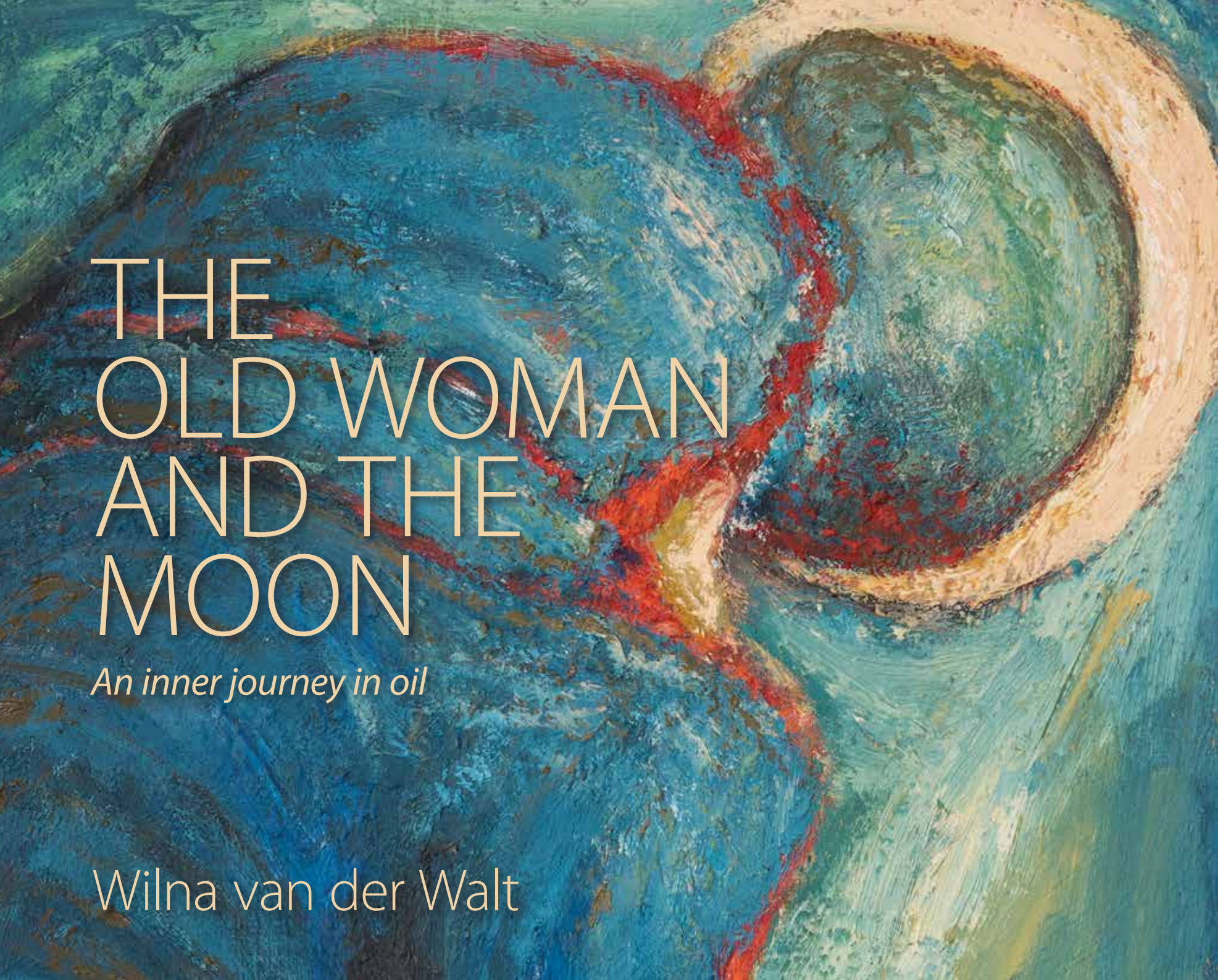




THE OLD WOMAN AND THE MOON

An inner journey in oil

Wilna van der Walt

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Acknowledgements

Now that I have put it all together, at the end of this period of my life, I look back and see how my ancients came steadily closer, ever since their first appearance in *The Mary Magdalene* in 1992. In *Sophia* she rose up from the depths. As *The mulberry woman*, she took the lead and showed the way. In *Split femininity* and *Rape of woman* she shows me the wound. In *Self-portrait as Ereshkigal* she confronts me with my worldly life. She has been speaking out by way of images, telling me her story, teaching and guiding me, even when I thought I was hopelessly lost. Over the years *The old woman* has been steadily drawing closer. She is the true creating force behind this work.

When I was finally able to commence formal psycho-analysis, I discovered that I have been doing active imagination all along. In Renee Ramsden I found someone who contained me with endless patience, whilst I fought the storms. In this objective space, under her caring eye, I learned many things. She made significant contributions to my understanding of my images, opening it up; but above all, it was the mirroring which brought my understanding fully alive to me. Furthermore, in many ways she introduced the missing link from the side of integrated analytical psychology that put things into perspective. I have dreamt about putting it all together in book form for many years, and it was her support and encouragement which eventually brought this about.

To honour Renee, I have decided to mark her direct contributions in lighter text and sans serif font. It is impossible to quote from such a complex position as the therapeutic space, and also not possible to indicate in what manner she gradually opened my viewpoint over the years. I am deeply grateful to her for the opportunity to work with her in this space. (In Appendix B the reader will find a quotation explaining the complexities of the analyst–analysand transference.)

Dr John Gosling could make time amid a busy schedule to listen to my story, bringing about a further broadening of my viewpoint. I am deeply grateful for his contribution.

Amanda Botha guided me right through the practical process of making it happen, with sensitivity, enthusiasm and patience, working through it all again and again. Her experience has been invaluable and I want to thank her most sincerely for all her support. I also wish to express my gratitude to Elsabe Gelderblom for her excellent handling of the technical aspects of the book, always taking time to explain matters and to give much-needed advice.

Preface

The art of painting has many examples of untrained or little-trained artists, many of whom are still producing creative art. Aesthetically significant is the “content” of the work, the “voice” of the artist and the transfer of meanings, stimulating the viewer to engage in a conversation with the work.

A work of art is also defined by the manner in which the viewer’s imagination is unlocked together with the creator’s confidence therein, releasing unlimited imaginative possibilities interacting with each other. This interaction leads to appropriation and eventually results in embodiment.

Art becomes a mirror image for the viewer to gain insight into the psychic journey of the self, as well as that of the artist, defining the viewer’s aesthetic, emotional engagement with the work.

Wilna van der Walt’s art embodies the inner perception of the powers of healing, personified in the creative urge, whereby art becomes cure. The active pursuit of creativity transforms the subconscious into image, along with the striving for clarification.

This exhibition gives shape to Van der Walt’s symbolic journey on uncharted paths, an expedition of the shards and fragments of her wounded soul depicted on canvas. A journey of 25 years took her deep into herself, allowing her subconscious interaction with her imagination to convey messages and stimuli onto canvas by way of art. The dialogue between her and her psyche leaves the

personal domain through her artistic depiction and exhibition, providing space for the unknown viewer(s).

Van der Walt made herself vulnerable in relating her story on canvas, harvesting from the fertile turmoil of her inner awareness. She reacted to the stimulus and patiently waited for its evolvment, finding in herself the confidence to enter into the unknown inner world. Her palette becomes the medium, her canvas the report of her psychological journey, the answer to her continuous conversation with herself. The external reflection of her inner world on canvas, with its imperfections, became recognisable and allowed her acceptance and meaningful engagement with day to day living. She could find “the unbearable lightness of being” in her work, like the writer Milan Kundera, and like Vincent van Gogh she could turn her “sunflowers” to the light.

She did not think of her work as art, but rather as images coming into being as a result of an inner dialogue creating meaning for herself. Each of these images has a life of its own, part of a larger puzzle of truths, a larger cosmic concept. This is the essential meaning of visual art, the reason why artists work on canvas, others with chisels, to bring form into existence.

Amanda Botha

Introduction

My work is centred on the symbolical journey. I started painting in 1991 during a period of crisis in my life. I had entered psychotherapy and was advised to try creative play in order to assist with the work, although I soon realised that my therapist looked upon my work as art without seeing anything else. During this period, I was also introduced to the work of CG Jung and his students and co-workers.

When I met with oils for the first time, it was like first love. I enjoyed the texture, the colours and the mess. My first experiments were focused on looking into the mirror to see what would come from the other side. I became fascinated by this process of projecting and repeatedly experiencing interaction with what I later realised was the psyche. A dialogue developed: I would get stuck in what I had set out to do and put the work aside, but after an insight into my inner life, an artistic solution might offer itself; an answer seemed to come from nowhere and proved to be just right, although not perfect. At first it was all in a moment; later it developed into a more long-term project, for I realised that by staying with an idea, something would eventually come from inside that I could not have foreseen. A “key” was sometimes given which seemed to contain the essential palette for that image. Every truth has its own unique palette and even style.

Initially I experienced a feeling of wild freedom when painting. This became an open space which was precious to me and which I wanted to protect from outside influences at all costs: this play-space is sacred. Therefore I never took any art classes, but

stumbled along on my own. In some images, these “conversations” eventually stretched over years. On the canvas this meant that paint was sometimes piled on in thick layers, and older “mistakes” are clearly visible. To me it is rather like a deep truth shining through the noise of my everyday-life, from far away, calling to me. The truth is not only the perfection, but also the imperfection.

At first the images spoke to me mostly on an aesthetic level. After Job came into my life, the work became a conscious search for meaning. In *Job as a mountain* a question is voiced: why this suffering? In *The bundle* an answer is given.

Jung says in *Memories, dreams, reflections* p. 340:

The need for mythic statements is satisfied when we frame a view of the world which adequately explains the meaning of human existence in the cosmos, a view which springs from our psychic wholeness, from the co-operation between conscious and unconscious. Meaninglessness inhibits fullness of life and is therefore equivalent to illness. Meaning makes a great many things endurable – perhaps everything.

Although I was familiar with the term active imagination, I did not realise that that was what I was doing. I used to call it the creative process; much later I realised it is what Jung called active imagination. (Please see Appendix A.)

I have always been convinced that these experiments were significant. I did not think of it as art, but rather as images from

the deep. In 2008 I entered formal psycho-analysis and could start to understand my deeper self a bit better. By 2013 I could understand enough so that it became possible to penetrate the truth of each image sufficiently to pick up the thread and weave the deeper images of my life together. I had previously tried to understand it in chronological order, but now realised that this was not how the story went. The line weaves back and forth over the years. Possibly an image “vibrated” with some current situation in my conscious world and came up from the deep, but like a puzzle piece which still needed to find its right integrated place in my life. On the other hand, every image has a life all of its own. It is impossible to pinpoint any image as “exactly that”, which also means that the images can be woven together in more than one way and the end-product will remain as truthful as my attempt here.

Gradually, I became more intellectually involved, but it was not until quite recently that I have been able to connect to the feeling contents. To penetrate to the deeper meaning does not mean to analyse the image and cut it to pieces; by relating to the picture and taking note of all associations that enter into my mind, my own symbolical language became gradually more understandable. Every truth also has a universal or collective root. Symbol books do not come into this process.

Chronologically, the work falls into three periods: an initial period of mythological images, a period of reality-based images and a period during which few new ones were born, but many older ones came to completion. The mythological images originally would come as an idea, or sometimes I would be able to project the image clearly onto the canvas.

Mostly, I would start with a hunch and feel my way through, testing out and soundboarding it against the original idea. The reality-based images usually originated from photographs. I would look at the picture and it would have a glow; this glow was to me a thing of great beauty and an indication that here was something calling to me. Most photographs were taken by people close to me and had a certain immediate emotional content, although only indirectly related to the true content of the image which I projected.

Putting it all together in book form is to find a new perspective on my life. It is an open-ended process, for the material accumulated here will most likely take the rest of my life to integrate and digest fully.

In Rilke’s words (from *Selected poems of Rainer Maria Rilke* translated and edited by Robert Bly, HarperCollins Publishers Inc New York):

I live my life in growing orbits
which move out over the things of the world.
Perhaps I can never achieve the last,
but that will be my attempt.

I am circling around God, the ancient tower,
and I have been circling for a thousand years,
and I still don’t know if I’m a falcon, or a storm,
or a great song.

The ochre line

I have decided to include this watercolour in my selection of artworks for this book, although the rest of the work is in oil. This is because this image contains and describes my story in a direct and personal way. It also meant to me hope.

Travelling through the countryside I saw, in the distance on the horizon, a tree. I thought of the “third space”, of heaven and earth separating from each other and of the tree spanning the divide. This in turn reminded me of DW Winnicott’s principle of the third space or dream space, of the hungry baby dreaming of the mother’s breast and the fulfilment of his hunger, and she comes and puts her breast exactly there, in the spot where the baby dreamt it would be.¹

I played with watercolours, experimenting with shades of earth, heaven and tree. Over the course of a year I made seventy such paintings, until I felt satisfied in a deep sense. This series happened a little bit differently, as I would sit down to some serious inner work and then afterwards make an image, and assess myself as to how centred I was at that time.

A dark earth with the ochre sky of dusk seemed most appropriate, signifying the space between day and night, the dream-space. The tree was black from much suffering, gnarled, and leaning from left to right as it fought the wind. Clouds and leaves were grey and depressed, but through growing eventually transcended the pain. The upper and lower lines, yellow and blue, met accidentally which led to a green happening.

The seed of the tree falls into the dark earth. Painfully it breaks open and grows towards the light, the higher principle. Growing is a heaping up of small things (*I Ching*, Wilhelm Edition p. 621), through many moments of struggling, fighting the Holy Wind, the formative powers, to find meaning in life, building awareness one step at a time, until one learns how to go with the Wind, how to transcend the pain of daily existence and shed new seed for a new day.

The tree is this alchemical process of becoming aware, a bridge which spans the deep split in inner wholeness. It stands in this space of painful divide. It is the breast feeding one on nutritious wisdom.

1 DW Winnicott, *The child, the family and the outside world*, Penguin Books 1964, p. 47.



Three women on the beach

Oil on canvas 61 x 31 cm, November 2008

I found a safe place from where to seek my own truth. It is such a relief.

This was the first image that I painted after entering analysis. The picture was taken in 2005 at my request at my sister's wedding. I was also inspired by the painting, *Mountain village*, by Paul Klee.

We see a beach-town with the houses painted in levels of bright colours; I love colour. Three women are strolling along the beach, the three aspects of the deep feminine.² They came from the ziggurat or step-pyramid in the background, associated with religion in ancient matriarchal societies. Deep inner work is closely related to the sacred side of being.

The levels of colour signify mature differentiated levels of feeling as opposed to undifferentiated and unconscious, or split-off emotional responses. To attain the ability to respond emotionally in an integrated way is an important aim of the work; one has to differentiate and integrate, or divide and combine.

Towards the far right a man is approaching the beach from his boat. This is Jonah. He found a safe place, a haven, a place to anchor. I was so relieved to have found a safe space, where the whole process could at last take shape after many years of seeking on my own.

Much later I discovered that the shape of the hill in the background is the same as that of the back of the whale in the next image. I did not plan it: this is the process inside the whale by which one learns to relate to life anew; one learns to pray in a completely new way.

² The voice of the analyst is indicated in lighter text and a *sans serif* font.



Jonah and the whale

Oil on canvas 59 x 64 cm, April–November 2008

I feel myself falling into the deep, but it is contained.

I started this image shortly before entering analysis and before I knew it would happen. Jonah was my favourite Bible story as a child. I never seemed to tire of hearing it and I decided to honour it by painting the story. I was aware of the fact that the story of Jonah was associated with the night-sea journey, the process of individuation, but I had only a very vague understanding of what that meant.

The left half of the picture shows a boat in a storm at sea. Jonah is thrown into the sea, falling, falling; he survives inside the whale. Enormous storms roar about on one's planet; conflicting forces tear one apart and cause extreme despair. On the right side we see a city burning, uncontained fire; it is the skyline of old Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock, the seat of power. Beneath all this, depressed Jonah (which is how I was feeling) is now sitting under a mulberry tree. On the right of the figure is purple mulberry rain, an unnoticed blessing.

The mulberry has been associated with individuation since ancient times. The fruit turns colours through white, red and black/purple. In alchemy black is the nigredo, the matter or substance to be worked on; white is albedo, clarity, light, objectivity, and red is rubedo, integration, manifestation, birth.

From the tree a silkworm is emerging. The silkworm is spinning a golden thread as Jonah is spinning his story, my truth. Yellow-gold weaves through the image, spinning together the water, wind, fire and earth of inner wholeness. Truth is the gold, the authentic self. A silkworm eventually becomes a moth, a symbol of dependency. This is the process by which I may eventually heal my dependency on life in a healthy relationship to life, if all goes well.

This image shows an underlying pattern of the individuation process. Initially, one falls into the unconscious and needs to be contained while the work is in process. Fire and water are opposites which need to be mediated. For this to happen, one has to live this process in reality, creating the story of one's life and learning to relate to life as one goes.



The mulberry woman

Oil on board 70 x 127 cm, 2003–2012

I am determined to seek my own truth with all my heart. I have to make it my life's journey.

The mulberry tree was outside my window as I sat and struggled with my load. The tree became synonymous with my search, my inner journey, or the journey of Persephone, my young woman. I did not make the connection with Persephone, though, till long after I had finished the painting. (Please see Appendix D for the Greek myth of Persephone.)

The mulberry woman is the feminine counterpart of Jonah: the young feminine principle that has been banished to the underworld and whom I needed to find; she is the one who takes up the quest. The impulse to seek my own wholeness is not an intellectual idea, but an instinctive drive from the deep.

By hearing myself and my own truth, the young woman is born from the tree of consciousness, from her left ear. The tree is a rich and old symbol of the process of inner growth, spawned by taking on

one's own life. It makes a connection between above and below, a bridge between earthly and heavenly values, and also spans the divide between different people. Our earthly life can be enriched by the higher principles of love and wisdom and at the same time our higher life becomes manifest in the here and now, enriching our lives. Energy should flow across the bridge. It is the beginning of the formation of the ego-self axis, the healing of the divide. Eventually the mulberry woman goes up and down, connects above and below.

The mulberry woman has green hair; her thoughts are greening, causing growth. The tree is blessing her with mulberry rain. She is pregnant, a promise of new life, and is approaching with determination. She is the tree, but the tree is also her mother, giving birth to her. Her fruits are her developing ability to love.

All through the following images, purple is a symbol of the mulberry woman's presence or containing function.



African village market

Oil on canvas 50 x 60 cm, October 2004

*My life feels to me insignificant, but my truth
is a queen in her own domain.*

This picture was taken by a family member during a stay in Ghana. The woman in purple entering from the left immediately caught my attention and was the source of my inspiration.

Surrounded by stalls and filled with people, this image pictures a village market square. From the left we see a woman in purple approaching. She moves with grace and commands respect. She is the mulberry woman or Persephone as queen of the underworld. Somewhere deep inside, my feminine has value and is respected: a queen.

Red tomatoes on a blue cloth make a colourful contrast: these red fruits were to me the fruits of my creative experimenting or active imagination by which I could visit the unconscious; it was my art. In creative playing, a conversation happens between the conscious

and unconscious. A message from the other side is a truth about my deeper self which I was not conscious of: it is meaningful. By stitching it all together, a whole new world emerges.

In the centre in the foreground, a woman with a white headdress is seated. She is looking towards her right, towards the light skinned woman – the conscious personality in the domain of the unconscious – who is bartering with a purple skinned man close by, an exchange between conscious and unconscious, or to make unconscious content conscious. This is equal to a sacrifice, reason for children to be joyful.

The gaze of the woman with the white headdress draws us even deeper into the background and the green hills of the deep forest, evoking a feeling of mystery, even something sinister. Dark ditches draining equatorial rainwater, became traps for the uninitiated, who fall down; to enter this domain unguided or unprepared is dangerous. The people do not have faces. They are unknown potential.



Mothering the light

Oil on canvas 60 x 76 cm, 1994–1998

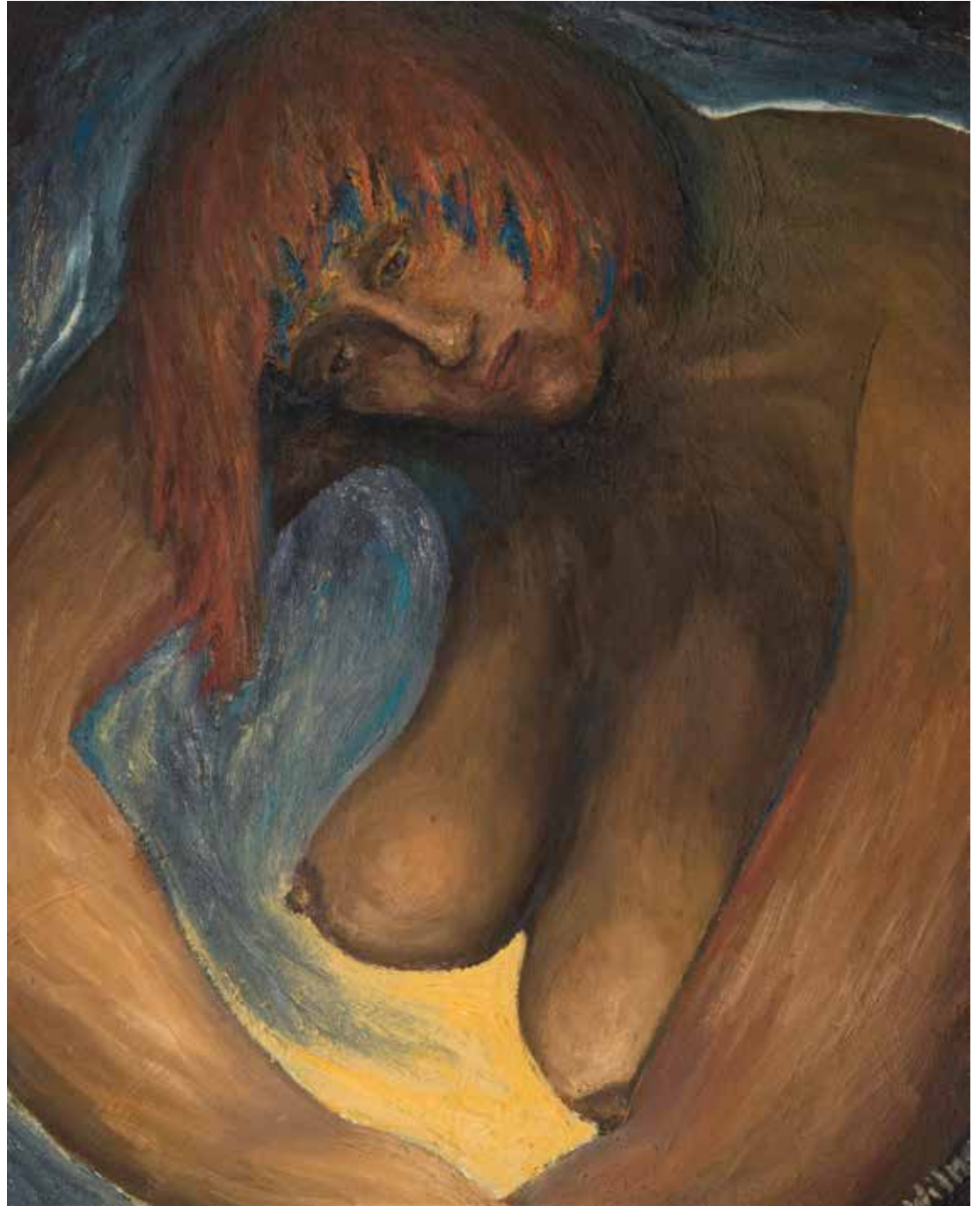
*I feel my body bending over the light of my life,
to protect and nurture it.*

This image started off as a nude study on a church bench in the glorious patriarchal sun. Then it changed, for the power principle cannot nurture one, and it became a very desperate face which I associated with cancer. Eventually that also changed and the loving eye of the Great Mother appeared, nurturing and containing the light of becoming conscious. Life is truth, and one's truth is light and life-giving. Life seems to be protective of the process of becoming aware.

It is as if she is the whole of the universe, like all the heavenly bodies altogether, all at once. In the world of a child, the eye of the

Mother is the mirror and the child's whole world; it is where a child discovers him- or herself, gradually developing an inner mirror and his own universe. If the eye of the mother is shut away, one cannot see oneself; all is darkness and death. One fails to exist. Love is defined as objective compassion, and in this space created by the analyst, one can learn to see oneself and the other clearly; love respects the other's mystery and carries all misunderstandings with patience.

In the dark of the underworld, all through the years of my lonely struggle, there was also this image to nurture and sustain me. To me it was life mothering me, putting her breast there where I dream and even though there has been much suffering, it was also contained, but eventually one has to learn how to mother one's own lost child.



In the underworld

Oil on canvas 61 x 91 cm, March 1992

*I feel all tied up in knots with fear, entangled, but
some part of me is quietly watching objectively.*

I used to go into the art shop, buy a canvas and wait for the image to come; I would soundboard the shapes and sizes against the urge to paint. Often, I painted the whole canvas black before continuing, because I projected better onto a black surface. This day, as I pulled the board from the shelf, I immediately and clearly saw what I had to do.

Fourteen figures are knotted together, entangled, writhing in agony, packed in a small space like an underground cave. They

are naked; this agony is the naked truth. Life blood is draining away, the work of the complex. Suppressed, depressed and completely isolated, this is the black feeling of nigredo, the base-matter to work on, and the departing point of the night-sea journey. Only after considerable time has elapsed, is one able to acknowledge this haunting place, where only the quiet witness of the full moon, the objective loving eye, silently penetrates. It can also be likened to Persephone in the underworld, abducted by Hades, whilst Demeter is roaming the earth, searching, searching.



Raka's forest

Oil on board 110 x 120 cm, 1996

*The mulberry woman walked and walked
and eventually came to the forest, the place of
the deep wounding, which resulted in a feeling
of being a spectator of life, of life passing one by.
Out of fear, the animals have gone into hiding
and Raka has taken over.*

This image started with the idea of a forest, an enchanting and mysterious place. But it also had an ominous feeling; something dangerous lurks unseen: it was Raka's forest, as in NP van Wyk-Louw's poem. Raka is experienced by me as a power-hungry inner figure, who exploits my inner nature in order to survive, as opposed to my animals that live in harmony with my true nature.

Since ancient times the forest has been associated with the sacred feminine. The tree trunks are dancing for they look like legs. It reminds one of the religious ceremonies and dances of ancient times. This is where the animals live, but they have gone away, for the forest has been taken over by Raka, the hungry primitive ape-man.

At centre, there is an area with purple flowers: it is where the feminine flowers. I lost my connection to my purple flowers and my animals, but it felt as though I had lost them. I became a spectator of my own life. I turned away from my flowers and felt disconnected and up-rooted.

In the foreground is an open space, the place of the spectator: this is where the struggle happens. On the left is the blue flower, a promise of wholeness for the future, and on the right is impatiens flowering. The blue flower emits blue berries, which I associated with the hobbits; thus the ring of power, or the complex, must be differentiated out so that it can be taken back to the fire that forged it.

The instinctive urge to suppress nature must be transformed to the instinctive urge to support nature consciously. The image is framed by zebra-skin lines, which points ahead towards the possibility of the integration of the opposites and a new life.



The Mary Magdalene

Oil on canvas 50 x 60 cm, December 1992

The first person that the mulberry woman encountered in the forest was the sacred feminine: the beautiful full moon is a servant and lives a life of pleasing others out of fear.

This image and the next two images followed very closely on one another.

In the forest, the mulberry woman encounters the Mary Magdalene, the Black Madonna. She is the sacred feminine, but the misuse of power has castrated her, and out of fear and hunger, she has succumbed to the power-principle: she became its servant. She is dark, suppressed, living in the shadows, and carries the shadow of the abuser, who feeds off her energy.

She is my beautiful full moon, my inner mother and mirror, reflecting my truth, seeing and containing my wholeness. She is also my ability

to care and relate; my ability to love and to grow into maturity; my connection to the wisdom of nature, as well as my ability to nurture myself and others.

Slowly, painstakingly, she has to be cleaned from the suppressive complex and restored to her proper place, for she is also my ability to take care of my lost inner child.

The Black Madonna is also associated with ancient cultures and with wisdom. Her statues still abound in Europe, particularly in France, into modern times.³

The culture of the feminine with its ancient values is the largest culture on this planet ever to be suppressed. We are all suffering from the resulting one-sidedness in one way or another.

3 Buffie Johnson, *Lady of the beasts*, Inner Traditions International 1994, p. 87–88.



The split femininity: Mary Magdalene and Barbie

Oil on canvas 70 x 55 cm, December 1992, reworked 2004

In the eye of the Magdalene the mulberry woman sees the split in inner wholeness, but also the possibility of healing the lost connection. Deeplyseated anxiety encapsulates the connection to life, the inner fire.

Two women protect the feminine fire, the mother and daughter aspects of the feminine. Together they form the eye of wisdom, the old woman, third of the three goddesses. The mother and daughter are in moon horns, which were the originating idea, ancient symbols of the feminine, also found with the Venus of Laussel, 20,000–18,000 BCE,⁴ related to the old bull ceremonies. I have a deep connection to the ancients, although I cannot feel it.

The shape of the eye is more egg-like, because it is sealed off: the energy is encapsulated, split off and made unavailable by the

power-principle, the White Man, in reaction to deep wounding. But the incubation of the egg holds a promise for the future, and the blue is reminiscent of water, the deep waters of the unconscious from which all things take their shape.

The two women are spinning and emitting, in this way, green energy. As opposites they are in eternal inner conflict, but also continuously healing the conflict by connecting again; eternally splitting, connecting, splitting, connecting.

The fire is the inner fire with which one engages when one takes on the journey to find oneself. The sealing off of this fire is how the process of individuation is blocked. The fire also resembles a flower: if I am able to carry the process through successfully, it may eventually flower through, as for example in *Mandala, the rhizome*.

4 Johnson, *Lady of the beasts*, p. 321.



The White Man

Oil on canvas 50 x 60 cm, November 1992

To control the fear and pain can help one cope temporarily, but in the long term, it causes more damage than good.

To survive, one takes control and suppresses the pain. One carries one's own wound and truth on one's back as guilt and one becomes defensive.

In 1992 I accepted a new job in an administrative position and suddenly I found a ghost from my childhood was haunting me. I felt his presence all day long in the corridors of the administration. I made this painting, as well as many notes on how this system operated outside. For years I wondered exactly what the White Man was, and how it could possibly be part of my own story, but also prominently part of the system, the collective, which is the way archetypes function.

A defensive system, the White Man is a complex which formed to protect me initially during a time of trauma in my early childhood.⁵ He is the negative animus which needs to transform. The White Man controls the pain by splitting off what is unbearable, mostly by using the intellect as a tool. He feeds on energy from the sacred feminine, which has the deep connection to life, nature; this makes her into his servant. This unholy marriage is driven by survival fear – Raka – driving the natural growth process ever further away. The negative process feeds itself continuously while natural growth is sealed off. This is the ring which needs to go back to the fire that forged it.

His hairlessness signifies immaturity because he puts a strain on psychic growth. His arms are cut off for he is as powerless in himself as the others he tries so hard to control. His eyes and ears are poorly developed and misplaced; he is not receptive. He cuts connections by fierce one-sided intellect.

The colour white points to his fascination with perfection and flawlessness. Therefore he is not conscious of his own shadow. When he is around, one becomes defensive. One's own shadow is projected, frequently onto the feminine side of the personality (or the feminine in the other): she is to blame for everything that goes wrong in the world, so that the sacred feminine gets pushed further and further away, and more exploited. He is also white like a ghost, bled empty of all life, for this vampire feeds on the wisdom of the sacred feminine. On the other hand, the white can also be read to be the albedo phase of his development. Then he is at the fire of his own making to be baked and transformed, the rubedo phase.

If he is more mature, he is an ordering principle and brings necessary structure and discipline, balanced self-control. He is also my strength, my uprightness, when freed, and my key to reality. The intellect is a most valuable and indispensable tool to be used to gain objectivity in service of life.

I projected this power complex onto the collective patriarch, where I found many hooks. Born a long time ago in Sumeria at a time when government originated, when the whole was broken, when a single individual in the culture could no longer fulfil all necessary

functions for his own survival. Collective consciousness became the external ordering principle necessary to govern, order and control the new city, in co-operation with religion, which gave meaning and was the true containing power.⁶

Over time the collective patriarch became progressively more individualistic and intellectually orientated, while nature was the enemy and had to be conquered. For the past two millennia he has been the ruling value system. Today no single myth is able to contain the new global village in a meaningful way; dangerously, it is all in the hands of one-sided control, and revered.

5 D Kalsched, *The inner world of trauma*, Routledge 1996.

6 Joseph Campbell, *The masks of God: oriental mythology*, Penguin 1962, p. 41.



The sun-child

Oil on canvas, 61 x 76 cm, 1994–1995

The mercurial sun-child steals my fire and drops my lyre into the sea. The sun-child is the voice of my deepest truth, the voice of nature which is confronting me all the time.

When I am out of touch, the sun-child stirs things up, or can become outright negative, causing all kinds of obstructions, to bring me back to the way. This is the fire that is split off by the control of the White Man. It is the inner fire which is being kindled and taken care of when one undertakes the journey to become whole.

The sun-child is a symbolical expression of Mercurius, himself a dragon.⁷ The image started with the idea of a child with fire around his head; he steals my fire. He is in opposition, not only to me, but also the dragon as well as the sword, that is, when they are divided, one-sided.

One's deepest truth, the seed of one's life, one's gift from life, is the divine child, another name for Mercurius, forever changing shape, moving, manifesting from the deep, the sea, mercurial. The sun-child ruled out of the deeply seated primeval chaos of my life, disturbing me to pay attention to things I wanted to ignore. I experienced him as part of the chaos and thought that life itself was against me.

He reminds me of "The flyting of Loki" in Norse mythology.⁸ As I understand it, the whole pantheon was influenced by the new values of the patriarch, and Loki, Norse equivalent to Mercurius,

a natural energy,⁹ became negative in opposition to the one-sidedness and over-emphasis of the Logos principle, which is opposed to nature and means to conquer it. The "flyting" was when he confronted the gods in their hall with their own failures and faults, after which they conspired to bind him, where he would remain, dripping with poison, until Ragnarok, till the end of this time.

A circle is formed by the contents of the image. The harmony is disrupted: the musical instrument goes back into the unconscious, the sea; by working on the feeling of "disharmony", some aspect of my feminity and inner child manifests, whereupon a new situation arises, a new one-sidedness, which needs to be addressed as well as I can, never perfect. Finally and exhausted, I would live up to the current crises, or integrate enough content to solve the tension. Then, again, the sun-child has already mercurially moved to another position, calling anew.

This was what I had discovered in the in-between space, the play-space; it is the voice with whom I had been engaging all along. It is the connection with the divine inner child which I need to restore.

7 Please see Appendix E for the Greek myth of Hermes, the Greek equivalent of Mercurius.

8 Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Penguin book of norse myths*, Penguin Books 2011, p. 162.

9 Please see my notes concerning alchemy, Appendix C.



The wine tasting

Oil on canvas 61 x 30 cm, 2008

The young woman, or mulberry woman, is now pouring the wine. From the deep comes the wine, the chemistry.

This picture was taken by a family member at my request, during a visit to a wine farm, Cape Town, 2007. It was mainly the atmosphere which spoke to me.

We are in the underworld, in a dungeon. Wine is being poured; wine bottles are on the table; wine is tasted and the process of winemaking is depicted on the window. The scene is Dionysian. Not only is the developing relationship between me and my analyst like chemistry,¹⁰ but the whole process of individuation is magical, chemical.

On the left are two women: one young, one older, the mother and daughter, or Demeter and Persephone. The third woman is presented in the picture on the wall. Together they form the three aspects of the divine feminine. Selket is an ancient Egyptian deity. She carries her emblem on her head, a scorpion, which marks her

as a deity of the underworld. In *Lady of the beasts* Buffie Johnson explains Selket as a goddess of resurrection into a new life (p. 334). This deity has been castrated: she has no hands, as in the story of the Handless Maiden.

The castrated left arm of Selket points directly into the direction of the right arm of the young woman, or Persephone, who is now pouring the drink. The cup must be emptied to the last dregs to empty the complex, that is, one has to withdraw as many of the projections onto others as possible. The older woman is watching. Her expression is thoughtful, yet amused.

On the right are four black figures, the nigredo or basic material, who are taking in what the young woman has passed on to them. The mouth is where things go in and out: we take things in to feed ourselves, and we say things with the mouth. So, out comes the story, and it goes into the jar on the table, the alchemical vas, where the chemistry, the conception, is happening. The unconscious adds chemistry to the mere telling of the story and this culminates in a pregnancy.

10 Please see Appendix B for a short discussion of the transference.



At the party

Oil on canvas 61 x 57 cm, 2005–2006

My whole inner world is aglow with the drama of freeing the child. There is an ancient pattern by which this process develops.

The inner child needs to be freed from inner criticism and one needs to learn how to take care of one's deepest truth, the child.

It is the end of a time, celebrating the image of *The ochre line*: the whole picture is drenched in this light of the in-between space and underlines the importance of the ability to persevere and to trust, the aim of which is to attain the inner marriage of the opposites – the picture was taken at my sister's wedding. A festive atmosphere prevails in this image which is described and contained by a fishing theme, that is, to fish out from the deep.

The wedding guests can be seen to consist of four groups. On the far left, but still in the shadow or not made conscious, two women have found each other, the shadow and the ego. The animus is in close attendance. These are the inner relationships to be restored and cleaned.

The light falls on a woman in a white dress, the conscious personality, who is approaching two men. They are in conversation, but in a confrontational manner. The child is caught up in this drama between the attacking and criticising negative animus which is blocking progress, and the protective and creative positive animus necessary for growth.

At the centre is the mother in contact with the pole, the self, which is also the tree. She is with the fairy child of innocence, the authentic self, the child that had been banished to the other world. One's eye gets drawn to the little white shoulder of this child. By freeing the inner child from accusations and attacks by the negative animus, the bond between mother and child is restored and one may learn how to nurture oneself.

On the right three animus figures are queuing to receive food, the gradual development of the four functions of the personality, and out of the draped cloth on the far right, hands are protruding, to help; it is the helping hands of the psyche. If the conscious personality takes up the challenge, the psyche helps.

While I was making this painting, I was thinking of the Axiom of Maria Prophetessa: "One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the One as the fourth". It is understood by Renee Ramsden in her seminar 2012, Cape Town, as follows: "Stage one is an original and unitary viewpoint ... stage two, where separation and differentiation begins ... stage three, the ego enters into a dialectical conversation with...inner figures ... from which (the fourth) a balanced viewpoint ... the authentic self ... the Divine child is born." Ramsden also mentions that Jung called the Axiom of Maria Prophetessa the leitmotiv of alchemy, running through it all.



Dance with negative animus

Oil on canvas 50.8 x 76.2cm, February 1992

*The inner attacking voice must be stopped.
To break his spell, I have to take responsibility
for my own shadow.*

The animus or inner masculine of woman is critical unless cleaned from the shadow. This is the projection-making factor, entangling me in endless complications and illusions. This is my struggle.

The idea for the painting came after reading some books by Marion Woodman. The young woman is dancing with a dark man. He is her opposite. He is dark, from the subterranean, and has positive as well as negative qualities. It manifested originally

as a critical and one-sided opinionated voice that is constantly and irritatingly off the mark and may have the ability to cut myself or my loved ones into pieces. Therefore her flowers are on her back, where she is not conscious of her own good qualities, but entangled in a constant inner argument with the attacking voice of the negative animus, unhealthy guilt-feelings and defensiveness. This has to change. I have to learn to distinguish between myself and the other, defining my own shadow so that I gradually and painstakingly free my animus from the shadow. Then the attacking voice may become the voice of the wise counsellor. The next task then is to learn how to relate to the animus, for the animus is the link between the conscious personality and the unconscious, or the self.



Job as a mountain

Oil on board 100 x 120 cm, 1996

*My seeking is also a struggle.
I am grappling with my life.*

Job had been an important symbol in my life for many years, feeling myself an outsider to life, wrestling with God to find meaning, and in 1995, I was introduced to CG Jung's *Answer to Job*, which made a profound impression on me.

In the Bible story, God and the devil are fighting for Job's soul. He loses all as they subject him to one test after another, for a high level of integrity is an essential prerequisite in the successful outcome of the individuation process.

He is stripped of all possessions and relations, and left all alone. He has no connections to life, to loved ones, to his deeper self or a satisfying life of his own, but on the positive side, this helps to achieve objectivity.

Job is pictured as a mountain, a high and holy place, where one goes to meet one's god. He wrestles with the god. Job cries: "Anything, but this!" or "Why me? What have I done to deserve

this destiny?" By wrestling with the god, the archetype manifests and is humanised. God becomes man. This struggle with the god is a struggle to find meaning in the suffering, to see the formative processes I am engaged in, that it is God's thumbs on my clay; it is the rocks that are grinding me from the inside as a mountain is continuously battered and shaped by rain and storms and geological factors. It is not to fight the patriarch in the outside world. One cannot become inwardly free from one's complex by fighting others outside.

Job is a beggar, a child of the street. He is caught off-guard by the appearance of the deity. He still has some reservations about it all, reaching for the half-jack in his inner pocket, the old dependency pattern, and a consequence of being cut off from one's own true self. By finding meaning in his suffering, he finds the right relationship to his deeper self and thereby heals the alienation. But Job still has a few obstinate ego plans in the back of his mind, by which he himself prolongs his suffering, for in the end, he will find it all back and more.



Autumn dance

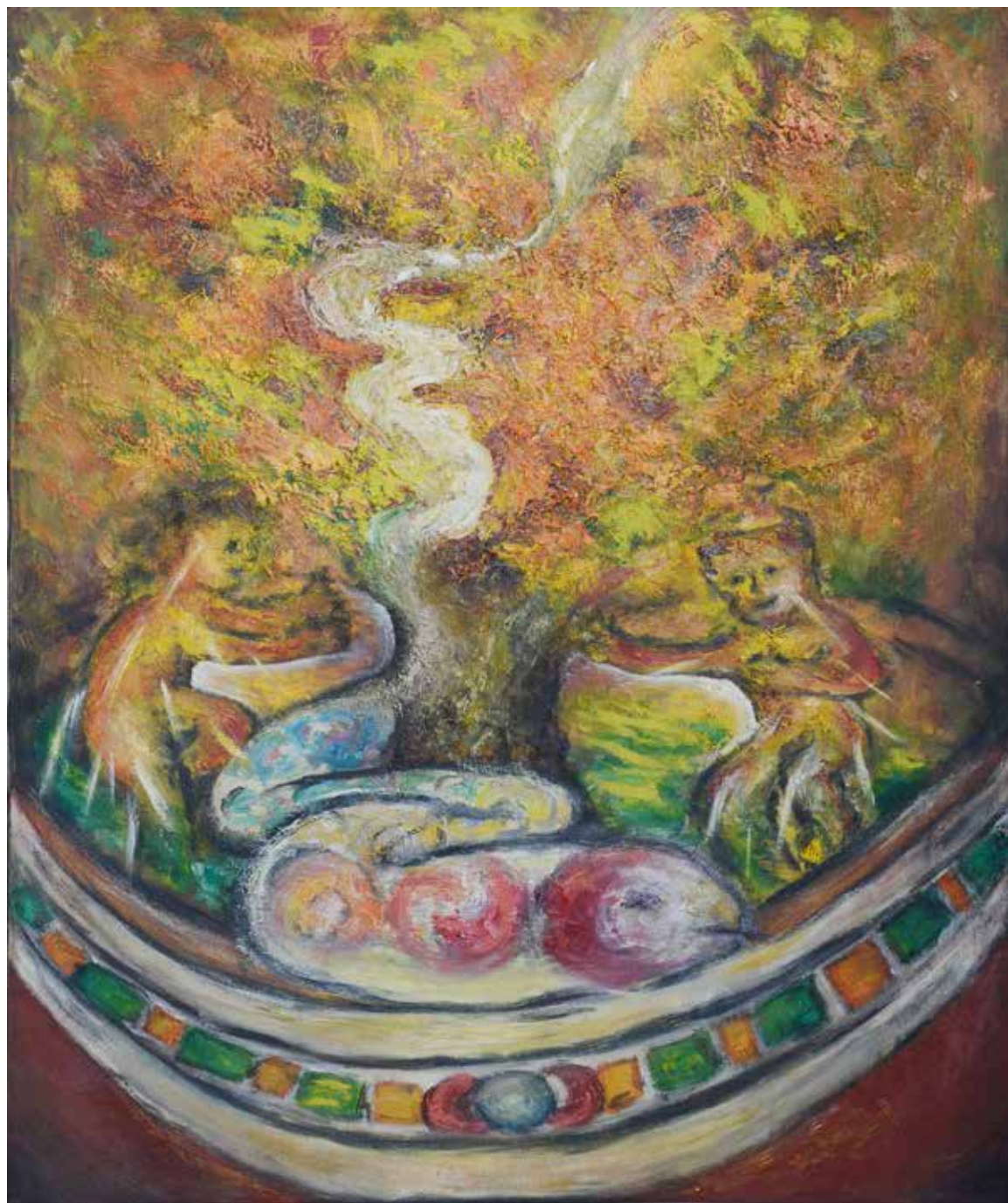
Oil on canvas 92 x 76 cm, 1993

*All along, the whole process is about dividing
and combining until a clear line is visible between
what I am and what not.*

I love autumn not only because of the colours, but also the feeling of relief, of letting go. It is a joyful experience to let go of the old to make way for the new. Leaves are falling, falling, and under my feet I feel the dry leaves; nothing, just dead leaves, yet they are the compost for the new life, but this only becomes possible if the old thing is truly dead, mourned, gone, and it has become possible to take care of one's soul-child in an effective manner.

One also has to put together the new. Tree and snake are old symbols of consciousness and healing, as in the staff of Caduceus, the ancient symbol of medicine. Mercurius as the snake, or the

psyche, descends by way of the process of becoming conscious, the tree. Jung says the snake is the voice of the tree. The rainbow snake is an old aboriginal symbol. The rainbow is a symbol for differentiated feeling. If one has achieved this to a reasonable degree, the snake becomes less dangerous and more healing. The old is discarded and the new is integrated. This process is contained in an enormous pot. The conscious personality must be able to contain and support the process or it will be broken apart by illness.



Two women under an umbrella

Oil on canvas 40 x 50 cm, 2005

*My wholeness has not been destroyed.
The mulberry woman contains me until
the process has developed sufficiently.*

The picture was taken by a relative at my request.

Two young black women are drawn together under the protection of a purple umbrella to cast one unifying shadow. The umbrella is the mulberry woman or Persephone. The two women are in friendly conversation: how wonderful it is if someone listens to you attentively and with acceptance! Then, maybe, one can dare to look at oneself with acceptance.

The mulberry woman, the seeking, brings together elements trying to break apart. Wholeness is at first constellated in the personal shadow and needs to be differentiated out. It needs to be cleaned from

the complex by painstakingly differentiating out what is mine and what is thine, over and over, to divide and also combine. A real person has a shadow.

By working on the individual shadow, individual aspects of the personality are differentiated out and then healthy inner relationships can be established. White and black are opposites, polarity, to be integrated, as are red and blue, which together make purple. It also refers back to the creative fruits pictured in *African village market*.



Three fruits and a lizard

Oil on canvas 50 x 40 cm, April 2004

There is some food, because there is a real connection to the deep roots of life. I have the fruits of my work and support on my journey.

This image, also a picture from Ghana, taken by a relative on a visit, is dominated by three houses, two of which are very close together, too close for comfort, and the third is too far away. The deep forest can be seen at the back. The black house is the house of the shadow. It has not been differentiated out from the inner complex and is enviously hugging the yellow earthen house, causing a divide between mother and daughter.

The yellow house is the house of the young woman, or Persephone. On the shelf there are two pawpaws to feed one and a pineapple, 'pain' plus apple; the apple with its 'core of truth', is also related to Persephone as Kore. The painful truth needs to be honoured and mourned in order to heal the lost relationship to the inner mother.

The blue house, closely connected to the forest, is the house of the mother: the forest has been associated with the deep feminine

and with life since ancient times. The disruption of this natural connection is a wounding of one's natural ability to grow and to feed oneself. One has a deep nagging feeling of insecurity and of not having enough. This causes envy, a desire to control and egotism. One needs to differentiate out one's own shadow, so as to see one's own right responsibility and to be able to utilise the crucial food and help.

Envy is the opposite of love; it wants to possess, not respect and relate. It says: "I love you so much, I cannot live without you." Envy is the true evil and potentially poisonous. It criticises and downs others; it can only compete, for there can be only one winner.

On the shelf, on the front of the yellow house, are fruits and a lizard. This process of individuation brings fruits, love, from the deep feminine to sustain one on the journey. Active imagination and individuation are something alive, for the mercurial aspect of the psyche supports the process of becoming. The lizard is the helper, the alchemical salamander, the mercurial element necessary for transformation.



The orange sellers

Oil on canvas 50 x 60 cm, 2007

It is as if the unconscious tells me: be patient and bear with it. A new dawn will follow.

The picture was taken by my sister-in-law during a trip through KwaZulu-Natal. What spoke to me most was the relaxed attitude of the portrayed figures. This image is the inverse, but not opposite, of the tree in *The ochre line*: the layers of colours are the same, but in a reversed order; the inverse of sunset is sunrise.

One must have an attitude of patience and bear with many things. Preparations must be made for change in the future. The fruits of wisdom, love, have real value – something I had difficulty realising for a long time. In this roadside image the two women are now seated, waiting and ordering the oranges, the alchemical balm. There is a time to bear and wait, like a mother carrying a child.

The implanting of the upside-down tree, or the tree growing back to the mother, earth, or the alchemical process, is supported by the two males – one a man, the other a boy, not yet mature. They are two aspects of the animus. The implanting of the tree brings about the arrival of the old woman. As the balm, she is the wisdom and helper.

The young woman is preparing to undertake the journey to the holy feminine (purple is again the mulberry woman) mountain of their birthright from which they are still cut off by the devil's fork hedge of the wrong kind of guilt. At first the truth is carried in projection, on the other side. One has to take up the quest. When one takes others' accusations and projections onto one's shoulders, one takes on guilt that does not belong to one's own self. This needs to be differentiated out.



The earth brought forth huts

Oil on canvas 50 x 60 cm, (with decorated frame: 90 x 76 cm), 1993

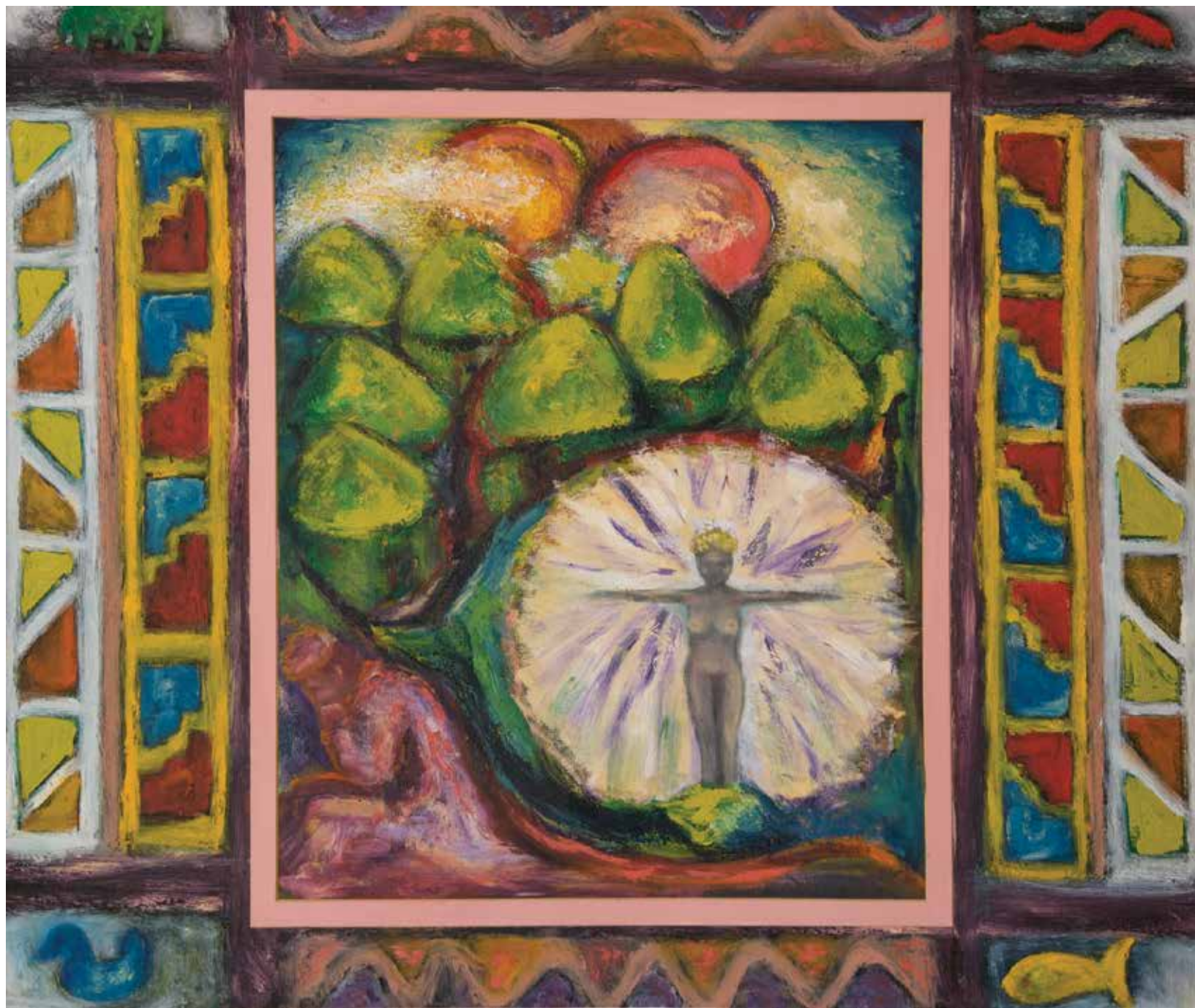
I do not have to control life. Growing is a natural process, and out of this growth, I shall find my true home, but I am not aware of this fact.

This image originated from the name, which came as an idea: the earth produced something, houses, which manifested through growth as plants do.

The feeling of something growing and the possibility of changing one's life is exciting and gives one a sense of connectedness and joy. The greening power of becoming aware brings with it the possibility to find one's own place in life. This power is unique for everyone, as no tree is completely like any other. Some grow fast, some slowly; some become tall, others are small or average. Some trees grow to be old; others again die after only a few years. This greening power is the organical chemistry, the natural alchemical process of individuation itself, and is what eventually may give me a house, my right place in life, both inside and outside.

In the background are a large sun and a moon: masculine and feminine values are equally respected, in balance. To bring forth new life and to nurture are the functions of nature, but she has been negated to the subterranean. Culture cannot make things grow; the king is sitting without an answer, and has to share her fate. On the other hand, growth happens in the dark, where our roots are, where we cannot see.

The ancient watery values of our deep past are displayed in the frame above and below. Four animals are pictured in the corners, for the instincts are an essential aspect of the chemistry of personality growth. On the left and right are patterns that I associated with the skin of a snake, the ability to shed an old skin and grow a new one, the cycle of dying to an old way of living and being reborn a more mature person, the ability to grow and adapt.



In the township

Oil on canvas 55 cm x 46 cm, 2005

*I have to find my own right place,
not too high or too low.*

The image, the picture also taken at my request by a relative, radiates a feeling of vibrancy and energy in spite of the general theme of need: inside is riches, that is underground or in the subconscious, although outside, in the visible world, things are difficult. I feel a kinship with the people of the township, a sense of connecting with something lost from ancient times and from my own life, but I also project my complex onto them.

One is not so entangled with the depressive position anymore. The albedo phase brings the starting of the greening and connectedness

(the focus on the overhead lines); the process of growing has commenced. The feeling is not the same as in *In the underworld*; some objectivity has moved in, portrayed by the high lampposts and poles. More objectiveness comes with more connectedness and unknown potential. Poles are also symbolical of trees; the beginning of a bridge to the self is constellating.

In the foreground is an earthen mound, the grave of the goddess, the suppression of the feminine, my truth and the unconscious. The grey, not black, truck of the depressed complex, is visible on the left, but on the right is a white car, a new possibility.



The fishing village

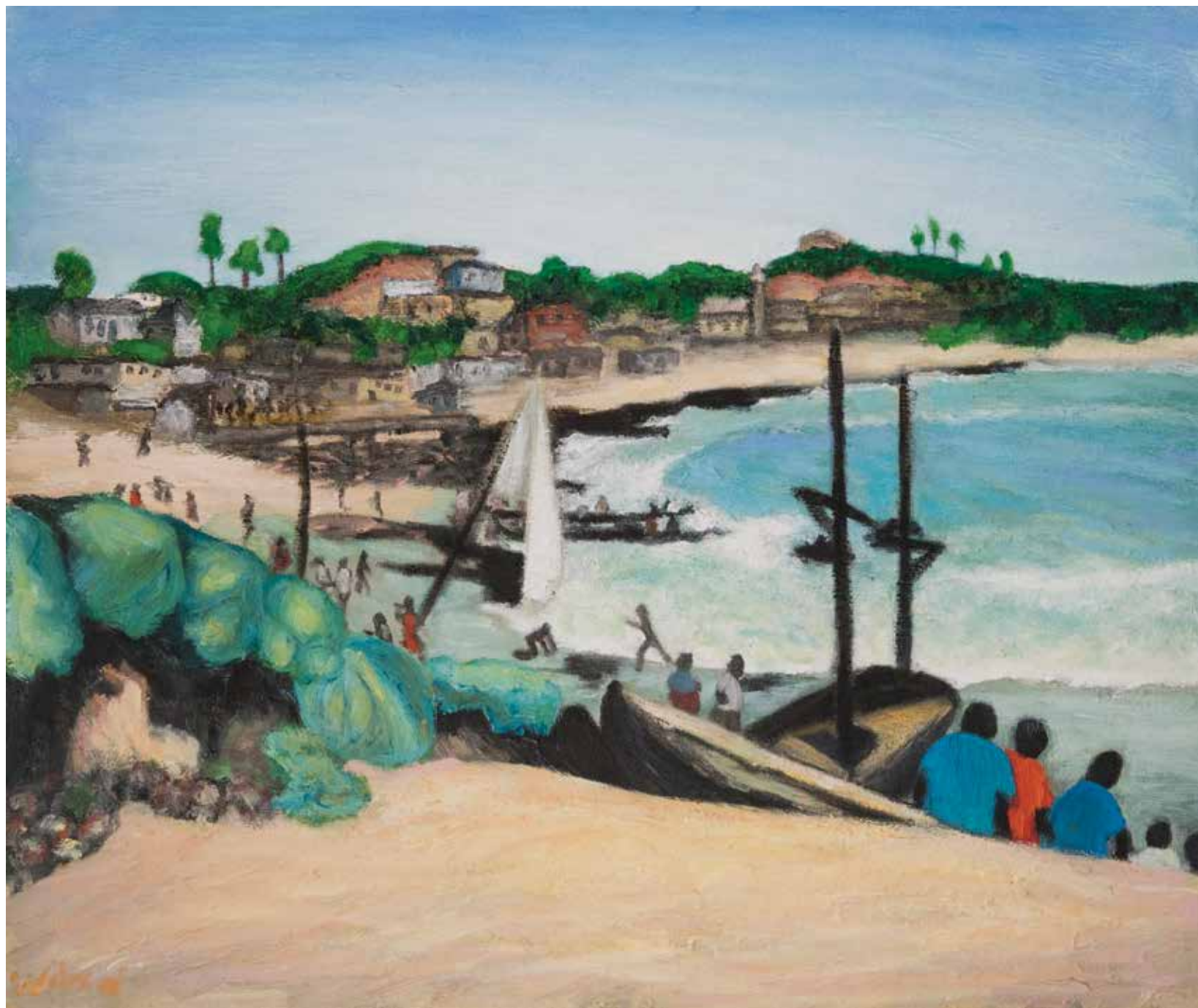
Oil on canvas 62 x 52 cm, 2004

*I have to surrender ego control. I need to learn
to trust in life and the food of the deep.*

The white sail in the foreground is to me the flag of surrender of ego control. The picture was taken by a relative during a visit to Ghana and felt rich and interesting to me.

When fishermen go out to sea, they have to put their trust in what they believe and hold sacred, and be able to hold on to it when

storms threaten or the catch is not enough. One goes in and out on the deep sea of the unconscious, like when fishing, out on a boat on the sea to bring back the food of the deep to the conscious personality. Life, like the sea, like the moon, has a pattern of ebb and flow, of seasons of summer and winter, but spring always comes again. This is difficult to trust in, when storms threaten or the catch is poor, for the psyche is so strange to a modern mind.



The red house

Oil on canvas 46 x 36 cm, 2008

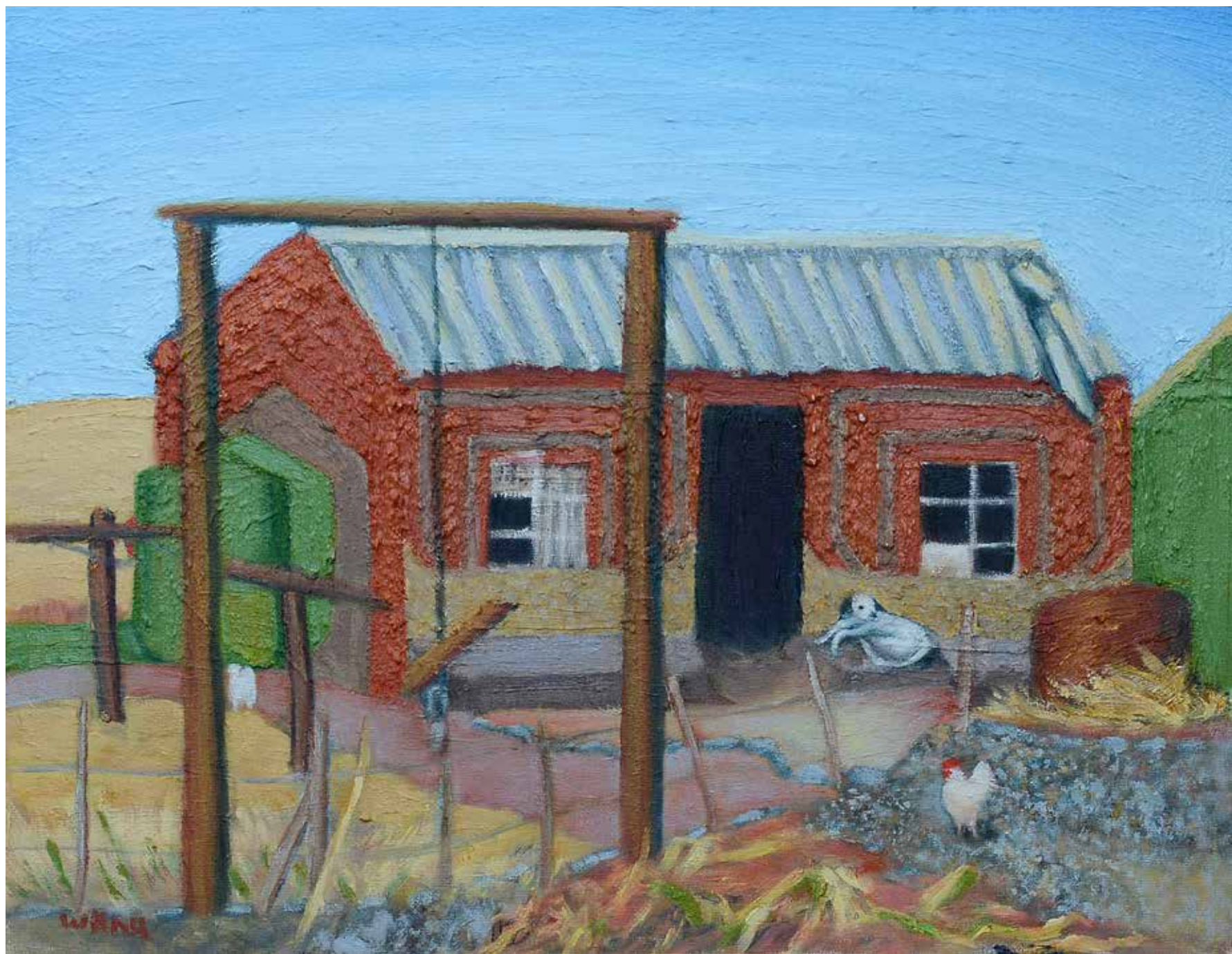
I have to take enough of the right kind of responsibility.

This picture, taken by a relative during a trip to KwaZulu-Natal, had the feel of a call-up or an awakening. I have to take on my load, but my own load only, no one else's. How strong am I? Is my strength and integrity enough?

The red house is contrasted by green shadows: in the shadow, also, is the potential for connectedness, contrasting the divisive action of the complex. The house of red clay is the personality, formed and worked by the life force to be shaped. The cock announces the new day, the dog wakes up and the hen goes to

lay her eggs, new life. The dog is the guide in the underworld, where one instinctively follows one's nose, doggedly, and sniffs out the meandering way of the process of becoming whole. The instincts are needed to accomplish this work of becoming connected to life. By washing out the complex, the sacrifice can be weighed correctly and the unused alchemical container will be put to use.

One has to pay the right price: if the washing out is incomplete, one pays too much and it becomes unbearable. If one does not pay enough, no transformation will happen and the wound will not be healed. One needs the help of the instincts to be able to weigh things so as to sacrifice correctly. For the process to have a successful outcome, I need my animals. I cannot do this intellectually only.



Woman with child

Oil on canvas 40 x 50 cm, 2006–2014

I see that life is also for me.

At the wedding-party, also, was an unknown woman holding someone else's child closely and firmly on her lap. She is dressed in a blue-purple outfit. She is the mulberry woman as the patriarchal woman. She is looking straight ahead to something that is not visible, which is also the source of new hope.

Cut off from her own ability to relate to life, the woman shapes her life according to male values, because the feminine has become inaccessible and unacceptable. Like Job, she has been living her life as an outsider from her own life, taking care of everybody else and unconsciously hoping she would buy a passport to her own truth – but this is not to be.

Two men are in conversation: the intuitive and thinking functions; and two more are seated at the back: the feeling and sensation functions.

The shadows were aglow with the open cooking fires and their large shining pots (see *At the party*, p. 34). The shadow in her face is red; the manifestation of the personal shadow is still 'in the shadow', not recognised as belonging to myself, and can only become manifest when all four functions have developed sufficiently. Once it has become possible to own my shadow, it becomes possible for the lost values of the feminine to return, and one can start to learn to take care of one's own soul-child, which, in turn, helps to release the compulsion to please and take care of others.

The focus point of this image is the intense expression on the woman's face. It shows pain and disillusionment, but also a sense of wonder.



The turning point

Oil on canvas 60 x 50 cm, 2005–2006

Hope returns; it must penetrate deeply.

This image, another picture taken at the time of the wedding, at my request, is of a sandy beach with people and poles interchangeable on the horizon; people and trees, that is, for all are growing. A white line transects the image in the background; it is a shiny water surface, a mirror reflecting the light. There is an open-ended feeling about the poles and the water; it is not hemmed in, but extends beyond the image. It is breathing.

It is the same beach that the three goddesses were strolling on in the first image and is what they were heading towards. If one finds a safe haven where one's story is truly heard and the mirror of the other is objective, clear, and filled with compassion, it becomes possible to hear oneself. The healing of this relationship with the objective other is the container within which the whole process is happening.

This initial bonding with the analyst marks a turning point, brings the hope of a time during which a real turning around may happen, and reminds me of hexagram 24 in *I Ching* p. 505: it is “to see the seed of the divine light”; it is the time of the winter solstice; the banished light slowly returns; it is still young and needs tender care. There is an opening up, “friends come and go”, inner and outer aspects of the personality can begin to move in and out. This is what the woman in the previous image had discovered in the distance, in the future.

In the foreground is a wet sandbank. A new influence, the new hope, has to filter through, penetrate, like water through sand.



In private

Oil on canvas 60 x 45 cm, October 1991

This is a very private process. One has to seek out the inner space, to withdraw from the outer world and its chaos, so as to strip to the naked truth.

This is often misunderstood as negative self-absorption, but the difference lies in the intent of serious self-knowledge.

We see a young naked woman in her room. The naked truth is to be stripped bare of all ornaments and pretence. She is sheltered from the world of chaos outside; contained. Her eyes are closed,

looking inward, searching for her own truth, but her whole body is open, receptive to the wind, or pneuma entering through the open window and turning back in a spiral from which the cat, symbol of Eros, manifests: it is a mystery. If one is receptive, there can be a conception. It is also reminiscent of Zeus entering the inner room of Danae and impregnating her with the spirit. It further raises the question of what to be open to and what to be closed to.



The way

Oil on canvas 1250 x 540 cm, 1999–2003

The way I follow and the seeking is like a pregnancy. My modern life is contained by an ancient pattern of growth and becoming.

The image, which originated from a vision that was more like a stone relief, is framed and contained by a pattern: ancient Egyptians believed the human to consist of nine parts comprising wholeness. This is repeated six times in the frame. In the upper corners are the eye of Horus signifying consciousness, and in the lower corners, two beetles or scarabs, associated with transformation and regeneration.

Nine women are following one after the other. It is the period of time, the “nine months” of the Way, simulating a pregnancy. They are on their way towards the burning water, the integration of the opposites and the point of transformation. If the ego is not yet strong enough, it all starts all over again.

The group of women on the left side is separated from those on the right by a small man with a sword, a trickster figure; this becomes then Thoth, the baboon god of wisdom: the animus changes from negative to positive. In the background is an extract from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The old Egyptians believed that the soul was weighed at the time of death. The price one pays, the sacrifice, must have the right weight: one cannot pay for the sins of others. There must be justice for all, which can only be born from clarity, objectivity.

The right half of the frame is a mirror image of the left half. The eye of Horus is the rising sun of becoming aware. It is balanced by its mirror image, the western sun, the eye of Osiris, the spiritualised masculine. By knowing myself and my shadow, I can see myself from both sides, more completely. One needs to achieve this ability. To see myself, is to be born.



First phase of birth

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm, October 1992

*The new thing to be born announces
the time with joy.*

This image was inspired by an exhibition by Franz Claerhout, *Die struis*, Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, 1993. Four figures are depicted beneath the oval of the head of the baby; they are readiness, joy, tenderness and surprise. I associated the colour with the richness of ripe corn: the harvest can be brought in. Demeter, the earth mother, is also associated with corn. The deep mother-daughter relationship, as the opposites, are to be integrated.



The second phase of birth

Oil on canvas 61 x 91 cm, July 1993

*The new is proceeding to manifest into the open.
One has to go through hell or the valley of death.*

This image was also inspired by the work of Claerhout. The new thing, the new life, is pressing outwards towards reality. This feels like going through the valley of death; the old must die. The four accompanying figures or four aspects of the personality, which were awakened at the start of the process, continue to oversee and support; the four functions are developing. They dance, that is to

integrate, to the music of inner harmony. To beat the drum also reminds one of heartbeats and the rhythm of life, like the baby hearing the pulsation of the mother's body. Dominating the scene is the eye; to see oneself, is to be born. On the other hand, the protecting eye also reminded me of the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert and of my wandering outside myself for so many years, the meandering course of the psyche, searching for my true birth ground.



The blue breast

Oil on canvas 60.9 x 6.2 cm, December 1991

At the centre of it all is the old fear that one shall not survive; one has to confront this fear.

This originated from a conscious attempt to work with my fears: a child is born. Its face portrays intense fear. With the birth of new life, comes the seed of its own destruction, death. This is the deeply seated fear that one will not survive and which one has to overcome, and the source of tension.

A dangerous period, one is extremely vulnerable at this stage. The head of the newborn is red, the colour of manifestation,

contrasting with a blue breast in the right upper area, completely unrelated to the newly-born, not containing or nurturing. Half born, half not, its feet and standpoint are stuck; halfway through the process, one needs to be able to trust and persevere. The blue breast penetrates into the bones like a cancer; it inflames and wounds the lower chakra which is the foundation of one's life. One needs to be able to see past this position, so that, eventually, in the wound, at the base of the spine, there develops a colourful flowery focus point, or the peacock colours of differentiated feeling. The eye in the peacock's tail is objectiveness, awareness: to see oneself. The rose in the wound is a well-known alchemical symbol of healing.



Sophia

Oil on board 123 x 142 cm, 1994–2014

There is a time of cooking, of holding the tension; this is an intense period during which one engages with the inner fire and during which transformation gradually happens. It is a lengthy process.

Gorillas fascinated me, and somewhere I had read something about Sophia as Mother of God. The image came bit by bit; I cannot remember clearly how it evolved.

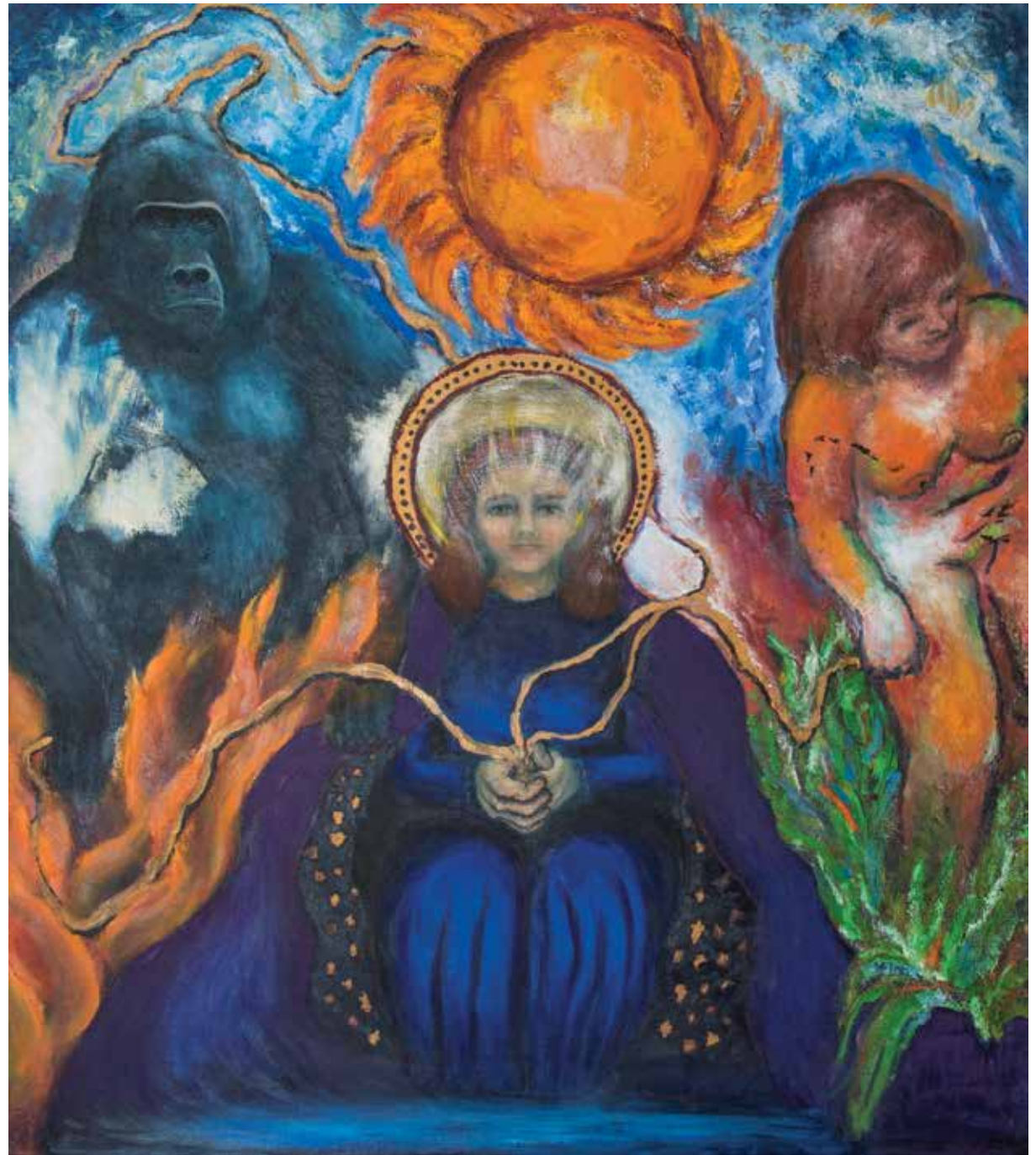
Sophia, as Wisdom, is the true containing power: she holds calmly and serenely. Not only is she connected to the life-giving waters, but she is also rising up from the deep after having been submerged for a long time. We see not only her watery past, testifying to her creative powers, but that she is also the starry sky. She contains it all. Her hands are emphasised: I am in her hands, as opposed to my own attempts to control my world. By feeling contained, I am able to hold the tension necessary for growth. Around her head is a horseshoe; the horse is associated with strength, libido and movement. Energy is available for this process.

Towards her right is the mighty gorilla, the primitive instinctive element, previously symbolised by Raka. The light is shining on his right hand: he holds on to the rope; he co-operates, because he has learned to trust her: a trusting relationship gradually developed between me and the analyst, which made co-operation possible.

This is a crucial necessity for transformation. The gorilla's left hand is on her shoulder: is he pressing her down, or is he her right hand? He is in the fire of transformation, by which suppressive can change to supportive. It is a very uncomfortable period of time.

Fire and water are opposites and combat each other ceaselessly. It needs to be mediated by the wind and the earth. On the other side of Sophia is a woman, consciousness as my patriarchal woman, stumbling around in circles with a very short lead, depicting little personal freedom and rights, the old position. She is pictured in mottled colours as if decaying. She has to bear with this crisis and live it through over time. A black line runs through her upper right arm into her right breast: if she gives up, decay can turn into poisonous self-destruction, the old fear. But we see her in grass, growth, greening, integrating the fierce conflict of fire and water in real life; she is also slowly changing.

Towering over it all is the glorious patriarchal ego as the sun, the arrogant place of my immature one-sided consciousness. His lead is so long, he does not realise that he has ties or is limited. Like a teenager, he thinks the sky is the limit, but he is subjected to the winds of change as the element of air and will be influenced by the new standpoint manifesting in the fire, which also brings new clarity. Fire and water build up clouds that are driven along by the wind; eventually, the rain will come to refresh and bring new growth.



Self-portrait as Ereshkigal

Oil on canvas 35.5 x 45.7 cm, June 1994

My underworld part looks me in the eye. This is death to the concept that I have of who I am, for I see my false life which is not grounded in my true seed. This is my immediate goal.

As Queen Inanna of old, one has climbed down through the long journey of the seven gates, the seven stages of the way, to acknowledge one's shadow, stripping down to the naked truth, a long and drawn-out process, and then be hung up like a piece of meat by the underground aspect of one's personality, Ereshkigal; one has to bear this position, to know oneself, to see oneself and eventually, to accept oneself.

The image was inspired by a painting by Matisse, *Green stripe*, and the book *Descent to the goddess*, by Sylvia Brinton Perera.¹¹ Queen Inanna descends into the depths of the earth in her quest for truth. She sheds layer upon layer of culture, until, at last, all traces of the old life is stripped away and she stands naked before her inner goddess. It is death to the old life.

Here is an excerpt from the book:

The Objectivity of the Eyes of Death

There is affect and energy and lawfulness in Ereshkigal. There are also her eyes of death. For Inanna is killed and turned into meat by Ereshkigal in an action described in the poem with chilling awe:

The holy Ereshkigal seated herself upon her throne ...
She fastened her eyes on her [Inanna], the eyes of death,
Spoke the word against her, the word of wrath,
Uttered the cry against her, the cry of guilt,
Struck her, turned her into a corpse.
The corpse was hung from a nail.

Here in the poem, Ereshkigal's eyes combine with word, affect, the judgement of conscience, and the act of murder. They can suggest a capacity to be objective. In the poem, Inanna, unveiled, sees her own mysterious depth, Ereshkigal, who glares back at her. She has an immediate full experience of her underworld self.

11 Sylvia Brinton Perera, *Descent to the goddess*, Inner City Books 1981, p. 30–31.



Rape of woman

Oil on canvas 61 cm x 76 cm, October 1992

I must be able to see that my feminine principle is exploited by my power principle and that pleasing is self-sacrifice. This is also true of the culture I live in.

This image happened while experimenting, playing with oil and canvas. Woman lies flung across the universe. Blood is in the sky, a feeling of being a piece of raw meat. This is the place of truth, rubedo. My whole world is one of self-sacrifice. I see that I am living a life of pleasing others at the cost of losing my own star. I realise I cannot buy myself out of my complexes by trying to please others. I cannot save any other person from his or her seed, for every person has a unique story, unknown to anyone else, and no one can know the right answers to any other person's problems, only he himself can find the right solution, if he pays attention to his inner life.

I see, also, that I live in a world where the feminine has no value, because the feminine values of relatedness, carrying, containing,

forbearance, receptivity, the earth, growing, death/rebirth, nurturing, are all exploited as possessions. One is expected to live a life of pleasing. This sentimental false sacrifice is a power tool, but is confused with love.

Furthermore, her breasts are toys only, for she cannot feed herself or others. Yet, her position as the firmament itself, raises her up above it all, enduring and transcending this time and position.

In the area of the liver is a manikin dancing. Originally I associated it with anger, but the liver, I discovered only much later, was also considered by ancient people to be the seat of the divine. A man in the liver is akin to the new thing to be born from the alchemical vas, a pregnancy.



The bridge

Oil on canvas 176 x 246 cm, 1996–2015

One has arrived at the place of the stones, the place of the waters. Mourning is an important aspect of the work.

This came from a dream. I was in a boat and saw before me an ancient place, like Stonehenge, but in a vast expanse of water. For just a moment the mists lifted and the divine mystery of my life was exposed. It came with a feeling of awe.

This image is dominated by three large stones with domed entrances. The stones stand; they make a stand; they are standing stones: I have to stand by my own truth. They are arranged as if part of a large circle, stretching away out of sight. The dome simulates the shape of the skull, bringing things together under one roof. The opposite is being portrayed at the back of the neck of the figure in the boat, the shadow of the head, as a sort of receptacle; I have to receive this new position. It is the time, the season: the marriage is about to happen, whether I am ready or not. There is a point at which the stone starts to incarnate.

The stone at centre is the most important. Over this doorway would be written in ancient glyphs the true name of the soul, the sacred inner child, the authentic self. The doorway is an entrance: one fits through this specific doorway and no other, because it is the doorway of only one's own truth, and no one other's. The way I follow is my way only, no one other's way. It is the middle stone, the middle way; it is to seek to live a balanced life. I have been rowing, or was rowed, to this place all my life. (I felt to accentuate the space under the armpits, as if the body is an arrow, or being

propelled forward.) At first I painted oars almost as extensions of the arms, but this was dysfunctional. The old dysfunctional life of rowing from the heart with its passions and fears, the unthinking acting out of every whim that enters into one's head, can start to regress; there is a shift in the centre of gravity. A new way of rowing grows out of the mourning, much in the same way as the hands of the handless maiden grew back in the story of that name.

After many years of wandering and seeking the balanced or middle way, the conscious personality has hopefully, more or less, succeeded in loading the boat with enough of the personal shadow. Jung advised that if the boat is too light, the personality drifts off into space, disconnected and ungrounded, out of touch with reality. If the boat is overloaded, if one takes on other people's shadows, the boat sinks into depression.¹²

It is dusk, the end of a period. One has arrived at this grey place; yet it is aglow with the whole rainbow, a promise. The boat is a longboat: the old egotistic life has to die; the struggle is over and the power principle is undergoing a change. At the place of truth, the boat of the personality must be loaded right for the individual to enter the place of mourning, the place of many waters.

The middle way leads to the water stone, the lapis, a symbol of the self. It is the bridge connecting the upper and lower waters, or it is to over-bridge the divide, the inner split between one's own true nature and one's life in the culture.

¹² Barbara Hannah, in *The inner journey*, p. 79–80, quoting Jung's seminar 1935 (Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the seminar given in 1934–1939, Bollingen Series XCIX); Inner City Books, 2000.



The bundle

Oil on canvas 35.5 x 45.7 cm, 2003

*One accepts one's dependency on God or a
Greater Power and one learns to revere life.*

I made this rather hastily and carelessly, with the outbreak of the war in the Middle East in 2003. In my mind were a piece of wood and the idea of carving a pattern. The name announced itself: *The bundle*, but also the bone of contention, related to the cradle of humankind. I could not relate to this image and put it away. About ten years later it started coming into my mind continuously. Only then could I begin to see and understand this image.

I realised that the piece of wood has the shape of the mummy bundles found high in the Andes. At the same time it simulates a ritual mask: at its centre I discovered shadowy slits of two eyes and beneath that a protruding tongue, reminiscent of the ancient Indian goddess, Kali, the Terrible, as the origin of all things. She is sitting on top of the face of a man in agony – the suffering caused by life.

The top end of the wooden mask resembles an owl, Kali's bird, which would fit in with the theme of this image: as a bird of the night, it is associated with death, but it also has a uterine shape for it contains and nurtures with its wisdom; one feels contained if one is able to find the deep pattern.

The pattern, carved out in wood, is the meandering way one trots over the course of one's life, seeking, making choices. This is the labyrinth. The way of becoming conscious, also, does not run in a straight line, but manifests from the deep as I live different aspects of my personality. My feet wrote this map of my life. It is connected to the DNA of my being, the seed of my future.

The blue background I found to shape the profile of a man, his brow, nose and chin, on the right-hand side, and on the left, the profile of a woman with a rather long nose and full lips can be seen. Unwittingly, I had signed my name next to the woman's lips, as if she is uttering my name. The heads of the man and the woman, the opposites, are unified and they are looking downwards or bending their heads, as if revering the deity, or life, keeping it in their thoughts.

My life is built on my seed, on this pattern, shaping me, bringing things onto my path. I depend upon it. I do not have control over the events that have been shaping my life. It is Nature. I have to accept and adapt to it. It brings to mind the serenity prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change, the courage to change what I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."



The owl

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm, December 1995

This is a time of chaos.

I associated the owl with my own story, my deep truth, fiercely protecting it as it would its own young. The owl as bird of the night is associated with death, but also with the moon, the mirror, to reflect on the chaos, and by reflecting, one finds guidance inside. The moon is also the inner mother's eye, ever present, mirroring one's truth and by seeing it, giving it life. She is the silent witness who bears all. Chaos is also necessary. No life is born from complete order and control. As I fought to regain my inner balance, I thought the owl was calling my name,¹³ but instead I found my own true inner name.

¹³ Margaret Craven, *I heard the owl call my name*, Heinemann Educational Books, 1992.



The third phase of birth: adoration of the kings

Oil on canvas 69 x 76 cm, September 1993

*New life manifests in reality and needs
to be loved and received.*

During the course of one's life, one goes through many times of discarding the old and inviting the new: death and birth. The picture is bathed in colours of red, pink and orange, the rubedo, or manifestation. It is framed and contained by a pattern consisting of spirals: on the one hand it is the meeting of opposites and integration, but on the other it is the labyrinthine way itself.

The third phase of birth is the moment of actual birth, when the baby is born into this world; it is the medical time of birth, and this is what the newborn perceives on first entering the world – 'hello there!' It is received by the same four figures which had been overseeing and accompanying it throughout the process. They are dressed in green theatre garb, greening. To the conscious personality this is like an operation. We see from the left, the shadow, the animus, the seated ego and the feminine on the far right. The different aspects of the personality are clearly defined. They are prepared and are receiving the unknown newly born with respect, for it is the authentic self, the deep truth, the god within.

This whole process cannot be brought to fruition without the objective compassion of the analyst, turning to listen to me when I so need; waiting patiently when I turn away, not taking it personally.

A quote from *The velveteen rabbit* by Margery Williams:

"What is REAL?" asked Rabbit one day. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside of you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real is not how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you when a child loves you for a long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?"

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It does not happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen to people who break easily, or have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to those people who don't understand. Once you are Real, you can't become unreal again. It lasts forever."¹⁴

¹⁴ Taken from the seminar, *The birth of the divine child as fruit of the philosophical tree: the lapis*, p. 12, Renee Ramsden, Cape Town 2012.



The king

Oil on canvas 55.5 x 71 cm, October 2003

The king is the animus of a woman, the opposite of her conscious personality, and forms the bridge to the self. He is gradually restored to his kingdom.

By this process the animus is transformed from an attacking inner voice to a wise counsellor and mediator. His deeply set penetrating eyes remind us of his connection with the mystery itself. In my mind was Strider, the king who lost all in quest of his rightful heritage and who is eventually restored to his own right place.

From *Lord of the Rings* by JRR Tolkien, p. 265:

The riddle of Strider

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.



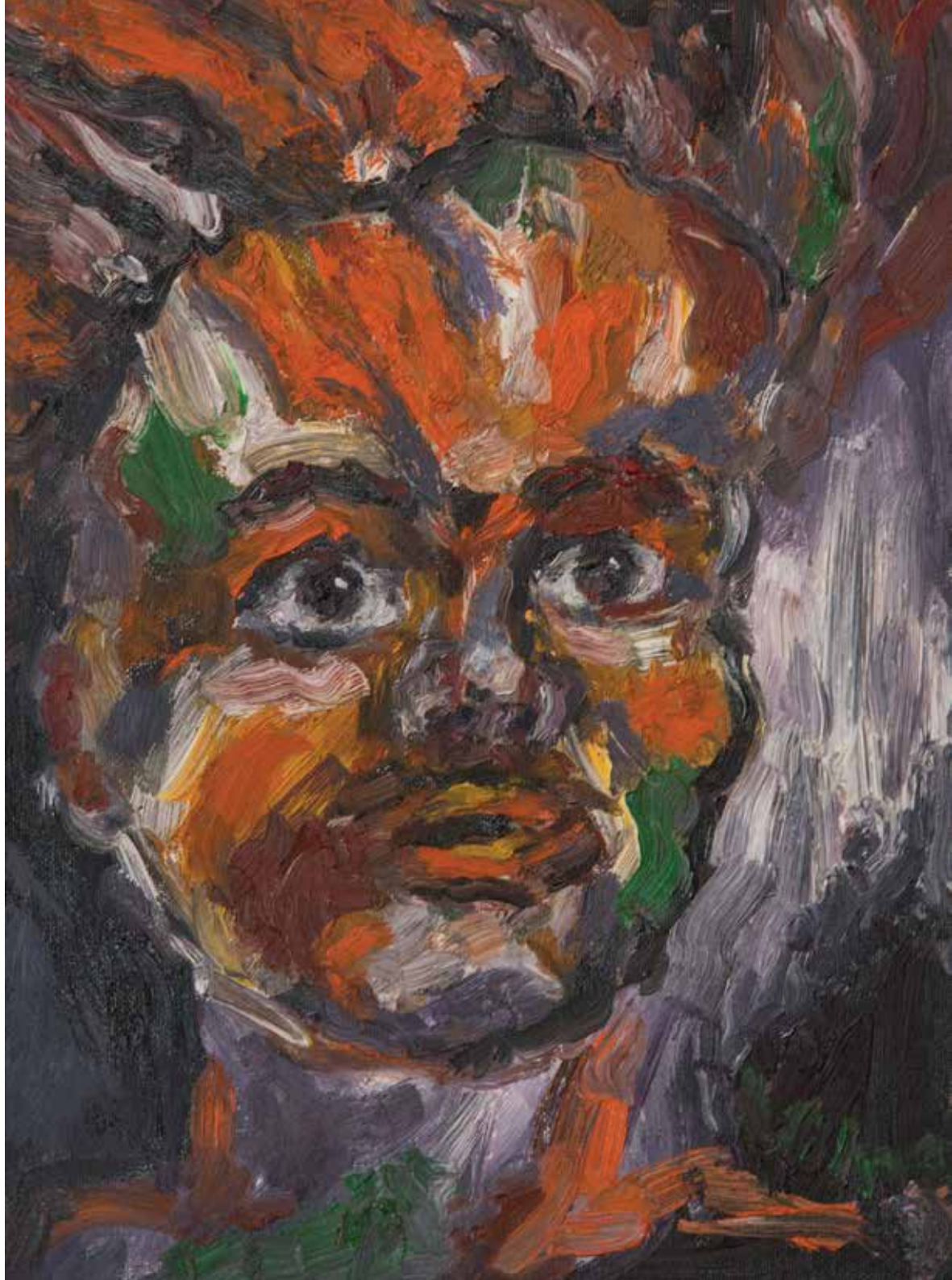
To be in awe

Oil on canvas 25.4 x 35.5 cm, June 1994

*To become an individual, the umbilical cord
has to be cut.*

The child has the markings of the zebrafish, the self, on her face. The pattern is the truth, and the truth is the seed, or the self. The conscious personality experiences the unconscious as a reality, as a shock. This is a numinous experience.

To be an individual, to be individuated, is to stand alone, to be able to stand by one's own standpoint and take responsibility for it, and to accept that one stands outside the group. The deeper patterns both of wounding and of becoming whole have become visible. One can stand clearly outside the old life and recognise its falseness, or smallness. Awful may turn into awesome: the awful load one has been carrying all one's life may turn out to be the awesome seed of the future.



Early mandalas: Mandala I

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm, 1992

The restoration of the ego-self axis happened over a long period of time. At first it was really a precarious affair.

The mandala is a universal symbol of inner wholeness of the personality. The triangle shows the inner conflict in the initial unresolved state. This is flung apart by the two little figures at the top. A crisis in the outer world served to kickstart the process of individuation, symbolised by the cross of black-white-red. This is the beginning of the long road to search for my authentic self. The man seems to be quite comfortable, but the woman is left outside in the cold. The angels are containing this early process. One is under immense and dangerous pressure.

This is how Jung explained the mandala:

Only gradually did I discover what the mandala really is: 'Formation, Transformation, Eternal Mind's eternal recreation' (*Faust, II*). My mandalas were cryptograms ... in which I saw ... my whole being actively at work.¹⁵

The Sanskrit word *mandala* means 'circle' in the ordinary sense of the word. In the sphere of religious practices and in psychology it denotes circular images, which are drawn, painted, modelled, or danced. Plastic structures of this kind are to be found, for instance, in Tibetan Buddhism. As psychological phenomena they appear spontaneously in dreams, in certain states of conflict. Very frequently they contain a quaternity or a multiple of four.¹⁶

¹⁵ CG Jung, *Mandala Symbolism*, Princeton University Press, 1972, Editorial Preface.

¹⁶ Jung, *Mandala Symbolism*, p. 3.



Mandala II: sun-moon with dove feathers

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm, 1992

In this world of all-sun, there is still some moon.

This image supported me in my office for many years. It had an uplifting effect on me, quite simply to remind me that the world of all-Apollonian sun is not the only truth about life. In this image the dove is an old symbol of Mercurius and originally conveyed to me a feeling of peace. I also associated this image with the headdress of an American Indian.



Mandala III

Oil on canvas 61 x 91 cm, 1992

*Initial insecurity had been overcome and I was
able to find a more grounded position in reality.*

Two curtains have moved apart to show wholeness now in contact with reality. The squares in the side panels or curtains have lights for clarity, and crosses, wholeness, but not integrated. The clover leaf pattern is an early manifestation of the three aspects of the deep feminine. The triangular patterns on the borders are the snake skins to be shed many times.



Mandala IV: dust storm

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm, 1992

*One realises that out of the chaos of the storm,
though frightening, something new will come.*

Spring is around the corner and an enormous dust storm brings night to day. The winter trees appear black and dead, but they are merely resting, waiting. The snake process is still underground and there is much fear, but there is also some comforting. The dove appears again as symbol of hope, uniting the opposites of green and red.



Mandala: the kitchen

Oil on canvas 61 x 46 cm, 1993

*The connection between above and below is real,
but not inhabited.*

There is a play of light and shadow patterns, initiated by the snake in the image of *Autumn dance*. Truth and the personal shadow are starting to interact as one wrestles with one's fate. On the back wall at centre there is an image of the personal mother symbolising the mother complex, and at right, behind the overhead light, one can make out the shape of *The split femininity*, the wound. Much work still remains to be done, but some fruit has appeared. The kitchen is the place where the alchemy and the cooking out of the complex happens, and where the baking and transformation will eventually be done. Then, if all goes well, aspects of the psyche can get together around the table and be fed.



Mandala: the rhizome

Oil on canvas 61 x 76 cm 2000–2015

This is my lodestar. It has been my guide all along.

I only realised it now: my star led me to this place. All my life has been adding up and preparing to reach this moment, and the “place” is the whole of this creative coming together. The image points towards potential wholeness and in this way sustained and nurtured me on my long journey.

This image is made up of a large flower and a stone with a rainbow-ring around it. The flower is an Iceland poppy, which is a delicate spring-flower. The opening up of this flower is particularly wonderful; a large pod suddenly bursts and then, before your eyes, the flower unfolds, almost like a butterfly from a cocoon. The flower is crumpled inside the pod and retains these folds like wet butterfly wings. This delicate bloom graces our gardens for one month of the year only, swaying on long slender stems in stormy spring weather. The flower typically has four large leaves with a prominent fold in the middle of each leaf. The four folds form a cross. The flower is growing out of a jagged stone. The stone shines, and also has a bit of translucency, for it is the water-stone. We see it in the dark sky, shining like a star, but at the same time, what we see, is its reflection in a dewdrop. The stone is the eternal and the

flower is the temporary. It is the true seed of the personality or the authentic self, which is the manifestation of the self in my personal life. The rainbow, differentiated feeling, the colour of my life, is to me a covenant that my life will not be broken apart again.

The stone has seven sides, a reference to the seven stages, and the flower may be the eighth. Some important work remains to be done, but this image also contains medicine, for the whole process of initiation aims at the unfolding of the personality in the same way as this flower opens up.

In *Memories, dreams, reflections*, Jung says in the prologue p. 4:

Life has always seemed to me like a plant which lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away – an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.



The old woman and the moon

Oil on canvas 46 x 61 cm, 1994

The old woman is my connection with my ancients.

The cold numbing blue feeling is energised by red energy flowing in from the moon, my connection with my ancients, linking my natural and cultural inheritance. The blue of logical thinking is bathed in the red of feeling values, restoring a lost balance. This brings an improved adaptation to the inner and outer world. This image also reminds us of the image, *The split femininity* and the moon-horns, ancient symbols of the divine feminine, for the moon has been associated with the sacred feminine since ancient times.

To see the other objectively, the inner mirror has to be clear. A clear mirror reflects truth. To reflect, is also to think about things. At times the moon is only partly visible or completely dark, as we wrestle with our own dark sides continuously. The moon dies and

is reborn anew every month. The natural cycle of death is followed by new growth, resurrection, rebirth.

The sickle moon is the older woman; it is the mirror image to the mature woman. The sickle brings to mind reaping and consciousness of one's own fragile life, its temporariness and the ability to accept and adapt to this fact. Everything has limits. To be truly human, is to be mortal. We are not gods. This is death to egotism. Only then can a true relationship with my ancients be established. This realisation is energising and comes as a lightning bolt.

The old woman is my connection to my ancients. She speaks to me by way of images. She has always been there; only, I could not listen.



The zebra-fish: the vision of the sangoma

Oil on canvas 174 x 188 cm, 1994–2014

My life, my seed, is a mystery. The fish from the deep, looks upon the individual with love; love and modesty is stronger than power-drive and possession.

This place and period of time is where the opposites meet and may integrate: above and below, white and black, warm-blooded and cold-blooded, a lengthy and stormy affair, but it is also the dawn of a new time.

This also came from a dream, many years ago, during a period of extreme pressure. This enchanted place fascinated me for years, and it took me a very long time to understand how to 'say' this. It was my inspiration through many dark-soul nights and the canvas is heavy with a great many layers of paint.

At centre are two strange animals, fantastic animals, from my dream. They live on an island. The zebra-fish has the shape of a duck, with the head of a horse and the body of a fish. Much later

it also sprouted a horn as unicorn. The sky is aflame with colour and light at dawn. In the foreground at right is a spectator, with the marks of the fish on his face; it is the shaman, or the animus, the connecting figure to the unconscious. The position of the animus is more or less the position of where the head of the fish should be, possibly an indication of his function as bringer of consciousness.

The image is a window on eternity, which is a symbol for the self: the foreground forms a frame to the background, which is the vision. Originally, I associated this image with paradise. The tree on the left is a local evergreen; to persevere through the cold winter. On the right is a deciduous tree, dying every autumn to be reborn in the spring.

After years of the meandering way, one has arrived at the edge of the water, a threshold place, and stands in awe before the mystery, which one can see only in part, for our ability to reflect and understand is only partial, limited.



Appendix A: Quotes concerning active imagination

The following are quotations from Joan Chodorow's *Encountering Jung: Jung on active imagination*¹⁷:

Jung discovered active imagination during the years 1913–16. Following the break with Freud in 1912–13, he was disoriented and experienced a time of intense inner turmoil. He suffered from lethargy and fears; his moods threatened to overwhelm him. He had to find a way, a method to heal himself from within. Since he did not know what to do, he decided to engage with the impulses and images of the unconsciousness. In a 1925 seminar and again in his memoirs he tells the remarkable story of his experiments that lead to self-healing. It all began with his rediscovery of the symbolical play of childhood. As a middle-aged man in crisis, Jung had lost touch with the creative spirit. A memory floated up of a time when he was a 10- or 11-year-old boy, deeply engrossed in building games. The memory was filled with a rush of emotion and he realised the child was alive. His task became clear: he had to develop an ongoing relationship to this lively spirit within himself. (p. 1)

The dynamic principle of fantasy is *play*, a characteristic also of the child, and as such it appears inconsistent with serious work. But without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth. (p. 5)

An active fantasy may be evoked when we turn our attention toward the unconscious with an attitude of expectation; something definite is about to happen. Passive fantasy is always in need of self-reflective, critical evaluation from the conscious everyday standpoint. (p. 6)

Sometimes an image or idea appears first in the mind's eye, but it may or may not want to come out. More often than not, images arise in a completely spontaneous way as we work with an expressive medium. (p. 8)

Active imagination has two parts or stages: First, *letting*

the unconscious come up; and second, *coming to terms with the unconscious*. Sometimes it takes a long time to assimilate the material. In the second part of active imagination, consciousness takes the lead. As the affects and images of the unconscious flow into awareness, the ego enters actively into the experience. This part might begin with a spontaneous string of insights; the larger task of evaluation and integration remains. Insight must be converted into an ethical obligation – to live it in life. (p. 10)

The major danger of the method involves being overwhelmed by the powerful affects, impulses and images of the unconscious. It should be attempted only by psychologically mature individuals who are capable of withstanding a powerful confrontation with the unconscious. Lesser dangers described by Jung include the patient getting 'caught in the sterile circle of his own complexes' or 'remaining stuck in an all-enveloping-phantasmagoria' so that nothing is gained. (p. 12)

Jung often points out that active imagination is not so much a technique as it is a natural process. (p. 13)

After an unconscious affect or image is given form, Jung generally encouraged his patients to live with it, relate to it, be with it. The image has everything it needs; allow the meaning to emerge from it. (p. 14)

Although he preferred not to interpret the images of active imagination, he was fascinated by their meaning. In his writings, he amplifies the symbols by linking them to the images of archaeology, myth and the world's religions. (p. 14)

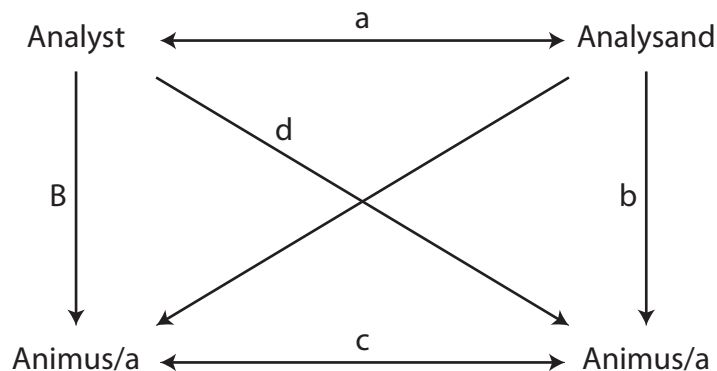
In his final great work, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, he shows how active imagination is the way to self-knowledge ('Know Thyself'), and the process of individuation. From this mature perspective, he is describing much more than a specific meditative procedure or expressive technique. In the deepest sense, active imagination is the essential, inner-directed symbolical attitude that is at the core of psychological development. (p. 17)

¹⁷ Joan Chodorow, *Encountering Jung: Jung on active imagination*, Princeton University Press 1997.

Appendix B: Complexities of the transference

The following excerpt is from the seminar notes, *As above, so below* presented by Renee Ramsden in February 2012. This demonstrates the complex chemistry of the transference and the impossibility of complete objectivity from such a position. The moment of truth is rather when something 'clicks' and one has a feeling of a truth opening up. This diagram was taken from *The psychology of the transference*, CG Jung 1946 (CW 16):

Jung identifies four levels of the transference:



1) An uncomplicated personal relationship between analyst and analysand, represented by (a) on the horizontal plane. This is the conscious communication between analyst and analysand: an adult-to-adult level, the place where personal history, events of life, and dreams of the analysand are explored – the conscious, ego level of relating. The contract of analysis is negotiated and held between two adults.

2) The internal relationship, represented by (B) and (b) on the vertical plane. This represents the internal relationship of each individual with their own respective psyches. This axis is

symbolical of the integrity and self-esteem of the respective parties.

3) The unconscious relationship between the psyches of analyst and analysand, represented by (c) on the lower horizontal plane. This is where the bond is formed between the psyche of the analyst and analysand on the unconscious level. This unconscious identification, or participation mystique, is the sense of being part of the internal world of the other. It is, as it were, the negotiation between the ancestors of the analyst and the ancestors of the analysand, to see if they can work together, to see if they are acceptable to each other. This is a decisive factor in whether the work will proceed or succeed. The messages from dreams are very important in seeing whether trust is given and maintained, how the work is developing. This is where the help of the stars, the divine, the gods, are enlisted, where the archetypal transference is constellated.

4) The relationship of the ego of the analysand to the psyche of the analyst, and vice versa, represented by (d) in the centre. This is the work of making the unconscious conscious, the conscious work of analysis. The analyst needs to be conscious of projections of father/mother/brother/sister/friend/lover/child from the analysand, and needs to also pay careful attention to the projections the analysand elicits in them. This is crucial information in terms of what the unconscious of the analysand is requiring from the analyst. This is where the projections are carried in consciousness by the analyst, until that energy is owned and integrated by the analysand.

Appendix C: Notes concerning alchemy

The following are quotations from R Ramsden's notes of the seminar *As above, so below: introduction to alchemy and analytical psychology: main concepts*, Cape Town 2012:

Most sources put the origin of alchemy in Alexandrian Egypt, and the religion of the Egyptians and their embalming rituals. The religion of the Egyptians was rooted in a theology of Isis and Osiris, and much of the alchemical language and reference points of medieval alchemy is rooted in this mythology. (p. 1)

Baking of pottery and melting of metals is the beginning of alchemy in the shape it had in Alexandrian Egypt. The art of making pots would lead to the discovery of metals in the earth, and its smelting properties. Metal ore in the earth was seen as embryos in the womb of the mother, ripening in the dark. The alchemist would steal this embryo and hasten it to maturity through capturing it in a vessel and maturing it with fire. Cooking is the earliest form of alchemy, and fire and pot are the basic instruments of alchemy, as water and earth are its basic matter. In this we have the main elements of alchemy: fire, water, earth and air, held together in a creative balance. (p. 2)

Alongside this, the wise of the human race, the shamans, have always been in communication with an inner fire: a spirit of transformation which assisted them in how to live, how to make a way in the world, how to alleviate suffering. The relationship to the inner fire has been the basis of our religions and mythologies, the lens through which we view the world, the guiding principle along life's path. (p. 2)

Alchemy: the dark art

Dark is not to be understood in our Western view as sinister and evil. Dark is to be understood as the mystery of the invisible realm of Spirit and Soul. Alchemy is therefore a search for understanding of the invisible realities of psyche, soul and spirit, both in us, and in the world. Alchemy was the search to find the secret of spiritual transformation in our material

existence. The way this search was expressed and understood was through the search to transform base matter, metal, like lead, into noble matter, a metal, like gold. Psychologically translated, it is the search to understand how to transform an immature and ignorant psyche or human into a mature and wise psyche or human. Alchemists worked in laboratories with the vessel, the matter and the fire. Their aim was to distil out of base matter a refined Spirit which would reside in a Stone, which contained great wisdom and transformative power. They experienced, through intense feeling and visionary participation, that transformation was taking place in them too. As they worked they experienced visions which they developed into 'Theoria' through meditation and amplification. These visions were given to them by a mysterious Spirit that dwelled in matter, in them, as well as in the universe. They called this Spirit **Mercurius**. (p. 5)

"The real mystery does not behave mysteriously or secretly; it speaks a secret language, it adumbrates itself by a variety of images which all indicates its true nature. The real nature of matter was unknown to the alchemist: he knew it only in hints. In seeking to explore it he projected the unconscious into the darkness of matter in order to illuminate it. In order to understand the mystery of matter he projected yet another mystery – his own psychic background – into what was to be explained. This procedure was not, of course, intentional; it was an involuntary occurrence. Strictly speaking projection is never made; it happens, it is simply there. In the darkness external to me I find, without recognizing it as such, an interior or psychic life that is my own."¹⁸ (p. 6)

One of the most important woman alchemists who lived in Alexandria around 100 AD, was Maria Prophetessa.

Axiom of Maria

One becomes two
Two becomes three
And out of the third comes
The One as the fourth

¹⁸ Quoting Jung CW 12, *Psychology and alchemy*, par 345–6.

I have worked on this Axiom over many years, and have come to understand it as a basic pattern describing the stages of the transformation process from immature ego to the mature viewpoint which embraces the reality of the Other in a functional relationship. The following is my understanding of the Axiom in psychological language:

Stage one is an original, unitary standpoint ... no differentiating consciousness yet.

Stage two where separation and differentiation begins, resulting in a consciousness of two.

The third stage begins when the ego enters into a dialectical relationship with the shadow, or anima/animus, or inner figures representing these. This **relationship**, here represented by the image of the labyrinth, is the **Third**.

Lastly, from this labyrinthine relationship, which weaves back and forth between the opposites of male and female, above and below, the authentic self is born, a new more balanced viewpoint, which is represented by the image of the **Divine child, the Fourth**.

These four stages are also represented in alchemical writing by **four colours**: black, white, yellow and red. In later alchemical writings the yellow was dropped.

Black represents the initial stage of ignorance or unconsciousness, or depression, and is represented as lead.

White represents the second stage, in which the light of consciousness begins to dawn, insight into patterns emerge, literally like the dawning of the day. In the tree image, it is the young plant emerging from the dark earth into the light of day. It is a stage which brings relief from blind depression.

Yellow represents the sunrise as it comes up, and is the highest firing of consciousness. This is a stage of realization of realities of life, of self, of one's responsibilities and limitation of self and other, and learning to relate to the psyche as a power greater than the ego. The passage to relating is through humility. This is the highest heat of the fire.

Red is the full light of day, the red blood of lived reality in full consciousness and is equated to the birth of the divine child, wisdom, and gold. This is a stage of living the reality of oneself, of acceptance of self and the world as it is, of working creatively within limitation and developing one's gifts." (p. 9-11)

Dangers of the art

"I shall keep silent about this science, which has led most of those who work in it to confusion, because they are few indeed who find what they seek, but an infinite number who have plunged to their ruin."

"This stone proceeds from a most glorious place of great terror, which has given over many sages to death."¹⁹

¹⁹ Ramsden, R, notes of the seminar, *Mercurius as the central symbol in alchemy for the human psyche*, p. 13 quoting Jung CWV 13 par 429.

Appendix D: Demeter and Persephone

The following is quoted from Robert Graves, *The Greek myths: 1*, Penguin Books 1955, p. 89–92:

Demeter lost her gaiety for ever when young Core, afterwards called Persephone, was taken from her. Hades fell in love with Core, and went to ask Zeus's leave to marry her. Zeus feared to offend his eldest brother by a downright refusal, but knew also that Demeter would not forgive him if Core were committed to Tartarus; he therefore answered politically that he would neither give nor withhold his consent. This emboldened Hades to abduct the girl, as she was picking flowers in a meadow.

Demeter sought Core without rest for nine days and nights, neither eating nor drinking, and calling fruitlessly all the while.

On the tenth day, after a disagreeable encounter with Poseidon among the herds of Oncus, Demeter came in disguise to Eleusis.

Triptomelus, who herded his father's cattle, had recognized Demeter and given her the news she needed: ten days before this his brothers Eumolpus, a shepherd, and Eubuleus, a swineherd, had been out in the fields, feeding their beasts, when the earth suddenly gaped open, engulfing Eubuleus's swine before his very eyes; then, with a heavy thud of hooves, a chariot drawn by black horses appeared, and dashed down the chasm. The chariot-driver's face was invisible, but his right arm was tightly clasped around a shrieking girl. Eumolpus had been told of the event by Eubuleus, and made it the subject for a lament.

Armed with this evidence, Demeter summoned Hecate. Together they approached Helios, who sees everything, and forced him to admit that Hades had been the villain, doubtless with the connivance of his brother Zeus. Demeter was so angry that, instead of returning to Olympus, she continued to wander about the earth, forbidding the trees to yield fruit and the herbs to grow, until the race of men stood in danger of extinction. Zeus, ashamed to visit Demeter in person at Eleusis, sent her first a message by Iris (of which she took no notice), and then

a deputation of the Olympian gods, with conciliatory gifts, begging her to reconcile to his will. But she would not return to Olympus, and swore that the earth must remain barren until Core had been restored.

Only one course of action remained for Zeus. He sent Hermes with a message to Hades: 'If you do not restore Core, we are all undone!' and with another to Demeter: 'You may have your daughter again, on the single condition that she has not tasted the food of the dead.'

Because Core had refused to eat so much as a crust of bread ever since her abduction, Hades was obliged to cloak his vexation, telling her mildly: 'My child, you seem to be unhappy here, and your mother weeps for you. I have therefore decided to send you home.'

Core's tears ceased to flow, and Hermes helped her to mount his chariot. But, just as she was setting off for Eleusis, one of Hades's gardeners, by name of Ascalapus, began to cry and hoot derisively. 'Having seen the Lady Core,' he said, 'pick a pomegranate from a tree in your orchard and eat seven seeds, I am ready to bear witness that she has tasted the food of the dead!' Hades grinned and told Ascalapus to perch on the back of Hermes's chariot.

At Eleusis, Demeter joyfully embraced Core; but, on hearing about the pomegranate, grew more dejected than ever, and said again: 'I will neither return to Olympus, nor remove my curse from the land.' Zeus then persuaded Rhea, the mother of Hades, Demeter, and himself, to plead with her: and a compromise was at last reached. Core should spend three months of the year in Hades's company, as Queen of Tartarus, with the title of Persephone, and the remaining nine in Demeter's. Hecate offered to make sure this arrangement was kept, and to keep constant watch on Core.

Demeter finally consented to return home.

Appendix E: Hermes, the Greek form of Mercurius

The following is quoted from Robert Graves, *The Greek myths: 1*, Penguin Books 1955, p. 63–65:

When Hermes was born on Mount Cyllene his mother Maia laid him in swaddling bands on a winnowing fan, but he grew with astonishing quickness into a little boy, and as soon as her back was turned, slipped off and went looking for adventure. Arrived at Pieria, where Apollo was tending a fine herd of cows, he decided to steal them. But fearing to be betrayed by their tracks, he quickly made a number of shoes from the bark of a fallen oak and tied them with plaited grass to the feet of the cows, which he then drove off by night along the road. Apollo discovered the loss, but Hermes' trick deceived him, and though he went as far as Pylos in his westward search, and to Onchestus in his eastern, he was forced, in the end, to offer a reward for the apprehension of the thief. Silenius and his satyrs, greedy for reward, spread out in different directions to track him down but, for a long while, without success. At last, as a party of them passed through Arcadia, they heard the muffled sound of music such as they had never heard before, and the nymph Cyllene, from the mouth of a cave, told them that a most gifted child had recently been born there, to whom she was acting as nurse: he had constructed an ingenious musical toy from the shell of a tortoise and some cow-gut, with which he had lulled his mother to sleep.

'And from whom did he get the cow-gut?' asked the alert satyrs, noticing two hides stretched outside the cave. 'Do you charge the poor child with theft?' asked Cyllene. Harsh words were exchanged.

At that moment Apollo came up, having discovered the thief's identity by observing the suspicious behaviour of a long-winged bird. Entering the cave, he awakened Maia and told her severely that Hermes must restore the stolen cows. Maia pointed to the child, still wrapped in swaddling bands and

feigning sleep. 'What an absurd charge,' she cried. But Apollo had already discovered the hides. He picked up Hermes, carried him off to Olympus, and there formally accused him of theft, offering the hides as evidence. Zeus, loath to believe that his own new-born son was a thief, encouraged him to plead not guilty, but Apollo would not be put off and Hermes, at last, weakened and confessed.

'Very well, come with me,' he said, 'and you may have your herd. I slaughtered only two, and those I cut up into twelve equal portions as a sacrifice to the twelve gods.'

'Twelve gods?' asked Apollo. 'Who is the twelfth?'

'Your servant, sir,' replied Hermes modestly. 'I ate no more than my share, though I was very hungry, and duly burned the rest.'

Now, this was the first flesh-sacrifice ever made.

The two gods returned to Mount Cyllene, where Hermes greeted his mother and retrieved something that he had hidden under a sheepskin.

'What have you there?' asked Apollo.

In answer, Hermes showed his newly-invented tortoise-shell lyre, and played such a ravishing tune on it with the plectrum he had also invented, at the same time singing in praise of Apollo's nobility, intelligence and generosity, that he was forgiven at once. He led the surprised and delighted Apollo to Pylus, playing all the way, and there gave him the remainder of the cattle, which he had hidden in a cave.

'A bargain!' cried Apollo. 'You keep the cows, and I'll take the lyre.'

'Agreed,' said Hermes, and they shook hands on it.

While the hungry cows were grazing, Hermes cut reeds, made them into a shepherd's pipe, and played another tune. Apollo, again delighted, cried: 'A bargain! If you give me that pipe, I will give you this golden staff with which I herd my cattle; in future you shall be the god of all herdsman and shepherds.'

'My pipe is worth more than your staff,' replied Hermes. 'But I will make the exchange, if you teach me augury too, because it seems to be a most useful art.'

‘I cannot do that,’ Apollo said, ‘but if you go to my old nurses, the Thriae who live on Parnassus, they will teach you how to divine from pebbles.’

They again shook hands and Apollo, taking the child back to Olympus, told Zeus all that had happened. Zeus warned Hermes that henceforth he must respect the rights of property and refrain from telling downright lies; but he could not help being amused. ‘You seem to be a very ingenious, eloquent, and persuasive godling,’ he said.

‘Then make me your herald, Father,’ Hermes answered, ‘and I will be responsible for the safety of all divine property, and never tell lies, though I cannot promise always to tell the whole truth.’

‘That would not be expected of you,’ said Zeus with a smile. ‘But your duties will include the making of treaties, the promotion of commerce, and the maintenance of free rights of way for travellers on any road of the world.’ When Hermes agreed to these conditions, Zeus gave him a herald’s staff with white ribbons, which everyone was ordered to respect; a round hat against the rain, and winged golden sandals which carried him about with the swiftness of wind. He was at once welcomed into the Olympian family, whom he taught the art of making fire by the rapid twirling of the fire-stick.

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Glossary of terms

Active imagination: please see Appendix A.

Alchemy: please see Appendix C.

Anima and Animus: personification of the unconscious femininity in the psyche of a man and of the unconscious masculinity in the psyche of a woman. In her negative form the anima will manifest herself in a man's irrational moods and emotions; the negative animus is made up of a woman's second-hand opinions, sweeping generalisations, and imperatives. Their positive natural function, once we relate to them, is to act as guides to the unconscious and to the creative images within.²⁰

Archetype: the archetypes themselves are the indefinable natural forces underlying human life in all ages and all places. They cannot be known directly, but archetypal themes appear all over the world in myth, in fairytales, fantasies, dreams, etc. We can recognise these archetypal motifs by their fascination, their irrational power to move us. A few of the most frequent archetypal symbols are the hero, the wise old man, the nourishing and the devouring mother, the water of life, and so on.²¹

Complex: an emotionally charged group of ideas or images. At the "centre" of a complex is an archetype or archetypal idea.²²

Consciousness and the Unconscious: the conscious mind contains all that we know, and the ego is the carrier of the knowledge. The unconscious comprises all that we do not know in the inner world, from personal repressions to all the vast possibilities of the psyche, the future, and the past.²³

Ego: "the conscious thinking subject" (Oxford English Dictionary).²⁴

Ego-self axis: understood by me to mean the conscious restoration of the relationship between the ego and the self.

Eros: the Greek god of love. Psychologically, Eros is the love that brings healing and balance to the split in the psyche, but may also, if so *used* by the soul, degenerate into lust.²⁵

Individuation: the conscious realisation of one's unique psychological reality, including both strengths and limitations. It leads to the experiencing of the Self as the regulating centre of the psyche.²⁶

Logos: the creative word of God; conscious masculinity, the seed of life.²⁷ When negative, the logos principle cuts everything into pieces.

Mandala: a "magic" circle, symbolising psychic totality and expressing the pattern of life around the centre. Mandalas are found all over the world. They were used especially in India as "yantras" – aids to contemplation. Their structure is usually based on the number four within the circle. Their forms are often variations on the flower, the cross, or the wheel. Traditional mandalas, whether Eastern or Christian, have the Deity at the centre. Individuals nowadays often produce mandalas spontaneously from the unconscious, and the centre is apt to be a point. They are not consciously contrived patterns.²⁸

Night-sea journey: the necessity of a descent into the dark world of the unconscious ... the perilous adventure ... whose end and aim is the restoration of life, resurrection, and the triumph over death.²⁹

Nigredo/ albedo/ rubedo: In alchemy black is the nigredo, the matter or substance to be worked on; white is albedo, clarity, light, objectivity, and red is rubedo, integration, manifestation, birth.

20 Helen Luke, *The way of woman*, First Image Books Edition, Doubleday Publishing 1996, p. 201–203.

21 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

22 Sylvia Brinton Perera, *Descent to the goddess*, Inner City Books 1981, p. 95.

23 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

24 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

25 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

26 Perera, *Descent to the goddess*, p. 95.

27 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

28 Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

29 CG Jung, *Psychology and alchemy*, Bollingen series/Princeton University Press 1968, p. 329.

Numinous: an adjective which describes that wonder which is felt by an individual who is moved by or transformed by a symbol (q.v.); a mystery transcending rational thoughts or analysis.³⁰

Projection: everything of which we are unconscious is “projected” into the outer world, and we see it in events and people outside ourselves. Thus the less conscious we are of our own rejected and inferior qualities and of the realities of the inner world, the less objectivity we have in our judgements of people and things, for they are hidden behind our projections of our unknown selves.³¹

Psyche: the psyche is defined in the dictionary as soul, spirit, mind. As used by Jung, it includes all the nonphysical realities of the human being.³²

Self: Jung has used this term to express the idea of the centre – the centre which is also the circumference – the totality of the personality, embracing all, both conscious and the unconscious. This centre of being has a thousand names: the Atman in India, Christ in Christianity, the stone in Alchemy, the diamond, the child, the flower, the circle, the square, the Tao in China. All these are but a few of the symbols through which men have experienced this central mystery of life.³³

Shadow: the shadow (in dreams always of the same sex as the dreamer) personifies all the inferior and rejected sides of the personality. These shadow qualities are not all negative, but may also be potentialities for which the ego has not taken responsibility.³⁴

Symbol: the meeting of conscious and unconscious meanings which awaken in us an awareness of something that cannot be expressed in rational terms.³⁵

Transcendent function: the reconciling “third” which emerges from the unconscious (in the form of a symbol or a new attitude) after the conflicting opposites have been consciously differentiated, and the tension between them held.³⁶

Transference and counter-transference: particular cases of projection commonly used to describe the unconscious, emotional bonds that arise between two persons in an analytical or therapeutical relationship.³⁷

³⁰ Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³¹ Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³² Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³³ Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³⁴ Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³⁵ Luke, *The way of woman*, p. 201–203.

³⁶ Perera, *Descent to the goddess*, p. 96.

³⁷ Perera, *Descent to the goddess*, p. 96.

A work of art is also defined by the manner in which the viewer's imagination is unlocked together with the creator's confidence therein, releasing unlimited imaginative possibilities interacting with each other. This interaction leads to appropriation and eventually results in embodiment.

Art becomes a mirror image for the viewer to gain insight into the psychic journey of the self, as well as that of the artist, defining the viewer's aesthetic, emotional engagement with the work.

– Amanda Botha, art journalist and writer, Cape Town

This is a book depicting the depth journey of individuation, over a twenty-five year period, in images depicting this process of transformation. It illustrates the remarkable capacity of the psyche to reveal in images the inner process of becoming a more integrated human being. The book offers a rare glimpse into how the human psyche of one individual, who is willing to engage in a depth therapy process, is capable of transforming.

– John Gosling, Jungian analyst, Cape Town

About Wilna van der Walt, the artist

The artist was born in 1959 in Cape Town. In her ninth year they moved to Aliwal North on the banks of the Orange River where she matriculated in 1976. She developed a love for music and the piano during her teens, and planned to study music, but after school she enrolled in medical studies at the University of the Free State and finished her training in 1983.

In 1992 her marriage ended and during this period of turmoil she started experimenting with oils and was introduced to the work of CG Jung. Creative play lead to active imagination and a search for meaning, while medicine brought her into contact with different aspects of society. The uprootedness of modern life was taken back to the canvas and became a mirror depicting the return of feminine values.

During the past period of 25 years, her creative work became increasingly important and in 2015 she sold the medical practice and relocated to the Western Cape, with the aim of devoting herself fulltime to the creative projects that had been lying dormant over the years.

