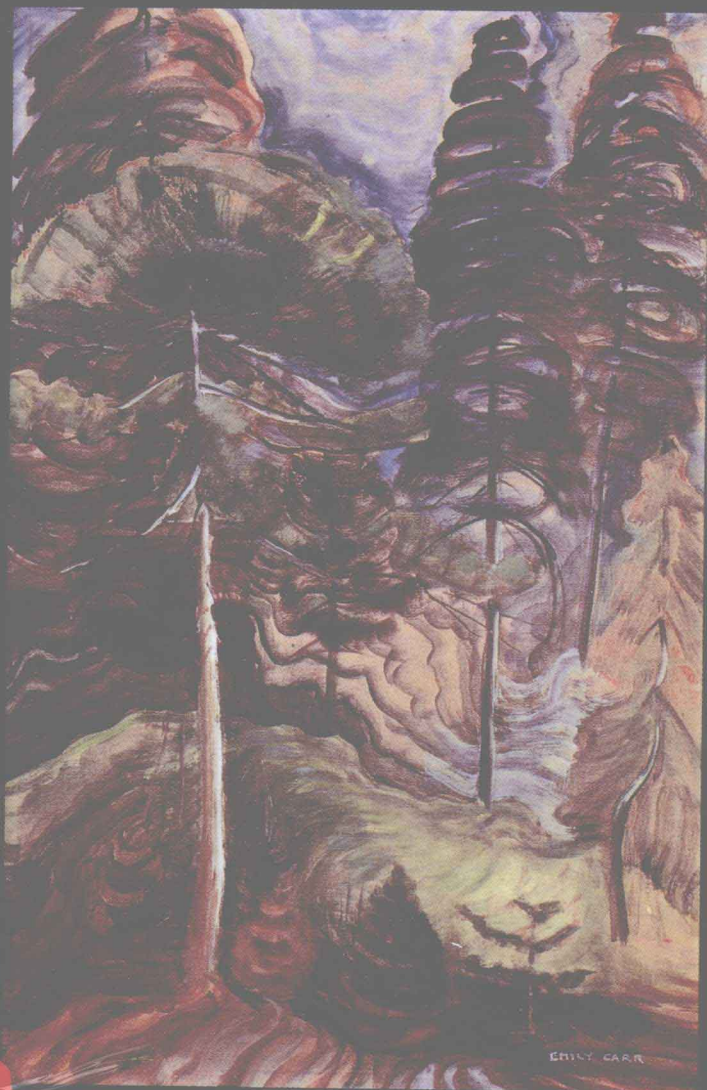


LOVE AND THE SOUL

Creating a Future for Earth



ROBERT SARDELLO

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Facing the World with Soul

For Cheryl

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GETTING STARTED

This book is about the future. However, I am not a futurist, and what follows is neither prophecy based in clairvoyance nor prediction based on extrapolating current world conditions to produce a vision of the times to come. If we listen only to the clairvoyants or to the scientists concerned with prediction, what is around the corner looks very dire indeed. But, knowledge of the future alone, regardless of the source, seems to me to be of very little importance because it is inevitably fatalistic. This fatalism stems from an emphasis on seeing what is ahead in terms of one content or another. Some may see natural catastrophes while others see incredible technological achievements. Regardless of what is seen, when the focus is on content then the creative powers of the human soul are neglected as being a primary factor in the making of the world. My focus is on the future of soul and the soul's engagement with the future.

What has not yet been touched on by psychologies of the soul life are three essential qualities that guide and shape what is to follow in this book. The first is that the soul is tremendously interested in the future. The second is that the soul can no longer be viewed as belonging to what goes on unconsciously beneath the surface of consciousness; we are entering the age of soul consciousness. And the third is that soul cannot be confined to being a substrate of human consciousness, a limitation leaving the outer world prey to the literalisms of science, technology, and economics, which, in spite of all their benefits to the world, if left on their own, will not only eradicate individual soul life, but also bring world destruction.

The basic premise of this writing is that soul refers to the imaginative possibilities in our nature. This definition of soul follows C. G. Jung, who considered the images that run through our daydreams and night dreams to be the fundamental mode of operation of the soul. Jung does not tell us what the soul is, but rather how it functions. According to Jung, images are also always present in waking consciousness, but here operate unconsciously.

Further, what is most important in this minimalist definition of soul is the activity of imagining rather than the momentary results of this ongoing activity that appear as the content of images. Many followers of Jung are forgetful of this crucial distinction between activity and content, and work with image content rather than image activity; for example, they work with myths rather than mythical imagination, or with the content of dreams rather than dream activity. An exception is James Hillman who has produced a remarkable archetypal psychology that is indebted to Jung, but emphasizes always the active quality of soul life that by its very nature cannot be pinned down. Nonetheless, soul life can be described quite accurately as long as one adheres to metaphor, likeness, resemblance, analogy, and style, rather than to language suitable to reified things. An emphasis on activity rather than content becomes even more important when considering how soul works into the future, in full consciousness, conjoined with the world.

Depth psychology is such a fascinating field because it must constantly change to meet the needs of the soul that are ever-changing. Jung emphasized archetypes in his psychology because soul expressed its need for roots as it became apparent that history and tradition no longer nourished the inner life. Hillman emphasizes image, metaphor, likeness, myth, and fantasy because soul expressed its need for culture, as it is now apparent that art, story, tale, poetry, and ritual are no longer taken seriously and that everyday life has been usurped by the factual. The need now emerging is both deeper and broader than history, tradition, and culture, and that need is love. I do not mean that soul needs to be loved

but that love is the very essence of soul, and this essence, as it has been expressed in the world in the past, is fast disappearing. All the manifold and different phenomena of the soul are modifications and various transformations of love. Every stirring of a soulful kind, however it may come into appearance, is in some way modified love. Thus, it is not possible to know what stirs in the soul except through love, and depth psychology is an epistemology of the heart. When Jung says that soul refers to the imaginative possibilities in our nature, we can hear this in a more dynamic sense as referring to the creating activity characteristic of love.

If we ask why soul finds rootedness in archetypes and culture in imaginal realities, it is not just because archetypes are very old and culture is very fecund. Soul is in these instances holding fast to primary reflections of itself as creative both of the universe and of the human world, the latter which has a special significance in relation to the whole, the significance of being responsible for the fate of the whole. Thus, archetypes are first modifications of a creating force that is far too intimate to be encompassed by the mechanistic assumptions of physics and the big bang theory. And imaginal realities are first modifications of this same creating force that is far too personalized to be explained by impersonal evolutionary processes. Soul finds its homeland in archetypal pictures and its proper landscape in culture because these are both productions of the creative force of love.

Seeing the essence of soul as love, and love as more than emotion, desire, or sentiment, allows us to venture further than ever imagined into soul life, getting even closer to its reality than is possible through what is expressed in its first modifications into archetype and imaginal reality. First, we are able to see that soul activity is prospective before it is retrospective; that is, love creates the unknown but utterly substantial reality of the future. As long as there is the sense of soul, there is the sense of a future. And when there seems to be no future, or a future that is no more than a projection of the past modified by wild fantasy instead of the truly new and unknown drawing us toward it, then soul has been

diminished. Second, soul as love implies that it is an activity that seeks to be fully conscious and not remained trapped behind the scenes, in the dark, labeled as the unconscious. In fact, unconsciousness does not belong at all with the activity of love, but is nothing more than our inability to face the full reality of love—that it is not a content, but the very activity of consciousness. Third, soul as love, and love as the activity of consciousness rather than the content of consciousness, opens up the reality that the outer world expresses itself everywhere and in each individual thing as the appearance of soul in the world.

Love is an extensive word, easily thrown about carelessly and used to depict our feelings about nearly everything. In order to avoid further misuse, in the following chapters this word is always implicitly conjoined with soul and, further, linked up with the careful observation of a host of phenomena through which this creating activity can become palpable and substantial. All of the usual senses of love, including sexual attraction, emotional bonding, familial ties, and absolute regard for oneself, are seen more as preparatory aspects for the primary task of taking up this force in freedom and responsibility.

We must, I think, distinguish between being carried by love and originating love. While love is the essence of soul, we are now entering a time when we have to give birth to our own essence. The expectations that we all carry and nourish that we will be supported by love coming from some all-caring presence, either human or divine, miss the point that the varying forms in which this support has been present over many ages have been but preparations. When love first emerged in the human world, it did so in the form of blood ties. This form of love is no longer effective, and in fact, if now enacted is harmful because it dims the fact of true individuality.

When romantic love originated, it brought about the possibility of caring for a stranger as strongly and as completely as if the other person were of one's own blood. When self-love entered, it brought the possibility of freely deciding to

care for another rather than being carried by the bond of emotion, but it also brought the possibility of self-centeredness. While many confusions still continue to exist in all of these manifestations of love, we have come to the end, I think, of being carried by love and now have to discover how to originate it.

The approaching end of this millennium may signal the end of love as we have known it in the past. This would mean the beginning of true independence in this sphere and the attendant task, to be developed over a long period of time, of coming now to create love rather than to be carried by it. Of course, when the first day of the year 2000 arrives, outer things will look pretty much the same as they did the day before. Love as we have known it does not die on that day. It has actually been dying now for a long time, since at least the middle of the present century. And the birth of fully conscious individual love has already started. But, this new birth will take a very long time and will not happen automatically.

The passing from one form of love to another did happen in the past, not without struggle, but inevitably. *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, depicts the passing of love from blood bonds to romantic love, something that could not be prevented. To choose to create our essence through creating love does not have this finality. It is up for question whether we shall take on this task or continue to try to revert to former modes of love. Nationalism, for example, is such a reversion. And, while we are in the midst of gradually and mostly reluctantly trying to decide whether or not we are capable of taking up this task, there is a tremendous void of love, and thus of soul, in the world. This void does not remain empty but is taken up primarily by scientific, technological, and economic materialism, which would try to make a world full of substitutes for love and soul.

The three shaping forces of the present world—science, technology, and economics—are extremely important because they give the soul something to push against in order for it to come into its central place as capable of making a world. When soul-making implies that these factors are wrong and

that an alternate world is what is being sought by turning to soul, then we do not have soul but escapism. The danger that arises when there is not adequate balance to these outlooks is that we relinquish to these realms what belongs essentially to the work of soul. For every advance in the domains of science, technology, and economics, two steps are needed in soul work to keep from losing sight of soul. Science must be met by equal disciplines of careful research and observation of the inner side of things in order to complement knowing through the mind with knowing through the heart. Technology must be met at every step by an equal interest in how soul can actually function in the world, the challenge of practicing soul-work in the world. Economics must be balanced by learning care of the soul so that meaning does not come to be equated with outer possessions.

The three qualities of soul mentioned earlier—interest in the future, soul consciousness, and locating soul in the world as well as within individual life—can now be seen as soul needs stemming from the prevalence of science, technology, and economics. Left to itself, technology determines the meaning and essence of the future. Left to itself, science determines what counts as valid consciousness—that which is quantifiable, measurable, and can be seen. Left to itself, economics determines what happens in the world, and indeed defines what makes the world. These powers of the world are now so strong and so pervasive that very fundamental reflections of soul in the world such as tradition and culture cannot balance them and will be lost, even with all the efforts of depth psychology to uphold their importance.

Only the very essence of soul as love, worked out in concrete and specific ways, can balance these world powers. First, soul now needs a deep and unassailable interest in what we can be rather than only in what caused us to be the way we are due to what has happened to us from the past—soul as future. Second, soul now needs to operate in the full daylight of consciousness in order to freely take up the responsibility of creating love and thus re-creating its own essence—soul as soul consciousness. And third, soul now needs to free

itself from the limitation of confinement to individual life alone, and develop the capacity to feel itself in everything in the outer world—soul as world soul. These interests form the substance and activity of this book. The content is merely the by-product.

While this work begins in depth psychology, the boundaries of psychology are pushed to the very edge. My concern is not to find acceptance by the orthodoxy but to express the urgency of finding the doorway leading to the creation of a new spiritual culture. No one has more carefully articulated what such a culture might look like than Rudolf Steiner, and his insights are evident throughout this book. However, just as this is not another book about Jung or archetypal psychology, so also it is not a work about Steiner, but rather an attempt to exemplify a way of working based on a schooling of consciousness, which is the essence of what Steiner has offered the world. While many people take up Steiner's Anthroposophy as a system of thought and apply it in many fields, often religiously, he was as adamant about decrying Steinerians as Jung was about Jungians.

A schooling of consciousness becomes necessary in approaching soul-work in order to adhere to what can be known through description rather than through devising theories. The phenomena of soul life are available to consciousness and can be described, provided the attempt is made to speak from soul rather than about soul. Soul is all around us and is not the special province of dreams, myths, alchemy, or active imagination. But, to say that soul is all around us means that it is not possible to find a standpoint outside, and thus it becomes necessary to be able to speak from within what one is observing; that is to say, the observer is inevitably an aspect of what one observes when working from a soul perspective. This sort of intimacy is different from the recognition by science that observation of a phenomenon has an effect on what is being observed.

Here, to be objective, it is necessary to develop soul logic rather than cognitive logic. Since phenomena of the soul pre-

sent themselves always as living pictures, as images, soul logic involves not speaking about images but speaking from within the activity of imagination. Too often, depth psychology uses images, myths, and stories either as illustrations or as material to be interpreted. What is not seen is that the illustrative or interpretive use of images applies a different logic to the material than that belonging to what is being talked about. The result of this kind of thinking is that soul can never find its way to the center; it is a little like being told stories about someone without ever meeting the person. If the stories are good, you might feel as if you know the person, but the stirring of soul is not the same as its immediate, conscious presence. When soul is stirred, the response of sympathetic resonance easily passes as knowledge and can serve as an unfortunate substitute for the unavoidable work of coming to know for oneself.

Soul logic can be recognized by the fact that it synthesizes rather than analyzes. Soul phenomena are characterized by an act of knowing in which apprehending soul and understanding soul are completely united. Thus, soul cannot be explained by anything outside its own appearances, and when we enter into the multiple appearances of soul its meanings are self-explanatory. Evaluation of what is revealed through this act of immediate apprehension accompanied with understanding must be made on the basis of different criteria than those used in the realm of cognitive logic. In cognitive logic the primary question is whether what is stated is right or wrong. In soul logic the primary question is whether what is put forth is healthy or sick. Health is determined by whether the understanding works organically as a whole being and serves the whole being of the one encountering such understanding. Illness occurs when something partial is taken to be the whole, which is not always easy to determine. Sometimes what will make one ill feels very good, so the criterion cannot be how what is put forth makes one feel.

In the realm of soul logic, what is healthy is usually at first unsettling. It becomes necessary not to immediately

reject disturbance, but to go on to see whether a whole world is being revealed in a steady row of manifestations that makes a complete picture even if it does not make the picture completely. A sign of health is that more questions are raised than are answered, and that the nature of such questions does not carry the character of doubt but rather the inspiration to go yet further.

The character of soul logic can be described in yet another way, from the viewpoint of its purpose. Practical application is the least useful form of soul logic and the greatest stumbling block on the way to a new way of knowing. What must be seen is that application, at least as it is currently understood, carries with it the propensity to impose something on others or on the world that is imagined to be beneficial or helpful. Application in this sense brings the greatest possible harm to the soul because such application is bound to be highly influenced by the attempt to address a problem in the most efficient manner possible and to bring about results in the least amount of time possible. Soul does not function in this manner; it is not in the least concerned with efficiency, but can be easily obscured when approached in this manner.

If application is set aside, does soul logic have the purpose of knowledge for its own sake? This purpose is also unsuitable to the soul realm, primarily because knowing in this way does not do anything. While it might be argued that psychology is a modern version of the ancient practice of knowing oneself and that such knowledge in itself makes a difference, this form of knowing is next to application the least useful form of approaching soul logic. Soul is not an entity but an activity, and thus if one knows what it is but does not know it in its functioning, in its very operation while it is functioning, such knowledge may be profound but is nevertheless abstract. Such knowledge does not take one into the world but away from it, sanctified perhaps by believing that one has entered the domain of the esoteric and the hidden, which most likely reveals a fear of the world rather than a love for it. In our time, if soul-knowing is not

also world-knowing, self-knowledge rapidly declines into self-aggrandizement.

Soul logic begins to stand on its own when seen as a mode of beholding. Soul, first and foremost, needs to be witnessed. To stand simultaneously before the reality of soul and within this same reality is a way of knowing proper to this domain. The simultaneity of participating and observing is the mode of imagination, but here it is necessary to distinguish between beholding as a necessary beginning and its fulfillment. Beholding alone is not sufficient to count as soul logic; it is only what initiates it. Imagination must unfold into productive imagination, the positive act of participating in the creation of what one beholds. Soul logic also creates what is being observed by attending not only to what presents itself but also to the coming about of what is presented. This way of knowing is the most productive because it encompasses the appearances of soul, the coming into being of those appearances, and the result of those appearances. This comprehensive soul logic satisfies in one act what is otherwise segmented into knowledge and application, while excluding altogether the coming into being.

The work of soul logic is to be engaged in creating the capacities to apprehend soul-making rather than what is already made. If we proceed as if soul is already made then we are fated to discover only what we already know in advance. Entering into soul logic is a schooling of consciousness because ordinarily we are able to be present only to the endpoint of an ongoing process and the coming-to-be of this endpoint is relegated to the realm of the unconscious. The prevalence in psychology of the notion of a separate realm of the unconscious is nothing more than a sign of laziness, of wishing to know what is going on beneath the surface without undergoing the effort required to find out that in fact nothing is hidden in the first place. To break through this false division between the conscious and the unconscious, all that is needed is practice in active focusing, combined with receptive assimilation that does not go to sleep but is taken up productively by understanding that reception is also a cre-