

Of Regression and Idealisation

[A complementary caveat to "THE CONTINUUM CONCEPT" by Jean Liedloff, published by Penguin, 1986]

The beauty of a partial vision can only be enhanced by encompassing the whole of which it is a fragment. Jean Liedloff has made humanity her debtor by her moving treatment of the lessons to be drawn from the lifestyle of the Yequana Indians and their implication for the future of civilisation. It is a moving book, a disturbing book, that lays bare the condition of detached neurotic rootlessness of what passes for civilised society. It opens up possibilities for a more fundamental at-one-ment of persons with their own inner being, of persons in families, of families in society, of society within its environment. It is both global in extent and multigenerational in its future vista.

Anyone like Jean, who dares to question the contemporary mores, runs the risk of generating an intense love-hate reaction. Significantly she chooses the response of Rachel (weeping for children or her own childhood?) to demonstrate the transference:

'Another lady, Rachel, whose family of four was half-grown, wrote, "I think your book was one of the cruellest things I've ever read. I am not suggesting that you should not have written it. I am not even saying that I wish I had not read it. It's simply that it impressed me profoundly, hurt me deeply, intrigued me greatly. I do not want to face the possible truth of your theory and am trying my best to avoid facing it ... (God forgive you for that sequence about what babies go through, by the way, because, in the deathless words of Noel Coward, I never shall!) ... It's a wonder to me, as a matter of fact, that you were not tarred and feathered at some stage ... Every mother who reads it must do everything she can to avoid its implications ... Do you know, I honestly believe that it was only while I thought that all the aggravation we go through was normal and unavoidable - "natural!" to use a word one often hears by way of comfort from other mothers, child psychologists and books - that it was endurable at all. Now that you have intruded into my mind the idea that it could be otherwise, well, I don't mind telling you that for twenty-four hours after reading your book, not to mention during, I was so depressed I felt like shooting myself.'" [p.12]

To expose any person to the truth and the reality of repressed imprints of cruelty received in childhood is to be treated as if responsible for that cruelty in the first place. Truth that is linked to trauma will inevitably elicit the sane reactions as that trauma, subjected to repression, to denial, to displacement. Truth that opens up the possibilities of fundamental guilt will render the speaker unforgivably guilty in the eyes of the hearer. Truth that raises the echoes of unresolved desires for retribution and retaliation receives at least in fantasy, the fate of being tarred and feathered, excommunicated or burnt at the stake. That which raises what people have done everything they can to avoid facing, will receive as a reaction intense avoidance.

The fact that Jean Liedloff generates this kind of response is evidence of the depth to which she has approached truth, raised the unraisable, named the unnameable, unmasked the hidden, expressed the repressed. It is also a mark of her genius that in raising such issues she

has also held people in a mode of reading which sustains attention and allows a reworking of the underlying construct. So Rachel reads on to the end. In spite of her desire, she does not in fact avoid the void. She risks the depression which follows the recognition of her own alienation; internalises the guilt she has laid on Jean for writing and yet survives its suicidal intensity, reworks her world view and eventually takes up a positive role within the process of transformation. Such is the beauty and the power of The Continuum Concept and such is the sensitivity and simplicity with which Jean has expressed it.

In his review for the newsletter of the Scientific and Medical Network, Dr. Brian Nicholson summarised:

[The Continuum Concept] shows a way of living which dissolves completely the dichotomies between mind and body, thought and feeling, progressive and authoritarian education. It identifies the kind of emotional and intellectual at-one-ment with the world which is needed before the further mystical journey into innocence can occur - an innocence remembered as bliss in our deepest expectations from before the domination of life's relationship to the environment by thought and time; an innocence waiting to be rediscovered in any moment by those who can 'for a time hand over the reins of the intellect to unthinking being'. [Scientific and Medical Network Newsletter No. 37, August, 1988, p.27]

It is a succinct summary and yet one which uncannily uncovers some disturbing questions which must be asked and answered if we are to build effectively on the foundations which Jean Liedloff has laid.

Is the achievement of human potential and the integration of experience truly served by the dissolution of dichotomies? It is an attractive concept yet one which tends to lead into the monism of undifferentiated unity. It is the kind of thought form that characterises a very primitive regression rather than an authentic engagement with the complexities of reality which requires many levels of differentiation and concomitantly many levels of integration. The emptying out of all differentiation between psyche and soma, sentient and sentiment leaves a mode of being which is rightly defined as continuum in which all existential experience somehow blends into a kind of homogeneous soup.

The sense of intellectual regression is underlined by Brian Nicholson's next few sentences. He speaks of 'emotional and intellectual at-one-ment with the world' in a way which appears to mean the coming into unity of a common continuum rather than the overcoming of guilt, alienation and separation between distinct, though complementary entities. It is not surprising therefore that he goes on to speak of 'the mystical journey into innocence' as the next and needed step beyond at-one-ment. Some would see such a mystical journey as the end or telos of human endeavour. That would indeed appear to be the value system applied in Brian's writing, reflecting quite clearly and accurately the values of Jean Liedloff herself. The troublesome question arises however as to whether such a mystical journey is not a retracing of steps into a dim and distant past in flight and retreat from the complexity of a future reality which is deemed as unfaceable, as it is incomprehensible. Significant, therefore, that he speaks of 'an innocence remembered as bliss'. It is an innocence of our past, not our future. It is a period of our development as persons, as being, as species which lives in our presence as memory rather than invading our consciousness as advent coming fresh from the future. It is a journey away from the boundary of the here-and-now back into

the primitive roots of being. It is an innocence which is born of ignorance of complexity. It is an ignorance which stems from the not-yet-happenedness of traumatic experience. It is an innocence which is in essence the antithesis of at-one-ment and can only be described as 'naive before-ment'. It is an innocence remembered 'as bliss', there are no negativities in this world. It re-presents therefore an idealisation, a filtering out from experience of all that carries the shadow. It is an emergence into consciousness of that idealistic transformation of history into primitive utopia, as 'Paradise Lost'. It is that state than which nothing more perfect can be imagined, from which all that is evil has been removed. It is therefore an innocence supremely sustained by splitting of the information base into good and evil and the annihilation of the evil.

Brian Nicholson goes on to locate this experience of innocence in the existential nexus 'from before the domination of life's relationship to the environment by thought and time'. The precise, if unwitting, identification is of the deep intrauterine regression before the differentiation between inside and outside, before the awareness of the passage of time indicating significant sequencing of life's events. It has the quality of eternity, the quality of the 'dream time'. It is an 'aboriginal' concept, stemming from the developmental stage of the organism as an experiencing whole before the development of the capacity for intellectual reflection. As such he is quite correct in describing it as "an innocence waiting to be rediscovered". He recognises quite clearly that it has been discovered once already. It is part of our past. It is there in our memory. To go back to that state and to act as if our subsequent history has not happened is to invert the direction of time, to define regression as progression and, in some kind of mirrored mentality, to walk into our past as if it is our future. The doors through which we came with such pain in yesteryear are portrayed as the portals through which we must pass tomorrow.

Regaining the innocence of bliss is, in that phrase where Nicholson and Liedloff converge, 'open to those who can "for a time hand over the reins of the intellect to unthinking being"'. It is an extraordinarily fractured and confused metaphor. The immediate understanding is that one should leave intellect on one side and allow unthinking being to hold the reins, to exercise the control, to set the directions, the pace and so forth of one's life. But that is not in fact what is said. Some other agent, some other centre of the self has the hands which hold the reins, which control the intellect. What constitutes that self-centre is completely undisclosed, but for a time that self-centre is asked to get out of the saddle, out of the coachman's seat and hand over the reins to a new occupant, a new centre, called 'unthinking being'. It is this unthinking being who must then hold the reins of the intellect, directing the intellect in the way it should go. It is not clear what it is that controls the intellect in the first place and that needs to hand over the reins to unthinking being. Nor is it clear what is gained by allowing unthinking being to take over the control of the intellect, as a replacement rider or coachman whose mode of manipulation of the reins is going to be preferable to that which is precisely undisclosed and undescribed.

The intended meaning however is quite clear, namely that the intellect is a bad master, the left brain with its rational, logical, linear, problem-solving, analytic mode is responsible for the mess in which we find ourselves within so-called civilised society. It should be laid on one side and the continuum of instinctive, unthinking being should be enthroned in the driving seat. So in the end of Liedloff's construct we find an idealisation between left brain and right brain, between good and evil, between past and present. Rather than seeking an integration of complementary characteristics between the different parts of human being, one

part is elevated and the other is denied. Innocence, bliss, the perfect solution, are achieved by the annihilation of one side of the dichotomy of thesis and antithesis. So in the feminist movement it is often stated that it is male dominance, male ways of thinking which have led the species into its current mess and obviously the female of the species should now take up the reins. Others would speak of the male and female parts of each person and the need to move from the male part to the female. Still others would speak in terms of right brain and left brain, but few in this category would speak of the need for a conversion reaction from one side to the other, so rendering the left brain subdominant and repressed, its role replaced by the right brain's dominance. They would speak more of the integration between left and right in a complementary holism, that brings the instinctive, holistic, sensitivity, that multi-dimensional holographic capacity of intuitive thought of the right brain into a complementary synthesis with the essential attributes of analytic integrity of its left-brained counterpart. Perhaps the exchange of horses between intellect and unthinking being is inappropriate. What is required are the linking of two chargers in tandem in the hope that a two-horse-power person might attain the solutions which the one-horse-power variety cannot reach.

In all this there is a certain amount of confusion between the processes of regression and idealisation. In the regressive mode Liedloff invites us to return to a precognitive stage of development. In the idealisation phase she asks us to move from our left brain to our right brain (or the other way round for a true left hander!). It is not an uncommon confusion since many going through processes of personal integration find that the right brain tends to be split off and denied, its functions repressed and its content in some ways identified with pre-traumatic experience which does indeed correlate with the precognitive levels of being.

Liedloff accurately pins the point of breakdown in continuum experience in our western civilisation in the events of birth and the subsequent dislocation of instinctive bonding which is now endemic. Even here, however, there are traces of idealisation since her view of 'natural' childbirth is of an almost utopian and non-traumatic experience. Today, however, we know that because of the particular stage in physical evolution through which we are passing as a species, birth itself is, even in the natural and 'normal' state a point of transmarginal stress of traumatic level for the neonate. The large cranial diameter, evolved to house the developing third brain, exposes the baby to a level of head crushing and moulding which is of a different order to that experienced in the birth of any other mammal. The impingement is made significantly more traumatic by the evolution of greater rigidity within the pelvic bone, tendon and muscular structures required to sustain the upright posture. In addition the upright posture also leads to the weight of the full-term baby pressing down into the pelvic basin where it inhibits the blood supply in the vena cava and the vessels leading to the uterus and so to the placenta. There is therefore a normal experience of placental inhibition and comparative failure for the full term foetus leading to conditions of malnutrition, oxygen starvation and waste product retention. This means that the neonate has to face one of the most stressful points of its whole life in an extremely bad physical condition.

Not only is the paranoia-inducing placental failure and the persecutory experience of the birth crushing trauma enough, but this whole episode also signals the most fundamental change from the safety of the holding environment of the intrauterine condition to the strangeness of afterbirth. It is, as Lily Pincus notes, the 'archetype of bereavement', the first major experience of loss undergone in conditions of trauma which makes the past appear ideally good, the present ideally bad. The loss undergone is therefore the loss of the ideal holding

environment, it is the breakdown of the paradigm of paradise. Under these conditions of trauma, idealisation, and the reversed time-vectoring of regression, there is almost no possibility of resolving the repressed grieving, no mourning is adequate for such a loss. Unless the experience is itself fundamentally reworked and reintegrated, the idealisation process deconstructed, and the emotional imprint from the traumatic experience discharged, then the persona is caught in a regressive search for the regaining of paradise for the rest of life. The search is itself also driven by the fixated sense that the next event is too stressful to tolerate. The fixation just prior to the high point of perinatal trauma acts not only as a block in terms of creative movement across boundaries into the future, but also as mirror and motivator in the regressive search for paradise. With this psychodynamic commonly in place throughout society it is hardly surprising that our main religious systems offer in myth and ritual, in psychodrama and in architecture, in belief system and construct, a way of re-entering that whose loss has been intolerable.

The search may also colour the dynamics of relationships and sexuality, drug dependency and attitudes to change and deprivation. In particular certain geographical or symbolic sites will tend to re-evolve the dim and distant tactile memories of the idealised womb world. At such points of geographic resonance one feels utterly at home and at peace with the world and the universe, the desire is to remain there for ever: it is a holy place, a sanctuary. When sufficient people identify a particular location in such a way then it becomes a commonly recognised centre of pilgrimage. It will attract an evolving symbolism of regressive architecture, art, icon and psychodynamic presence, which in turn intensifies the sense of common displacement and reinforces the social religious process.

It becomes clear from the snatches of autobiographical material within Jean Liedloff's writing that the continuum concept has been generated from precisely some such matrix. The first point of identification came during her latency years:

'The incident happened during a nature walk in the Maine woods where I was at summer camp. I was last in the queue; I had fallen back a bit and was hurrying to catch up when, through the trees, I saw a glade. It had a lush fir tree at the far side and a knoll in the center covered in bright, almost luminous, green moss. The rays of the afternoon sun slanted against the blue-black green of the pine forest. The little roof of visible sky was perfectly blue. The whole picture had a completeness, an all-there quality, of such dense power that it stopped me in my tracks. I went to the edge and then, softly, as though into a magical or holy place, to the centre, where I sat, then lay down with my cheek against the freshness of the moss. It is here, I thought, and I felt the anxiety that coloured my life fall away. This, at last, was where things were as they ought to be. Everything was in its place - the tree, the earth underneath, the rock, the moss. In autumn it would be right; in winter, under the snow, it would be perfect in its wintriness. Spring would come again and miracle within miracle would unfold, each at its special pace, some things having died off, some sprouting in their first spring, but all of equal and utter rightness.

'I felt I had discovered the missing centre of things, the key to rightness itself, and must hold on to this knowledge that was so clear in that place.' [p.20]

It is a beautiful statement of re-cognition, it is symbolically typical of such womb-regressive experiences. There are the living surrounding walls of forest trees, the clearing with the little

mound, recreating precisely that sense of proportional containment for the foetus which was experienced before the onset of uterine constriction, the soft spongy holding tissue, the dome overhead radiating warmth and energy, the outstanding clarity of the symbol of the lush tree - the placental image, the tree of life, the source of well-being. Here the worshipper is constrained into foetal position, either kneeling or squatting in a lotus position or curled up on one side, knees drawn up to the tummy, cheek to the ground. Re-cognition it may be, but the identification with the original ground of knowledge is not made. It is a centre of being, a point where all things are right and well, where the anxiety that invades life has not yet arisen, there is no snake as yet to bite or tempt within this paradise. There is a recognition that the glade has been known before, has been lost and is now re-found, but what was lost is unknown, the connection unmade. Yet in the text there are significant signals: the sense of being surrounded by living, self-regenerating being; it is the place of conception, development, living, dying and regeneration; the overwhelming motivation is to remain in this context forever. The question is how to sustain the experience, how to hang on to the vision.

'I was tempted for a moment to take a scrap of moss away with me, to keep as a reminder; but a rather grown-up thought prevented me. I suddenly feared that in treasuring an amulet of moss, I might lose the real prize: the insight I had had - that I might think my vision safe as long as I kept the moss, only to find one day that I had nothing but a pinch of dead vegetation.' [p.20]

Once that primordial longing for the ideal womb has been met in displacement by a particular location, the desire is to stay there forever. No displaced context can ever suffice for the lost reality of which it is a symbolic expression. The hunger is intensified, the search becomes even more powerful and life-consuming. The attempt to hang on to the experience inevitably fails but the search permeates the life-style. There is a movement from one institution to another, across the Atlantic, searching always for that way of being that feels right, until as an adult, in a somewhat confused and unconscious way, searching still for that primordial right place in the centre of the universe, Jean accepts an invitation to join a diamond-hunting expedition into the remote vastness of the South American jungles. Here she encounters her idealised womb in an even more profound identification.

'It was our first day of rest since we had entered the Carcupi. After breakfast the Italian leader and both Indians went off to look at the geological situation, while the second Italian lolled gratefully in his hammock.

'I took one of the two paperback books I had brought from a small selection of English titles at the Ciudad Bolivar airport and found a seat amongst the roots of a large tree that overhung the river. I read partway through the first chapter, not day-dreaming but following the story with normal attentiveness, when suddenly I was struck with terrific force by a realization. "This is it! The Glade!" All the excitement of the little girl's insight came back. I had lost it, and now in a grownup Glade, the biggest jungle on earth, it had returned. The mysteries of jungle life, the ways of its animals and plants, its dramatic storms and sunsets, its snakes, its orchids, its fascinating virginity, the hardness of making one's way in it and the generosity of its beauty all made it appear even more actively and profoundly right. It was rightness on a grand scale.

'In my joy that day I thought that I had come to the end of my search, that my goal had been achieved: the clear view of things at their undiluted best. It was the 'rightness' I had tried to discern through the bafflements of my childhood and - in the talks, discussions, arguments, often pursued until dawn, in the hope of a glimpse of it - in my adolescent years. It was The Glade, lost, found and now recognized, this time for ever. Around me, overhead, underfoot, everything was right, being born, living, dying and being replaced without a break in the order of it all.

'I ran my hands lovingly over the great roots that held me like an armchair and began to entertain the idea of staying in the jungle for the rest of my life.' [p.22f]

The account is not unlike that of the primal experience of the Buddha, meditating amongst the roots at the base of the bo tree. The bodily position, the sense of containment, the living presence of the surrounding vegetation, the very form of the root structure of the tree itself, restimulates the organismic memory of the last time that little being was held in utter security as if in some kind of mobile weightless armchair in which its newly sentient fingers could run their exploratory ecstasy over the root-like structures of the umbilicus :leading up into the treeform placenta. Again the desire is to stay there for eternity, for the rest of life. Here is the telos, the end point of life's searching, the recovery of a lost beginning. To progress forward from here is to emerge through the fall into an alienated environment, in retreat from which paradise beckons into a regressive future. In the jungle experience the sense of the glade of childhood, lost but now re-found is the dominating association. The displacement which the glade itself represented is never in fact recognised. It was not that the glade had been lost and was re-found in the jungle, but that the womb-world was fundamentally lost and simulated first in the glade and again in the jungle.

The ancient psalmist also knew the temptation to fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, to build a nest and remain there forever at rest - the reconstruction of the womb in the farthest wilderness of the world. It is however a temptation whose indulgence is completely unsatisfying, you cannot stay there forever. If you do manage in regression to get back into that safe space then you have the resources to begin to start growing and re-emerge only to face once again in displacement the trauma of birth and the alienation of the post-natal deprivation, the lack of maternal bonding that characterises our so-called 'civilised practices'. It is hardly surprising that in the first months of the jungle experience Jean thrives.

'At the end of the Carcupi exploration (we did find a few diamonds), when we went back to the little outpost of Los Caribes for supplies, I saw in a mirror that I had gained weight and for the first time in my life might be described as slender rather than skinny. I felt stronger, more able, less afraid than ever before. I was thriving in my beloved jungle. There were still six months to think about how I'd manage to stay on after the expedition; there was no need to face the practical problems yet.' [p.23f]

During those early months the organism does indeed thrive. Significantly Jean feels that 'for the first time in my life', having put on weight she could be described as slender rather than skinny. Perhaps in her post-natal life that was true, perhaps she had never really bonded and thrived after birth. And yet deep in that primitive pre-cognitive memory was the recognition that this is where she ought to be, this was the kind of nurture she ought to have. It was the not the first time that she had had enough, but the memory was pre-conscious and pre-trauma, closed off in the dim and distant reaches of a mind closed over by the repression, the denial,

the suffering, the alienation of the trauma of birth and the deprivation from tactile bonding in its aftermath. Perhaps the experience really did characterise the first 3 months of her womb-world. Certainly she recognises that she still has six months to go before she has to think about leaving. When that six months had gone she was no longer in the same thriving condition.

'When the months had passed, however, I was ready to leave. My flourishing health had been brought down by malaria, and my morale was eroded by hunger for meat and green vegetables. I would have traded one of our hard-won diamonds for a glass of orange juice. And I was thinner than ever.' [p.23f]

Six months later it is time to go. The environment is no longer nurturing. Resources are inadequate, health is degrading. She needs a different diet. Malnourishment signals the time for departure. So in reality this paradise is found wanting. The search goes on. She questions what it is within this experience that is the core of the rightness for which she so deeply longs. Again the connection to the ground of search is not made but one further step of displacement is put into operation.

'The truth of the matter was that I had found no rightness for myself at all. I had only seen it from outside and managed to recognize it, and very superficially at that. I somehow did not see the obvious: that the Indians, as humans like myself and also as participants in the jungle's rightness, were the common denominator, the link between the harmony around me and my want of it.' [p.24]

So into her study of the ways of being of the Yequana Indians is transferred the whole regressive idealising search for the once known yet profoundly lost holding environment of the womb-world, the continuum from conception. The pre-cognitive consciousness of that experience was briefly re-activated in glade and jungle, yet only glimpsed in memory "from outside". Perhaps in displaced identification with the Indians the ideal environment could be re-entered.

The beauty and significance of Jean Liedloff's work lies precisely in the fact that the ways of being of the Yequana do indeed minimise the traumatic disruption of bonding. They generate in their quality of relatedness a way of working through the sense of post-natal alienation and of sustaining the harmony between the inner and outer self, between persons in relation to other persons and between the tribe and its environment. As such it does indeed offer some sense of model but it is a model coloured by the twin dynamics of regression, a going back into some pre-conscious, pre-civilised, pre-complexity state of social being and also by the drive of idealisation, the negativities are denied and excluded from the field. As a religious construct the schema of salvation which Jean Liedloff offers is parallel to many other recipes for utopia: the splitting of the world into good and bad; the annihilation of the negativities; a regression away from the complexity of the present into some past era of innocence and bliss, of wholeness and integration; a reversal of the direction of time and a holding as telos that which was in fact our origin. This confusion of the end and the beginning and the elevation of past situations as goals for the future is a recipe for psychodynamic disaster whether at a personal, social or species level. So Jean Liedloff recites her creed:

'But I believe it is still possible to start as we are, lost and handicapped, and find a way back. At least we might learn the direction in which our best interests lie and not go on making efforts that have an equal chance of leading us further off the track. The conscious part of the mind, like a good 'technical adviser' in someone else's war, when it sees the error of its ways, ought to work to put itself out of business, not move deeper into alien territory.' [p.35]

That first sentence puts the whole concept of the continuum in a nutshell. We are to start where we are and find our way back. The direction in which our best interests lie is behind us, therefore we should turn round, abandon the future and search for our past, for in that is our wholeness. The attempt to find the way forward along the track is to be abandoned. Consciousness is to put itself out of business. The task is the regression into pure instinct, into an id-entity with the continuum of intrauterine bliss.

The denied area of experience, the search for which drives Jean Liedloff's whole project, is contained in those few fragile months from conception to birth, from the fertilisation of the single cell, to the emergence of the fully formed neonate. That missing 9 months of eternity is then symbolically re-coded and projected back into the dim mists of time, to provide some kind of biogenesis in myth:

'The chain of experience that prepares a human being for his time on earth begins with the adventures of the first single-celled unit of living matter. What it experienced in the way of temperature, the composition of its surroundings, available nourishment to fuel its activities, weather changes and bumpings into other objects or members of its own species was passed on to its descendants. Upon these data, transmitted by means still largely mysterious to science, the very, very slow changes came about which, after an unimaginable passage of time, produced a variety of forms that could survive and reproduce themselves by coping with the environment in different ways.' [p.36]

There does indeed appear to be a continuum of living experience internalised into the complex multi-dimensional force-field structures of the molecular chains of living matter. That continuum puts us in touch not simply with the emergence of the first single-celled animal, but way back into the continuum that reaches through the millions of years of formation of complex amino-acid molecules that prefigured the development of the cell, back into the inorganic chemical soup, which was itself such a late stage in the formation of the planet earth. The continuum reaches way back before that to the origins of some of the complex atoms in the imploding cataclysm of supernova formation, the unimaginable processes of travel through space and time that link the here-and-now of human being to the there-and-then of emergence from the singularity of black hole plasma.

It is significant that Jean Liedloff cuts off the continuum with the first cell. Perhaps her aeons of biogenesis really are a mirror of the eternity of gestation. That which makes a specific individual is traced in displacement from the point of conception through the development of the tiny pinhead of an organism evolving within its environment, embedding in the infinite jungle of the womb lining tissues, cradled in the roots of the umbilicus, nurtured in the glade of placental attachment, growing in a condition of precognitive, preconscious at-one-ment with its environment, until it reaches the cataclysm of birth itself. In its subsequent wilderness of alienation it is driven by the search to return to its beginnings.

Such a centration may be an essential point of departure for the process of personal integration, but it is a beginning, not an end, a ground and not a goal. Perhaps as a species we have to recapture our dream-time, and then work forward again, integrating the traumatic experience of parturition, deconstructing the idealisation, the splitting, the polarisation, the denial and the regression. It is these defence structures that permeate our being and inform our sociality, that disrupt our dynamic into neurotic search, displacement, retaliation and victimisation, both of one another and of our common world. In such a pilgrimage the Yequana offer us not a goal, a destination or an end. Perhaps they can provide for us an indication of our starting point, the end of our beginning.

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