and the United Nations. Beyond the typical bureaucratic seepage of funds, there is another form of poverty. The poverty I refer to is directly linked to slavery. Oppression has many faces and tools, but the longest lasting are psychological. The psychic enslavement has turned "work" into a dirty word in Ayiti (R. Cadet conversation, March 2010). Farming the land became vulgar, trite, and shameful (R. Cadet conversation, March 2010). Psychic enslavement has made trust in oneself and neighbors slim.

The horrors of the earthquake are tremendous. But the wounds were already there exemplified by Limbé's market built on and around a festering heap of Trash. So what good can come from Noramise's intentional action? A fire has caught Rosedanie and is spreading. The fire knows Haiti is like Mediterranean pine trees whose seeds need flame to open and germinate. Maybe Earthquake brought people back to their centers to remember? Maybe they can imagine something new for is it not in the aesthetics of being that the subjectives of soul are brought back into relationship (G. Slater, DP 762 **lecture**, March 22, 2010)?

**Seeing Through
*The 55 mm Lens Cap***

You can smell it, see it, walk through it, add to it. It is unavoidable. It is the pile of festering trash breeding larvae of unknowns. This Trash being will not be ignored.

Several Normaise projects were disturbed by Trash Heap. Team members often diverged from their recounting of a particular event and ended up at Trash Heap. Seeping into consciousness, Gaia speaking through Trash Heap colored their lens', asking to be imaged. On a Sunday, armed with green gloves, a few shovels, and wheel barrows, something remarkable happened. Some people stood back, watchful, curious, distrustful, or indifferent. Others jumped right in, often without shoes or gloves or masks. Due to Rosedanie's vigilance, people of all ages began to clean their market. There it was. Community in action. Gaia was imaged anew through Trash Heap.

I was photographing the event, while demonstrating how to cover one's respiratory track to lessen the effects of the disturbed heap of disease. I still use my manual 35 mm Nikon film camera. Once the dump truck was full, some of us (Team Normaise) decided to follow. We wanted to see where the particulars of Gaia's Trash Heap, festering psychic wounds with plastics, decomposing animal bodies, and life threatening bacteria, would be re-imaged. I needed more film, so I ran back to the church compound that sheltered Normaise. I weaved and dodged through the crowded market place, past stalls and vendors selling any and all goods. As I reached the boundary wall, I jumped down and held my camera close. That's when I realized my lens cap had fallen off like it has so many times before. But this time, I could not stop running. My 55 mm lens cap is a small black piece of plastic. After 15 years together, I said goodbye. I was

honored that the protective covering of my artistic imaging tool used to offer humans a glimpse of the invisibles was taken by the pile of plastic. I grabbed film, jumped in the waiting car, and we followed the dump truck to the river bed.

Mid afternoon signaled our time to leave Limbé. The trash pile was still being reworked by the community. As Noramise walked through newly imaged Market toward the compound, I stopped and said, "I will meet you in there. I am going back to look for my lens cap. A feeling has me." I turned around and walked toward the wall. My eyes, scanning the ground littered with a myriad of colors swirled in mud, heard something. "Hey lady. Hey, Lady!" I turned and looked up. Above, a man perched with two friends on the wooded frame of a stall avoided the mud. His hand appeared and there it was. The lens cap. Somehow, while I was running and the small, black piece of plastic flew to the ground, this man had seen. He saw it and saved it and returned it home. We laughed and smiled with each other. I returned to the compound, eager to share my story. Noramise, however, was caught in the unconscious. Some people were crying, others vomiting, or packing. There was no room for this moment that to me exemplified soul making. My eyes smiled, remembering.

The lens cap served as mythic metaphor. Hillman wrote, "Metaphors are more than ways of speaking; they are ways of perceiving, feeling, and existing" (1975, p. 156). Lens cap reminded me that by letting go of previous vision, opening to the fullness of a moment bridges us back together through the unknowns. I felt the lens cap offered itself or was called to remind Noramise there are people and experiences in Limbé they have yet to imagine. There is joy and thoughtfulness amidst the decay. Archetypes hold fullness in the potentiality of fluidity and

metaphor gives us access to their newly imaged voice “so that what one says ‘does not become encased in rigid armor’” (Plato as cited in Hillman, 1975, p. 157).

Noramise is action oriented. Their action sometimes bypasses crucial moments for seeing through to that which is already there as if stuck in the fantasy of illness (1975, p. 78). Rosedanie often scolded the people of Limbé. Once she grabbed her male cousin and proclaimed his study of electricity was useless in a town without a grid. She said, “I will not help you. Your hands are not working the earth and are wasted on a useless pursuit!” Maybe Ayiti's Gaia knows the people need Rosedanie's particular force, but through my voice she asked, “What happens when Limbé has an electrical grid? Won't they need an electrician?” It was if she could not see into the idea of electricity and forgot that “reflection by means of ideas is an activity; idea forming and idea-using are action” (1975, p. 117).

Returning the lens cap was such an action of idea, a living metaphor. Noramise's hermetic interpreter, driver, and mediator Jimmy understood this. When I asked him what he thought of Noramise's new relationship with Limbé he replied: “We need mentorship. We need to learn the tools of trade, community, and commerce. We do not need others to do for us, but work with us so we can become the master. Team Noramise needs to set up a base in Limbé, not just come every three months with their intended action. If there is a physical base with people from Limbé working there, the roots can begin to thrive. We need to work together to ensure the people of Limbé are not persecuted by those in power. The violence is real.” When I presented Rosedanie with Jimmy's idea, it was met with indifference. She replied, “I am planning on buying a house, but there is nothing to fear. They are stuck in slave mentality. Nothing will

happen.” I have personally witnessed the violence those who forge newly imaged community receive at the hands of those who fear in Guatemala and beyond. Jimmy’s fear is valid as is his hope. Hillman reminds us we need a “resuscitation of ideas at a time in psychology when they have fallen into decline and are being replaced by experimental designs, social programs, therapeutic techniques” (1975, p. 116). Will Noramise “become monomaniac, one particular idea crediting itself with more value than all others, and in opposition to them” (1975, p. 116)?

**Personifying
*Invisible Trash***

One afternoon, Posie, her video camera, myself, and my camera went for a walk around the market. No, no. It was not the kind of walk that involves strolling. Brother Daniel shepherded us through the market. We were introduced to various market coalition members and the Trash Heap. Or, as Brother Daniel called it: “*The mountain of trash inside our market.*” The coalition members shared their desire to rid themselves of this mountain, but did not know how. “Where to begin?” was the common response to my inquiry. As we approached the mountain’s center, its smell intensified, the ground beneath our feet gave more way, and we saw its children. Millions of tiny larvae and hatched flies feasted in the center. Posie zoomed in on the black hole of life, while Noramise voices flooded my head. “The trash, the trash. The plastics, the plastics. The trash, the plastic. Haiti has so much trash and so many plastic products. Everything is plastic. What can we do to help?”

Help? Seriously, help? At that point, my eyes imagined earthquake and a Gaic voice told Posie to zoom in on me. “Foreigners look at this mountain, smell its decay, and judge its plastics. They pity the Haitians, feel sorrow for their blight. But this is not theirs alone. The plastic trash that leaches life while seeping toxic chemicals is only visible here. That’s the difference. The

horror, numbness, and shock is received as a distraction. Or can it be an opening? The United States has this trash, this mountain piled high, only it is hidden. It is buried beneath the sands, anchored in the seas, floating in outer space. What can you do to help? Own your personal responsibility for creating and enabling Trash, visible or not.”

Christine Downing wrote, “Gaia’s emanations are projections of her own being, each catching one aspect of her own protoplasmic fullness. To know her fully is to see her in that which emerges from her” (1984, p. 152). This quote serves as a reminder that to know Gaia, the first autonomous being of Chaos, is also to know death and despair. The monotheistic religions that subjugate Mother Earth’s diversity to a singularity of the pious cannot access the image of psyche’s personifying agents, such as the Trash Heap. Death is not wrong. Decay and disease are part of the rhythmic recycling of energetic beings of which humans are only a part.

After Earth Quaked, many agents of colonialist mind said, “Haiti made a deal with the devil in 1804 and earthquake is the consequence.” I think, however, the Earthquake called attention to a nation which exemplifies what “Robert J. Lifton calls ‘psychic numbing, a term’” that lends itself to Hillman’s notion of *titanism* (2007, p. 144). In *Mythic Figures*, Hillman states, “In the absence of the gods, things swell to enormities. A sign of the absence. . . is hugeness, not merely the reign of quantity, but enormity as a quality, a horrendous or fascinating description, like Black Hole, Conglomerate, Megapolis” (2007, p. 146). Haiti cannot be imagined without remembering its enslavement and those who imposed their unrefined Zeusian qualities of strength, law, and order. Modern experience of colonialism, capitalism, and religious dogma are manifestations of such singular enormities in Haiti where polytheistic Voodoo is demonized and mono cropping reigns. The earth quaked to remind humans “by actively imagining the psyche

into multiple persons, we prevent the ego from identifying with each and every figure in a dream or fantasy. . . . For the ego is not the whole psyche, only one member of a commune” (1975, p. 31). The people who fled domination of spirit and were of entrepreneurial inclinations were burdened by limitation yet projected the same psychic numbing onto and in the people and landscape of Ayiti. The imperialists did not understand or chose to ignore that, “Titanic hugeness can be encompassed and contained only by an equally large capacity of inspired image-making” (2007, p. 148). Monotheistic mind removed the knowing that, “Zeus is truly about the ordering power of the differentiated imagination: polytheism” (2007, p. 149).

Here, I return to Gaia, mother of diversity. What purpose does she hold for the 21st century mind? Well, lets listen to her child. Trash Heap translated through Hillman's words said to me, “The world does not ask for belief. It asks for noticing, attention, appreciation, care” (2007, p. 145). As mentioned above, Haitian aspects of colonialism, capitalism, and religious dogma are the offspring of an undifferentiated ego. Yet, it is only “through multiplicity we become internally more separate; we become aware of distinct parts. Even should unity of personality be an aim, ‘only separate things can unite,’ as we learn from the old alchemical psychologists” (1975, p. 31). Trash Heap is a singular being composed of infinite singularities. Hillman continued, “This *separatio* (in the language of alchemy) offers internal detachment, . . . more interior space for movement. . . where before there was a conglomerate adhesion of parts or a monolithic identification with each and all, a sense of being stuck in one's problem” (1975, p. 31). Trash Heap as an image alive begs for recognition and offers stagnation release. Psyche is calling out to be re membered and re imaged in a time when globalization has failed to reunite humanities conscious minds with the multiplicity of being. Trash Heap may repel our refined

senses, but as Hillman proclaimed, “The ‘worst’ images are thus the best, for they are the ones that restore a figure to its pristine power as a numinous person at work in the soul” (1975, p. 8).

Pathologizing
My Little Ponies

Nico's six year old daughter donated her *my little ponies*. She loved those ponies. Limbé was hard for Nico, a seasoned traveler who had traversed China, India, Tibet, and Nepal. She is a journalist. She kept repeating, “We have never seen such poverty, filth, or hunger.” My eyes remembered and I reflected, “You have never seen?” I could see her confusion, feel her defenses rise, hear uncertain ego seeking reflection. Nico continued, “What good is this? What good are we doing here with video cameras?” Again, a Gaic quality infused my voice and replied, “What good are you doing here? That's an important question. Maybe one day you will know your answer.” Fierce pain streaked across her face.

One afternoon, Posie, Nico, the cameras, and I were invited to the home of a young church family. Rain had come and we removed our mudded boots at the tiled entrance. As I tried to balance the laces undone, my tilted head saw Nico. She was sitting on a couch surrounded by four little giggling girls. Nico beamed as she handed over the ponies of purple and blue, pink sparkles and silver dots. We were given a tour of the three floors, shown the television set which displayed sparkle dusted, plastic sea creatures. Photos were taken. Stories were translated in a few shared words as Posie alone remembered her grade school French.

After dinner was had with Team Noramise, our documentary trio went outside to regroup with a smoke. Nico smiled remembering the little girls. She was excited to show her daughter the pictures of the ponies new home. She shared, “I feel good tonight. I was able to bring a small

amount of joy to those girls.” I replied, “That is a very nice house they have... quite upscale compared to most Limbé abodes.” I wondered aloud who those *my little ponies* were for? I wondered what affect the ponies will have once seen by other children? I wonder if it really matters?

Nico worked hard before we left to compile material goods for Limbé. Her need to acquire donations such as clothes and medical supplies were a source of pride. I witnessed her growing discomfort with the reality of life and daily death in Limbé. Every day we watched funeral processions from the perch above the church. Every day she gave away goods, she felt better, yet only for a moment till she repeated the exchange. Her experience reminded me of Hillman's words, “Treatment, of course, assumes that something is wrong-that when the psyche is pathologizing in a fantasy, an emotion, or a symptom this is to be corrected or alleviated by practical measures” (1975, p. 73). Immersed in the enormity of feeling, judging Limbé's reality, Nico seemed to be searching for ground. Did she need something concrete to remove herself from imagining into the potential from such experiences? What value is there in pathologizing? As Hillman wrote, “The insights of depth psychology derive from souls *in extremis*, the sick, suffering, abnormal, and fantastic conditions of psyche” (1975, p. 55). In that case, does Nico's search for immediate bandaging display a deeper held fantasy that correlates to the medical model of soul? “Treatment attempts to take away the pathologizing, separating it from soul” (1975, p. 73).

Nico exemplified many actions of Team Noramise. My attempts to stimulate inquiry into the idea “that doing something, approaching helpfully, deciding practically, may all have to be abandoned if we are to take pathologizing psychologically. So long as we are still aiming to

alleviate or rectify we are engaged in preventative treatment,” were largely ignored (1975, p. 73). I saw myself doing the same when I pushed. So I began to step back and engage with my own soulful imaginings into the next step. I am used to dialoguing with communities who desire co created action. The materials bought from both sides of the equation went towards soulfully imagined projects for the benefit of the whole. Of course, The Maya are generationally imbued. The community I lived within in Guatemala took the genocide of their people and imagined with it. They imagined so far, they literally returned to their textured weavings. They imagined alive a meeting, creating, and living with members of the country (The United States of America) that trained and supplied those who slaughtered their families. So, what was psyche asking of me now?

Dehumanizing
...prayer for our sinners, now, and at the hour of our deaths...

Trash day. We awoke at six a.m. and anxiously prepared. The mayor had promised a dump truck and tractor would arrive at the market at 7 a.m.. The evening before Rosedanie, Brother Daniel, Posie, and a video camera had gone to the mayors office where Rosedanie demanded the trash be removed. Promise kept. The trash was moved on a Sunday. The Church was full. Parishioners occupied every ounce of available space within the church compound. Between moments of hurried action, Rosedanie was often heard ridiculing the Pastor. Only that day had he informed his parishioners of Team Noramise's intent and present action. One member of the congregation left church, changed clothes, and helped clean the market. Rosedanie was angry at the prayers. “What good is praying doing? The trash won't remove itself.” Other team members echoed her sentiments. Again, a Gaic quality colored my reply. “Look, the trash is

being moved. Maybe the prayers helped bring this call to action. Maybe intentional, shared imaginings is a power of its own.”

The prayers were remembrances, agents of Hillman's depth psychological *notia* of dehumanizing or soul making. He stated, “There is no place without the Gods and no activity that does not enact them” (1975, p. 168). Monotheism largely removed the daily rituals, ceremonies, and varied aspects necessary to access the fullness of Gaia. Did the judgement of prayer serve to separate community as if ego unaware searched for hierarchical positioning to immediate a new monopoly on soul? Christine Downing in *The Goddess* states, Gaia “is the incarnation of the polytheistic imagination which tends toward a multiplication of forms. . . . it is her very nature to generate, to bring forth variety, heterogeneity” (1984, p. 152). And in this way, prayer is just another manifestation of Gaia's voice, a necessary function of psychic engagement.

“Gaia reminds us that the divine is transhuman and prehuman- there from the beginning- not simply human projection” (1984, p. 140). Relief workers, organizers, humans searching for their own relief from pathologizing denied the necessary existence of psyche in prayer crucified. Prayer can be an action and prayer can be its own being. Denying prayer, Team Noramise seemed to be unconsciously validating their actions and solidifying the importance of their work thereby allowing their conscious minds to avoid sitting with the unknowns of Earthquake. Denial set the human above earthquake, nature, psyche, and the unknowns, forgetting that “our lives are on loan to the psyche for a while. During this time we are its caretakers who try to do for it what we can” (1975, p. 180). What can we do for it? Earthquake asked humans to remember they are not the sole progenitors. Earthquake reminded humans they are not the only ones needing care.

During the evening of Trash day, people began to place tables and chairs out in the Market space. What a glorious re imaging of Limbé! Maybe now the green mountains can be felt, the river and ocean waters can play, and the giant black Malfini eagle can soar, confident in its shared domain. So, what good came from Team Noramise's action and response to Limbé's call? The good came from seeing the self reflected, recognizing inner worth, and seeing it in others. The good came from allowing archetypal energy to be re visioned. Earthquake brought destruction, but also potentiality. "And leaving, before completion, suggestion hanging in the air, an indirection, an open phrase. . ." (1975, p. 164).

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