

WILD MIND

A Field Guide to the Human Psyche

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*To
the visionary artisans of cultural evolution
and
to the future children of all species.*



Nature is an incomparable guide if you know how to follow her.
She is like the needle of the compass pointing to the North,
which is most useful... when you know how to navigate.

— C. G. JUNG

... Sometimes...
... I look out at everything
growing so wild
and faithfully beneath
the sky
and wonder
why we are the one
terrible
part of creation
privileged
to refuse our flowering...

— DAVID WHYTE, FROM "THE SUN"



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Introduction

Re-Visioning Our Selves

Let the day grow on you upward
through your feet,
the vegetal knuckles,
to your knees of stone,
until by evening you are a black tree;
feel, with evening,
the swifts thicken your hair,
the new moon rising out of your forehead,
and the moonlit veins of silver
running from your armpits
like rivulets under white leaves.
Sleep, as ants
cross over your eyelids.
You have never possessed anything
as deeply as this.
This is all you have owned
from the first outcry
through forever;
you can never be dispossessed.

— DEREK WALCOTT, "EARTH"

It's time to take another look at ourselves — to re-enliven our sense of what it is to be human, to breathe new life into ancient intuitions of who we are, and to learn again to celebrate, as we once did, our instinctive affinity with the Earth community in which we're rooted. We're called now to rediscover what it means to be human beings in a wildly diverse world of feathered, furred, and scaled fellow creatures; flowers and forests; mountains, rivers, and oceans; wind, rain, and snow; Sun and Moon.

It's time to take an ecological and holistic look at the human psyche, to make a fresh start with Western psychology.¹ In an era when the revealed interdependency of all things is radically reshaping every field of knowledge, what might we discover about the human psyche — the totality of our psychological capacities, both conscious and unconscious — when we consider that we, too, are expressions of nature's qualities, patterns, and motifs?

We're being summoned by the world itself to make many urgent changes to the human project, but most central is a fundamental re-visioning and reshaping of *ourselves*, a shift in consciousness. We must reclaim and embody our original wholeness, our indigenous human nature granted to us by nature itself. And the key to reclaiming our original wholeness is not merely to suppress psychological symptoms, recover from addictions and trauma, manage stress, or refurbish dysfunctional relationships but rather to fully flesh out our multifaceted, wild psyches, committing ourselves to the largest story we're capable of living, serving something bigger than ourselves. We must dare again to dream the impossible and to romance the world, to feel and honor our kinship with all species and habitats, to embrace the troubling wisdom of paradox, and to shape ourselves into visionaries with the artistry to revitalize our enchanted and endangered world.

BECOMING FULLY HUMAN

Emerging in the late nineteenth century, Western psychology was seeded in that era's prevailing practice and philosophy of medicine. Psychology's focus was on diagnosis and treatment of symptoms, diseases, and "mental illness." It was, and in many ways still is, an attempt to identify what could and does go wrong with the human psyche when scrutinized outside its cultural and ecological contexts: neuroses, psychoses, personality and attachment disorders, manias, depressions, obsessions, and addictions. With few

exceptions — such as Carl Jung’s analytical psychology, James Hillman’s archetypal “re-visioning” of psychology,² and the new field of positive psychology³ — there’s been too little consideration of what is inherently right and inspiring about human beings. There’s been insufficient tending to the process of becoming fully human — an active, deeply imaginative, contributing member of what cultural ecologist David Abram calls the more-than-human world,⁴ a world that includes human society as a subset of a much more extensive Earth community.

Western psychology’s established ways of understanding ourselves have unintentionally cramped our abilities to grow whole and to fully mature. The agenda of mainstream psychotherapy has been, from its beginnings, remarkably limited and, consequently, limiting. What if, for example, our primary human need and opportunity is not to endlessly attend to our emotional wounds and the eradication of perceived psychological disorders but rather to fathom and flesh out our natural human wholeness and to embody this integral bounty as a gift to others and our world?

Conventional Western psychology has focused on pathology rather than possibility and participation, and this renders it incomplete...and in many ways obsolete.⁵

In Western culture, we’ve enclosed ourselves within continually mended fences of excessive safety, false security, and shallow notions of “happiness,” when all the while the world has been inviting us to stride through the unlocked gate and break free into realms of greater promise and possibilities. Our psychotherapy-fashioned fences have affirmed our flaws and failures and corralled us within psychosocial prisons of our own making. Our mainstream educational and religious institutions likewise have suppressed our human potential and magnificence, or at least failed to evoke and foster our brilliance and virtuosity, our capacity to truly mature and to help make our world a better place.⁶

OUR INNATE HUMAN RESOURCES

Our human psyches possess, as capacities, a variety of astonishing resources about which mainstream Western psychology has little to say. By uncovering and reclaiming these innate resources, shared by all of us by simple virtue of our human nature, we can more easily understand and resolve our

intrapyschic and interpersonal difficulties as they arise. We need not be as dependent as we have been on the psychological, social, and professional resources of others — clergy and counselors, family and friends, psychotherapists and psychiatrists — or on the neurological reconfiguration services of psychopharmacological chemicals, whether prescribed or elective.

The alleviation of personal troubles is, of course, important to all of us. But the significance and relevance of our innate psychological resources — largely unrecognized, unvalued, and uninventoried by Western psychology and culture — go well beyond the alleviation of personal troubles. Our untapped inner resources are also essential to the flowering of our greatest potentials, to the actualization of our true selves, and to the embodiment of the life of our very souls. These natural faculties are what we must cultivate in order to actively protect and restore our planet's ecosystems and to spark the urgently needed renaissance of our Western and Westernized cultures. And these innate human resources are precisely those that enable each of us to identify the unique genius and hidden treasure we carry for the world — and, in this way, to participate fully and consciously in the evolution of life on Earth.

These resources — which I call the four facets of the Self, or the four dimensions of our human wholeness — wait within us, but we might not even know they exist until we discover how to access them, cultivate their powers, and integrate them into our everyday lives. Reclaiming these essential human capacities of the Self ought to be the highest priority in psychology, education, religion, medicine, and leadership development. Doing so empowers people to wake up, rise up, and become genuine agents of cultural transformation — and, in the bargain, experience the most profound fulfillment of a lifetime.

The recognition and embrace of these inherent human strengths, capacities, and sensibilities turn much of Western psychology on its head. Our entire approach to understanding and quickening human potential and addressing personal problems shifts radically.

For example, many of the behavioral patterns that mainstream psychology labels as psychopathologies (such as anxiety, depression, manias, phobias, personality disorders, and the tendency to hear or see things other people don't) are not necessarily problems in themselves. How do we know when they are and when they're not? What if most actual pathologies are primarily symptoms of underdeveloped psychological resources — inborn

capacities of the Self that await cultivation within everyone? Psychological symptoms may best be relieved not by directly trying to eradicate them, impede them, or mask them but rather by developing our innate resources, the unavailability of which may be the primary reason these symptoms appeared in the first place. Perhaps we exhibit psychological symptoms not so much because we're dis-ordered but because we're deficient in our embodiment of wellness, health, or wholeness.

When we eliminate symptoms without cultivating wholeness, we still have an unwell, unwhole, or fragmented psyche that will soon enough sprout new symptoms that express, in yet another way, the lack of wholeness.

Here's an analogy from ecology: When an ecosystem has been damaged — say, from logging, overgrazing, or chemical-dependent mono-crop agriculture — and then you leave it alone, invasive species typically show up and take over. If you then attempt to simply suppress or eliminate the invasives — whether through pesticide application or heroic weeding — you're not strengthening the ecosystem but rather merely suppressing a symptom called “weeds.” In contrast, if you tend the health of the ecosystem — for example, by improving soil quality or planting native species — the invasives find a less suitable landing site and the ecosystem is more quickly restored to its natural and mature wholeness. Likewise, when we tend the well-being of our human psyches — by improving our social and ecological “soil” and cultivating the “native species” of the Self — there is less opportunity for the fragmented or wounded elements of our psyches to take over; the psychological “space” is already occupied by the facets of a more fully flourishing being. We've placed the emphasis on promoting health and wholeness rather than on (merely) suppressing pathology and fragmentedness.

We can douse our psyches with pharmaceutical pesticides and therapeutically weed them, but a much better approach would be to enhance our psychological, cultural, and ecological soil and to cultivate the capacities of our native human wholeness.

A second limiting assumption of conventional Western psychology — in addition to the idea that the symptom is the problem rather than *an indication* of a problem — is that our difficulties are solely or primarily a result of troubles within individual psyches (or, even worse, within individual brains).⁷ But in recent decades, we've come to understand that our psychological health relies profoundly on the health of the world in which

we are embedded — the psychosocial well-being of our families, the maturity and diversity of our human communities, and the vitality of our natural environments. Indeed, the very meaning of the phrase *psychological health* is interpersonal and ecological and cannot be coherently reduced to something merely subjective, internal, or neurological. Behavioral patterns that some might perceive as psychological disorders are often understandable and natural reactions to a disordered world. Most personal difficulties are symptoms of problems in our relationships, families, societies, and ecosystems.

When a large proportion of people in a given culture have significant psychological troubles, as is demonstrably the case in the Western world today, these people are not to blame. Their culture is. And yet their culture is constituted by the collective actions of its members. It is the responsibility of all capable individuals to help make their culture whole and vital. Those who are most capable in this way are those who are most whole in themselves.

How can we most effectively grow whole and participate in the revitalization of the whole? This book offers an answer.

In these pages, I introduce a map of psychological wholeness, a map that is nonarbitrary and comprehensive precisely because it's rooted in nature's own map of wholeness. The Nature-Based Map of the Psyche serves as a guide to becoming fully human by cultivating the four facets of the Self and discovering both the limitations and the gifts of our wounded, fragmented, and shadowed subpersonalities. This map of the psyche has been in development since the 1980s and has been field-tested and refined by psychologists, counselors, life coaches, educators, clergy, parents, initiation guides, and leaders of wilderness rites in their work with thousands of people of all ages.

For those of you who are psychotherapists, philosophers, professionals in another related field, or simply interested in learning more, I've used this book's endnotes primarily for ideas and references that may be of particular interest to you. Also see the website www.wildmindbook.com, especially the page "For Professionals."

REWILDING PSYCHOLOGY

Beyond its focus on pathology rather than possibility and participation, another feature of conventional Western psychology that renders it incomplete and largely obsolete is that, like mainstream Western culture more

generally, it is alienated from the greater Earth community — especially from nature's untamed powers, qualities, species, and habitats. This is a core insight of the developing field of ecopsychology.⁸ What makes us human is not merely other humans. We evolved over millennia in response to the challenges and opportunities encountered within a wildly complex web of ecological relationships in a thoroughly animate world. The ways we think, feel, perceive, imagine, and act have arisen in attunement to the rhythms of the day and the turning of the seasons and in intimate relationship with myriad other life-forms and forces. Although in everyday Western life we might feel cut off from our wild Earthly roots and relationships, it nevertheless remains true that the deep structures of our human psyche — the underlying patterns, universal archetypes, innate capacities available to us all, and, yes, even the distinctive ways we are psychologically wounded and fragmented — have emerged from this living web.

What insights, then, about our human psyches appear when we return to Earth, when we remember that we are related to everything that has ever existed, when we reinstall ourselves in a world of spring-summer-fall-winter, volcanoes, storms, surf, bison, mycelium, Moon, falcons, sand dunes, galaxies, and redwood groves? What do we discover about ourselves when we consent again to being human animals — bipedal, omnivorous mammals with distinctive capacities for self-reflexive consciousness, dexterity, imagination, and speech? In what ways will we choose to live when we fully remember the naturalness and ecological necessity of death? Who will we see in the mirror when we face up to the present-day realities of human-caused mass extinction, ecosystem collapse, and climate destabilization? And what mystery journey will unfold when we answer the alluring and dangerous summons now emanating from the human soul, from the dream of the Earth,⁹ and from an intelligent, evolving, ensouled Universe?

Beyond insights into the nature of our humanity, what will we discover — or remember — about the most effective methods for cultivating our human wholeness once we liberate psychotherapy, coaching, education, and religion from indoor consulting rooms, classrooms, and churches? What happens when we rewild our techniques and practices for facilitating human development — not by merely getting them out the door and onto the land or waters, but, much more significantly, by fashioning approaches in which our encounters with the other-than-human world are the central feature?

What happens, in other words, when we allow nature itself to be the primary therapist or guide, while the human mentor or adviser becomes more of an assistant to nature, an agent or handmaiden of the wild?

We have a vital opportunity now to shape a new Western psychology that acknowledges humanity as, first and foremost, natural, of nature — not separate from it. It's time to rewild psychology with ideas and methods rooted in the rhythms, patterns, principles, and other-than-human encounters of greater nature. We seek a Western psychology firmly planted in both wild soil and the soul of the world, at once both an ecopsychology and a depth psychology, one that emboldens us to serve the greater Earth community and to enhance the life of all species, and that does not merely tempt us to *use* nature for our own healing, self-centered benefit, or egocentric profit. A mature *ecotherapy* does not attempt to decrease our anxiety, outrage, fear, grief, or despair in response to the ongoing industrial destruction of the biosphere; rather, it helps us to more fully experience these feelings so that we can revitalize ourselves emotionally and, in doing so, enable our greatest contributions to a cultural renaissance. This is our current collective human adventure, which theologian and cultural historian Thomas Berry calls the Great Work of our time: “to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.”¹⁰ It is what ecophilosopher Joanna Macy refers to as the Great Turning, “the transition from a doomed economy of industrial growth to a life-sustaining society committed to the recovery of our world.”¹¹

The Great Work of our time calls us to something greater than personal happiness and something more than mere refinements in politics, economy, religion, and education. At its most fundamental level, the Great Work necessitates both a revolution in our understanding of what it is to be human and a revival of our abilities to realize our potential and to transform our contemporary cultures.

It's time, then, to redraw our map of the human psyche, a revision germinated not in notions of symptoms and illness but in our innate wholeness and our foundational and organic embedment in the natural world.

Toward these ends, this book introduces a holistic and integral ecology of the human psyche that encompasses the best insights of existing Western psychologies but also stretches far beyond them, extending our appreciation

of the psyche's untapped potentials and its inner diversity, intricacy, and structural elegance.

The Nature-Based Map of the Psyche highlights our positive, life-enhancing resources and perspectives and extols them as foundational to our humanity. The accent is not on our fragmented parts or wound stories, or how our psyches stall out in neurotic patterns, or how we might merely recover from trauma, pathology, or addiction; rather, the accent is on our wholeness and potential magnificence, how we can enhance our personal fulfillment and participation in our more-than-human world, and how we can become fully human and visionary artisans of cultural renaissance.



Chapter 1

The Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche

AN OVERVIEW

To speak of wilderness is to speak of wholeness. Human beings came out of that wholeness.

— GARY SNYDER

Wisdom traditions from around the world — including those from which Western cultures emerged — have looked to nature’s seven directions for a model of wholeness: north, south, east, west, up, down, and center. These seven directions support us in fathoming the wholeness of... well, anything that came out of the original wholeness called “nature” or “wilderness,” the wholeness that human beings came out of, as poet Gary Snyder reminds us. My approach to constructing a comprehensive, nature-based map of the human psyche begins with the foundational, three-dimensional pattern of the seven directions.¹ Here’s how I’ve mapped the psyche onto nature’s framework:

The Horizontal Plane

THE SELF. In the four cardinal directions are the four facets of our innate human potential — the four sets of resources that make up our horizontal psychological wholeness. Together, these four facets constitute what I call the Self. As we’ll see in later chapters, they also reflect the qualities of the natural world we observe in the four

directions and, not coincidentally, the characteristics of the four seasons and the four times of day: dawn, noon, dusk, and midnight.

SUBPERSONALITIES. Because each aspect of wholeness also has its immature form, we also find in the cardinal directions the four categories of our fragmented or wounded parts — which I call *subpersonalities*, and sometimes just *subs* for short — again echoing the qualities of the four directions, seasons, and times of day.

The Vertical Axis

SPIRIT. In the upward direction is the dimension of the human psyche that identifies with Spirit (a.k.a. God, Mystery, or the nondual). The upward direction is also known as the upperworld, the heavens, or the vast reaches of the cosmos.

SOUL. Reaching down into depths, we find the human Soul, our unique and deepest individual identity. The downward direction is also known as the underworld, Hades, or the fruitful darkness.

The Center

THE EGO. In the center, at the intersection of the horizontal and the vertical, is the Ego. Its “home” or “natural habitat” is the everyday world or middleworld of family, social, economic, educational, political, and ecological life.

In our three-dimensional wholeness, each one of us is nature in human form, nature in its wholeness of the four cardinal directions, the four seasons, and the four times of day, and also of the upperworld, underworld, and middleworld.

DEFINITIONS

Soul, Spirit, Self, and Ego. “Why all the capitalized words?” you might ask. Simply to remind you, throughout this book, that I’m using these common words to refer to aspects of psyche defined in specific and not necessarily common ways.

Here, then, are my definitions of these and other key components of the Nature-Based Map of the Human Psyche:

SOUL. The *Soul* is a person's unique purpose or identity, a mythopoetic identity, something much deeper than personality or social-vocational role, an identity revealed and expressed through symbol and metaphor, image and dream, archetype and myth. Some other ways to say this: Soul is the particular ecological niche, or place, a person was born to occupy but may or may not ever discover or consciously embody.² Or, in a more poetic vein, Soul is "the largest conversation you're capable of having with the world," it's "your own truth / at the center of the image / you were born with," it's the "shape / [that] waits in the seed / of you to grow / and spread / its branches / against a future sky," or it's "your individual puzzle piece in the Great Mystery."³ For example, the Soul of Irish poet William Butler Yeats can be articulated by way of a poem he wrote (and an experience he had) in his late twenties, as the niche of one who "pluck[s] the silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun."⁴ Ecophilosopher, Buddhist, and Earth elder Joanna Macy, at age thirty-seven, experienced a life-transforming inner image of a stone bridge that spanned "between the thought-worlds of East and West, connecting the insights of the *Buddha Dharma* with the modern Western mind." She knew in that moment that her destiny was, in part, to be one of the stones in that bridge — "just one, that was enough."⁵ And it might be said that cultural historian Thomas Berry was ensouled as someone who "preserves and enhances [wildness] in the natural cycles of its transformation" and who perceives, articulates, and advocates the "dream of the Earth."⁶

SPIRIT. *Spirit* (or God, Mystery, or the nondual) is the universal consciousness, intelligence, psyche, or vast imagination that animates the cosmos and everything in it — including us — and in which the psyche of each person participates. When consciously attuned to Spirit, we experience a profound connectedness with all things — the "oneness" of Spirit. The manner in which Spirit manifests itself or unfolds has been called, to cite just three examples, evolution's trajectory, the Tao (the way of life), or the Universe story.

SELF. The *Self* is an integral whole, a bundle of innate resources every human has in common, a totality that holds all the original capacities of our

core humanness.⁷ The Self incorporates the four facets of our horizontal human wholeness, which exist at birth but only as possibilities that, like the Soul, we may or may not learn to access, actualize, and embody. These four facets can be described in terms of archetypes, universal patterns of human behavior and character found in all cultures and in myths, dreams, art, and literature. The Self contains all the resources we need to meaningfully contribute to our more-than-human (which means not-*merely*-human) world in order to live a mature, fulfilling, creative human life, to effectively manifest our Soul's desires, and to align ourselves with Spirit's unfolding. In this book, I use *Self* and *horizontal human wholeness* interchangeably.

SUBPERSONALITIES. The *subpersonalities* are the wounded and sometimes hidden fragments of our human psyches — such as our “inner” Victim, Rebel, Critic, Tyrant, or Addict — each of which attempts to protect us from further injury. These are constellations of feelings, images, and behaviors that operate more or less independently from one another and often independently of our conscious selves (Egos). Subpersonalities form in childhood, with the enduring purpose of protecting us from physical, psychological, and social harm. Often they succeed. Often they also create additional troubles or mischief for us and others. Our subpersonalities are the source or instigators of what Western psychology understands to be our psychological symptoms and illnesses.

I borrowed the term *subpersonalities* from the approach to psychology known as psychosynthesis, developed by Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli in the early 1900s. Other traditions and schools of Western psychology have referred to intrapsychic fragments of this sort as *complexes* (Freudian and Jungian analysis), *parts* (Gestalt psychology), *internal objects* (object relations theory), *ego states* (transactional analysis), or *selves* (Hal and Sidra Stone's Voice Dialogue or Psychology of Selves; and Richard Schwartz's Internal Family Systems Therapy). Each subpersonality functions by way of an interrelated set of ideas, emotions, memories, impulses, and behavioral patterns.

EGO. The *Ego* is the locus, or seat, of conscious self-awareness within the human psyche, the “I.” (I also use another term, the *three-dimensional Ego*,

or *3-D Ego*, to refer to an Ego blessed with some degree of conscious communion and integration with Self, Soul, and Spirit.) By *personality* I mean the characteristic patterns of behavior the Ego engages in.

How the Ego Operates

When awake, we (our Egos) can, in principle, be conscious through the frame of reference of any of the other four aspects of the psyche — namely, the Self, Soul, Spirit, or subpersonalities. This is to say that we can be conscious as, and act from the perspective of, any one of these four aspects of the psyche. But the subpersonalities are the “default position” for our Egos. Unless and until we cultivate conscious relationships with Self, Soul, and Spirit (and in that way function, at least at times, as 3-D Egos), we experience and behave by way of our psyche’s fragmented or wounded parts — from the perspective, for example, of our Conformist, Escapist, or Victim. With a healthy, mature 3-D Ego, we are fully anchored in the fourfold Self, and we more often than not experience ourselves as being in service to Soul and, consequently, to Spirit, too. As 3-D Egos, we can also at times experience ourselves *as* Soul or *as* Spirit.

Self and subpersonalities are not entities or little people inside people. A better way to think of them is as different versions of ourselves that we experience and enact at different times.⁸ Here’s a slogan to help remember this: “Self and subpersonalities don’t do anything; *people* do.” People often act by way of or by means of or through their subs, for example, and sometimes they’re conscious that they’re doing this and sometimes not.⁹ But subpersonalities don’t act in the world independently of the person of whose psyche they are a component.¹⁰ A given sub is simply one version of the person in action. Same goes for the four facets of the Self.

Our subpersonalities generally function autonomously from other versions of ourselves, which is to say that, when our Ego is identified with a subpersonality, we tend to be undeterred by the perspectives we hold at other times. When identified with a sub, we might be completely unaware of the existence of some or all of our other versions (the four facets of Self as well as our other subpersonalities). In contrast, when our Ego operates by way of the Self, we are aware — or at least potentially aware — of our subs as well as the facets of the Self.

THE MAP AND THE TERRITORY

Something essential to note before continuing: The map is not the territory! In this book I'm offering a way to understand our human psyches, but the reality is always more complex and nuanced than any map can convey. May we always be astounded and humbled by the mystery of our human selves and our animate world.

THE SELF

The Self is what we'll explore in the first half of this book. Even though you may find it less familiar than the subpersonalities (because of what Western psychology and culture emphasize as well as what they neglect), the Self is where we'll begin, because it's the foundation of individual well-being, spiritual development, healthy relationships, and mature cultures. It's also the dimension of our psyches through which we're able to heal the wounds protected by and embodied within our subpersonalities. We must cultivate the resources of the Self before we can truly heal.

Although the Self is a single dimension of the psyche, an integral whole, it has four facets. Here's an initial introduction to these four facets:

NORTH: THE NURTURING GENERATIVE ADULT. This facet is empathic, compassionate, courageous, competent, knowledgeable, productive, and able to provide genuine loving care and service to both ourselves and others. Through the North facet of the Self, we contribute our best and most creative parenting, leading, teaching, directing, producing, and healing. The Nurturing Generative Adult is resonant with archetypes such as Leader, benevolent King or Queen, mature or spiritual Warrior, Mother, and Father.

SOUTH: THE WILD INDIGENOUS ONE. Emotive, erotic-sexual, sensuous, instinctive, and playful, this facet is fully at home in the human body and in the more-than-human world. The South facet of the Self is every bit as wild and natural as any animal, flower, or river and experiences a kinship with all species and habitats. The Wild Indigenous One is resonant with archetypes such as Pan, Artemis/Diana (Lady of the Beasts), and Green Man (Wild Man).

EAST: THE INNOCENT/SAGE. Innocent, wise, clear-minded, light-hearted, wily, and extroverted, the East facet of the Self is fully at home with the big picture, light, enlightenment, laughter, paradox, eternity, and the mysteries of the Divine and the upperworld. The Innocent/Sage wants to lead us up to the realm of pure consciousness beyond distinctions and striving. In addition to the Innocent and the Sage, this facet is resonant with archetypes such as the Fool, Trickster, Priest, Priestess, and Guide to Spirit.

WEST: THE MUSE-BELOVED. Imaginative, erotic-romantic, idealistic, visionary, adventurous, darkness savoring (shadow loving), meaning attuned, and introverted, this facet of the Self revels in night, dreams, destiny, death, and the mysteries and qualities of the underworld. The Muse-Beloved wants to lead us down to Soul and wants us to be continuously dying to our old ways while giving birth to the never-before-seen. In addition to the Muse and the Beloved, this facet is resonant with archetypes such as Anima/Animus, Magician, Wanderer, Hermit, Psychopomp, and Guide to Soul.

As you read about the Self in these pages, you'll likely recognize each of its four facets as existing in (or as) at least one of your friends or family members, in certain public persons or celebrities, and in characters from myths, dreams, art, and literature. You might not at first recognize all four facets in yourself, but they're all there; the "hidden" ones await their discovery by you (the Ego). By locating all four facets of the Self on a single map, we can explore their relationships with one another and with the Ego, subpersonalities, Soul, and Spirit.

In the following chapters, we'll also explore why each facet of the Self is associated with its corresponding cardinal direction or, more precisely, with the qualities of the natural world we experience when we face that direction, and also why it's associated with the related season and time of day. In other words, we'll see how the seasons, the times of day, and the four cardinal directions of the natural world constitute the design pattern enabling us to grasp the nature of the Self.

While the Self exhibits these four facets, it's best understood as a

single, integral dimension of the psyche, not merely a collection of four voices. This is why I prefer to say that the Self has *facets* — as opposed to components.

In addition to having the attributes identified above, the Self, as a whole (a “gestalt”), is creative, intelligent, inquisitive, utterly at home on Earth, confident, and joyous. When we (our Egos) function by way of the Self, we instinctively recognize and honor our relationships with other people and all living creatures, things, and habitats — the Self, consequently, is ecocentric.¹¹ We cooperate with others (including by way of mutually beneficial competition). We protect and enhance all of life.

Whatever we desire to do, we do it most effectively, aesthetically, imaginatively, fairly, and joyfully through the consciousness and resources of the Self.

THE SUBPERSONALITIES

And yet, one inevitable and heartrending feature of being human is that we do not live every moment from or as the Self, no matter how mature, gifted, or lucky we may be. Regrettably, we don’t always participate in life grounded in our innate human wholeness. All too often we’re in a fragmented or wounded state — physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually. Sometimes we find ourselves feeling unaccountably frightened, for example, or angry with nearly everyone, or unworthy, incapable, on a control trip, confused, subservient, or disconnected. The less healthy our families, communities, societies, and ecosystems, the more wounded and fragmented we tend to be individually. These wounded or fragmented aspects of our psyches are our subpersonalities, the subject of the second half of this book.

In Western and Westernized cultures (now widely understood to be not only adolescent but also pathological and growing increasingly so),¹² most people seem to function more often by way of their subpersonalities than by way of their Selves. Western conversations often sound like two or more subpersonalities comparing notes about life from their wounded or fragmented perspectives. Subpersonality-identified Egos seem to be the most common protagonists in contemporary relationships, politics, news, arts, and entertainment, and the subject matter of most advice columns and pop psychologies. See if you agree as you read the following descriptions.

Subpersonalities might be immature and wounded, but they’re doing

their best to help us. All four categories of subpersonalities, as we'll see, are attempting to keep us safe (physically, psychologically, socially, and economically) by using the unripe strategies available to them.

Here's an introduction to the four categories of subpersonalities and my names for them:¹³

NORTH: LOYAL SOLDIERS try to keep us safe by inciting us to act small (either beneath our potential or one-dimensionally) in order to secure a place of belonging in the world. They achieve this by avoiding risk, by rendering us nonthreatening, useful, or pleasing to others, or by urging us into positions of immature power over others (dominator power). Versions include Rescuers, Codependents, Enablers, Pleasers, and Giving Trees; Inner Critics and Inner Flatterers (the kind of flattery that motivates us to be useful and nonthreatening to others); Tyrants and Robber Barons; and Critics and Flatterers of others.

SOUTH: WOUNDED CHILDREN try to keep us safe by attempting to get our basic needs met, using the immature, emotion-fueled strategies available to them. They do this by appearing to be in need of rescue (Victims); being harmless and socially acceptable (Conformists); being coercive or aggressive (Rebels); or being arrogant or condescending (Princes or Princesses).

EAST: ESCAPISTS AND ADDICTS try to keep us safe through evasion — rising above traumatic emotions and circumstances and sidestepping distressing challenges and responsibilities. They do this through strategies such as addictions, obsessions, dissociations, vanishing acts, and delinquency. Versions include the *puer aeternus* and *puella aeternus* (Latin for “eternal boy” and “eternal girl”), Blissheads, and Spiritual Materialists.

WEST: THE SHADOW AND SHADOW SELVES try to keep us safe through the repression (making unconscious) of our characteristics and desires that are unacceptable or inconceivable to our Ego. Shadow characteristics can be either “negative” (what the Ego would consider morally “beneath” it) or “positive” (what the Ego would consider “above” it and out of reach). The Shadow is not what we know about ourselves and don't like

(or like but keep hidden) but rather what we *don't* know about ourselves and, if accused of it, would adamantly and sincerely deny. Our *Shadow Selves* attempt to maintain psychological stability by briefly acting out Shadow characteristics and doing so flamboyantly or scandalously, but without our being conscious of what we're doing — letting off steam as the only available alternative to complete self-destruction.

While the Self, with its four facets, is a single, integral feature of the psyche, the subpersonalities, in contrast, each function as separate and discrete versions of ourselves — as isolated voices. They are multifarious, fragmented elements of the psyche. This seems to be the case even when the subpersonalities join forces for the shared purpose of self-protection. For example, a frightened Wounded Child might plead that you not accept a promotion to the highly visible (socially risky) public role you've aspired to for years; a Loyal Soldier might chime in to say that, if you accept, you'll end up humiliating yourself because you don't have what it takes to succeed ... or even be taken seriously; and an Escapist might suggest that the life of a hermit, ski bum, or drunk would be a much more enjoyable choice, anyway.

In the second half of the book, we'll see that each subpersonality represents a wounded or immature version of the facet of the Self associated with the same cardinal direction.

It seems we never eliminate or finally grow out of our subpersonalities; we can only learn to embrace them from the perspective of the Self and in this way gradually heal our wounds and integrate our subpersonalities into the functioning of our 3-D Ego. Although our subs never disappear, we can mature to the point that we seldom get hijacked by them and instead live most often from our 3-D Ego consciousness as Self, Soul, and Spirit.

On pages 22–23, you can see the horizontal dimension of the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche, which is to say the four facets of the Self and the four categories of subpersonalities. The vertical dimension of the Map — consisting of Spirit and Soul — is not shown here, and you can think of the Ego as being at the center. In order to make it easier to take in, I've divided this horizontal dimension of the map into two parts, which I refer to as map 1 and map 2. Map 1 shows the intrapersonal features of the facets and the subs, indicating how we experience within our psyches our Self and our subs,

with the facets of the Self arrayed around the outer circle and the categories of subs around the inner circle. So far in this book, it's this intrapersonal dimension I've introduced you to. Map 2 shows the *inter*personal features of the facets and the subs — the ways others tend to see us when we're embodying these aspects of ourselves. In chapters 2 through 9, we'll explore in some detail both the intrapersonal and interpersonal features of the Self and the subs.

THREE CORE MESSAGES OF THIS BOOK

Now that I've introduced you to the central concepts of the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche, I can state, in one sentence, a core message of this book: The key to healing and to growing whole is not suppressing symptoms, eliminating wounds, or eradicating subpersonalities but, rather, cultivating our wholeness — the horizontal wholeness of the Self as well as the vertical wholeness afforded by our relationships with Soul and Spirit.

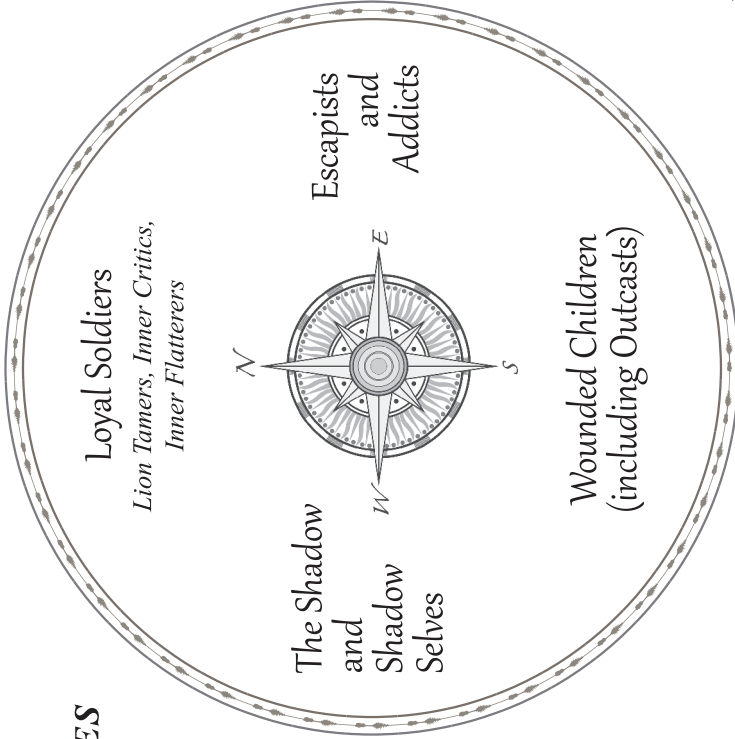
The second core message of the book is that there's a vital and synergistic relationship between cultivating personal wholeness and building life-enhancing cultures. Cultivating human wholeness can never be a matter of tending solely or even primarily to the individual human self, as if that self were an isolated entity somehow existing independently of the world of which we are a part. Ultimately, we cannot become fully human without healthy, mature cultures. And such cultures are not possible without healthy, mature humans — and without a healthy Earth community to be part of. Conversely, creating healthy cultures requires more than structural changes in politics, education, economies, religions, food production, energy generation, and environmental protection. It's also essential to tend to human development.

The third core message is this: There are three imperatives of any healthy, mature culture. First is to protect and nurture the vitality and diversity of its environment.¹⁴ Second is to provide adequate numbers of true adults and elders to nurture, educate, and initiate the next generations and to create or revitalize cultural practices for the well-being and fulfillment of its people — economically, socially, aesthetically, and spiritually. And third is to protect and foster the wholeness of the culture's individual members (which is to say the Self of each person and his or her relationships with Soul and Spirit).

MAP 1: INTRAPERSONAL VIEW OF THE SELF AND SUBPERSONALITIES

(how we relate to ourselves)

Nurturing Generative Adult



Muse,
Inner Beloved,
Anima/Animus,
Guide to Soul

Innocent,
Sage,
Sacred Fool,
Trickster

KEY:

OUTER CIRCLE =
the four facets of the Self (our wholeness)

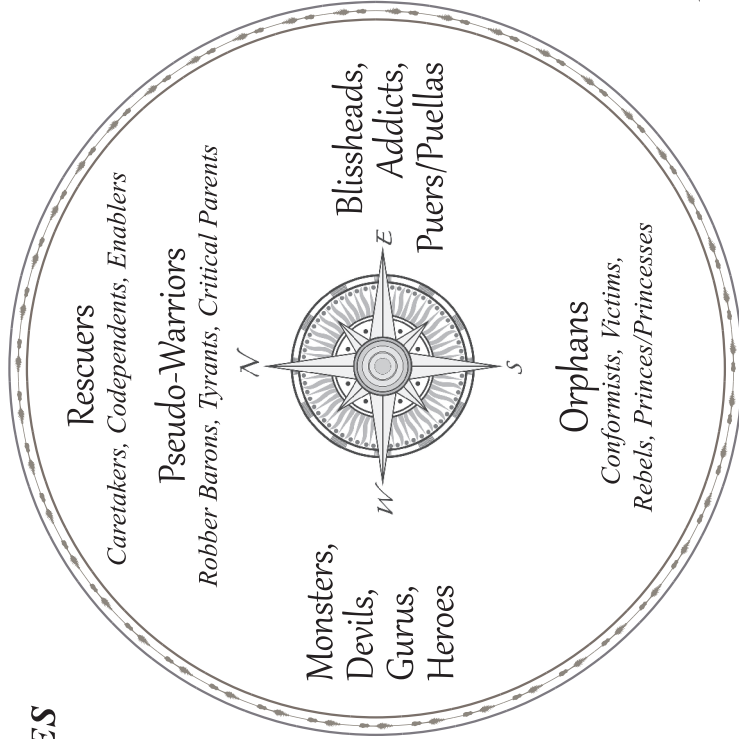
INNER CIRCLE =
the subpersonalities (our woundedness)

Wild Indigenous One

MAP 2: INTERPERSONAL VIEW OF THE SELF AND SUBPERSONALITIES

(how others see us)

Elder, Leader, Teacher, Manifestor,
Activist, Parent, Mentor,
Healer, Empath, King/Queen



Magician,
Wanderer,
Psychoomp,
Soul Guide

Innocent,
Sage,
Sacred Fool,
Trickster

KEY:

OUTER CIRCLE =
the four facets of the Self (our wholeness)

INNER CIRCLE =
the subpersonalities (our woundedness)

Wild Man (Green Man),
Wild Woman (Artemis)

HOW THE HUMAN PSYCHE WORKS

The Self and the subpersonalities may be thought of as a set of perceptual filters or frameworks the Ego can look through — an assortment of perspectives on one's self, life, and the world — or as different ways the Ego can tell the story of its life using a variety of narratives. They may also be thought of as different hats the Ego can wear or psychosocial roles it can play. Mature, psychologically healthy people can consciously choose, most of the time, which version or versions of themselves they operate as. But someone with limited psychological development — or a more mature person in temporary, stressful circumstances that trigger the survival strategies of one or more subpersonalities — might have no capacity to choose. The availability of the Self's perspectives and hats depends on conscious cultivation of our horizontal wholeness and its four facets.

A large percentage of people in the Western world seem to be at the mercy of how their subpersonalities react to their circumstances. Social settings, relationships, and traumatic events trigger or evoke particular subs, which then dominate consciousness, choice, and behavior. Many Westerners have no awareness of the Self and no ability to access it, no realization that they have other options; their consciousness is entirely identified with their subpersonalities. You could say that, at any given moment, they *are* one of their subpersonalities...until their circumstances abduct them into another sub. And any one of us, no matter how mature, can on occasion get locked into the rut of a subpersonality that confines us to the role of Victim, for example, or that of Conformist, Addict, Tyrant, Critic, or counterfeit guru.

When identified with a subpersonality, we simply react to our perceived circumstances. But as we cultivate our ability to observe and act from the Self, we become proactive. When our Ego is identified with the Self, we have multiple behavioral options. With the Self's many resources, we're far less likely to get stuck in a rut or hijacked by a subpersonality.

Soul and Spirit

Like the Self and the subpersonalities, Soul and Spirit, too, are filters or frameworks, but they are transpersonal ones, and most people access them far less often than the Self and subs. We might imagine the Soul as

the psychospiritual ground into which the 3-D Ego can learn to sink roots. Spirit can be likened to the heavens above, or the air, the wind (the breath of the world),¹⁵ the atmosphere, the entire cosmos, cosmic consciousness, or the great Mystery — the ultimate context within which the 3-D Ego is embedded.

When anchored in our 3-D Egos, we understand ourselves as agents or handmaidens for Soul. The Soul, after all, is the dimension of our human psyche that knows what's really worth doing with our "one wild and precious life," as poet Mary Oliver puts it.¹⁶ Soul holds the knowledge of what we individually were born to do and to be. The Ego, on the other hand, knows how to get things done, to make things happen, but it doesn't know from its own experience what to offer its life to. The genius and beauty of the mature 3-D Ego is that it possesses the ability and creativity to make real the Soul's passions. Indeed, the 3-D Ego is the only means by which the Soul's desires can be consciously manifested in our world. This is why so many mystical traditions speak of a love affair between Ego and Soul, the Lover and the Beloved: Each possesses something the other entirely lacks and longs for. Ego possesses the heart, hands, senses, imagination, and intelligence to manifest, but doesn't know what's worth manifesting; it yearns to know the deeply authentic purpose of the Soul. Soul possesses the song that's worth singing, the dance that wants to be danced, but it has no way to manifest this in the world; the Soul yearns to be made real by the Ego. Ego is long on know-how and short on know-why; the opposite is true of the Soul.

As 3-D Egos, we also understand ourselves as agents or emissaries of Spirit. We experience ourselves as integral participants in the unfolding story of the Universe, as filaments in the vast, singular consciousness that moves through everything. We discover ourselves to be essential extras in a cosmic drama in which Spirit plays hide-and-seek with itself, a pageant in which Spirit occasionally catches a glimpse of its own evolution through the consciousness of self-aware beings. Within this (upperworld) frame of reference, the Ego is entirely at home in the Universe and is cultivating a personal relationship with Spirit, sometimes experiencing itself as a child of Spirit, at other times as Spirit's Beloved or Friend, Partner or Collaborator. A person with a mature Ego understands that by serving as an agent for Soul, she's also serving as an agent for Spirit.

Immature Egos

A person with an immature Ego, in contrast, understands herself as primarily or solely an agent for herself — or at least acts that way, whatever she might believe. Western and Westernized cultures have devolved to the point that many of their members perpetually experience themselves as “looking out for number one.” They have little or no direct experience of Self, Soul, or Spirit (or of truly belonging to a human community or to the Earth community or of our interdependence with all things).

Because immature people experience the world, self, and others primarily through their subpersonalities, we can say that their subpersonalities are substitutes (subs) for Self, Soul, and Spirit. (This is another reason for abbreviating *subpersonalities* as *subs*.)

Essential Services Provided by Subpersonalities

As we’ve seen, the function of the subpersonalities is to protect us, especially psychologically and especially during childhood: they keep us safe by keeping us small. I mean *small* in the psychological and social senses: relatively powerless, nonassertive, harmless, invisible, and unaware; or, conversely, psychologically small by appearing socially, economically, or politically “big” through the wielding of immature, dominator power over others. The four groups of subpersonalities accomplish this in different ways.

The subs protect us by influencing us to act in ways they believe will reduce the chances of our being criticized by others, or humiliated, rejected, ostracized, disempowered, injured, left to die, or killed. Most of them are very good at what they do. Without them, most of us would not have survived as well as we have. We owe them a lot. Probably our lives.¹⁷

WHOLING, THE FOUNDATION FOR TRUE HEALING

The Nature-Based Map of the Psyche serves as a guide to the healing and wholing practices foundational to becoming fully human.¹⁸ By *wholing*, I mean the cultivation of the Self, including all four of its facets. Wholing — which enables us to understand both the limitations and the gifts of our wounded or fragmented subpersonalities — is a necessary step in optimal human development.

Wholing is the foundation for true healing. Some degree of personal wholing must precede any deep healing, not the other way around. In Western societies, many believe we can't be whole — truly loving, highly creative people contributing to the world — until we have sufficiently healed from our childhood wounds. But I believe the opposite is closer to the truth: Deep psychological healing is the result of learning how to embrace our woundedness and fragmentedness from the cultivated perspective and consciousness of the Self. We must to some degree cultivate our wholeness before we can truly be healed. Wholing comes first and is foundational.

In the predominant paradigm in Western psychotherapy, the therapist acts as the agent of the client's healing. The mature therapist accomplishes this by being present to the client with the resources of the therapist's Self. It's the therapist, in other words, who supplies the wholeness.¹⁹ This Western mode of psychological healing provides a great service, especially when the client has little access to her Self, but this is not the sort of in-depth healing from which we most benefit. It's more of a temporary fix or a relatively shallow healing that might later reveal deeper wounds. The more in-depth healing occurs when we learn to embrace our fragmentedness from our own wholeness. This is self-healing — or, more precisely, Self-healing (healing accomplished by an Ego rooted in the Self).²⁰

But once we get started in our wholing, we can begin Self-healing; and Self-healing accelerates our capacity for wholing. Wholing and healing reinforce each other.

Personal wholing and healing, however, require more than simply developing relationships between parts of our own psyches and between our selves and other humans. Psychological wholeness also necessitates a mature and reciprocal relationship with the more-than-human world of which we are members. We are served therapeutically and in so many other ways by nature, yes, but it is also vital that we each step up to our responsibility and opportunity to protect and serve the natural world. We can do this in any number of ways, including planting trees, preserving and restoring habitat, eliminating waste and pollution, protesting ecological crimes, and helping to change the laws, policies, and customs that enable such crimes. Engaging in the good hard work of such service may, in fact, be one of the most effective paths to our individual psychological healing — for many

people, ecological service alone (including service to our fellow humans) may be more therapeutic than psychotherapy.²¹

A true adult is in conscious relationship and service to our mysterious and endangered world and, more generally, is a creative, joyful, and contributing member of the Earth community. Our private psyches are meant to be public resources. The personal contributes to the cultural, and vice versa. The personal also contributes to the ecological, and vice versa: as healthy humans, we enhance our more-than-human environment, and we have no life at all, of course, without a thriving environment.

THE PROCESS OF INDIVIDUATION

Individuation is the word Carl Jung used for the cultivation of the psyche into a coherent whole, the process of becoming one's "true self." I think of it as the process of becoming fully human. From the perspective of the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche, the goals of individuation include the following:

- Cultivating our awareness of and our ability to embody the four facets of the Self
- Becoming aware of how our subpersonalities operate and then embracing them from the holistic perspective of the Self, in this way integrating our subpersonalities within the functioning of the 3-D Ego
- When developmentally ready, embarking upon the descent to Soul in order to discover our ecological or mythopoetic place in the world — "the truth at the center of the image we were born with" — and then cultivating our ability to embody or manifest this place or truth
- Developing a personal relationship with Spirit and/or cultivating our capacity to be conscious from the perspective of Spirit
- Applying ourselves to the developmental tasks of the life stage we're in, as well as to the most incomplete tasks of earlier stages (a nature-based perspective on these tasks and stages can be found in what I call the Eco-Soulcentric Developmental Wheel, introduced in my book *Nature and the Human Soul*)

ASSESSING OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

In addition to serving as a guide to the development of wholeness, the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche provides a constructive, person-affirming method of psychological assessment. It's an aid for identifying the innate psychological resources that are most in need of cultivation in an individual, how to go about this cultivation, and what sorts of symptoms are likely to become apparent when these resources are unavailable.²²

A COMPLETE PORTRAIT OF THE PSYCHE

After considering our humanity from nature's holistic perspective, it seems fair to conclude that previous maps of the psyche offered by Western psychology have been incomplete. The principal intrapsychic elements identified by the major schools of psychology are all represented on the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche (not because I was specifically attempting to include them, but because the seven-directions matrix suggested them), but none of these schools have included all the elements identified by the Nature-Based Map; most incorporate fewer than half, and many essential distinctions are missing.²³ Twentieth-century Western psychology provided many advances in our capacity for self-understanding, but it developed in a time and within a cultural framework that limited its vision, making it difficult for us to see the whole picture.

In contrast to earlier Western models of the human mind, the Nature-Based Map of the Psyche has been constructed using all four of the following design criteria. It is

- nature-based (ecological);
- holistic and integral (comprehensive);
- wholeness oriented (as opposed to pathology oriented); and
- contextual (recognizing that our psychological health depends on the health of our social, cultural, and environmental worlds and our active engagement in these worlds through regular participation, service, and social artistry).

A complete portrait of the psyche, however, makes possible something even more important than advances in psychological theory. It enables us,

as individuals, to identify elements of our own psyches whose existence we may never have suspected or that may never have made themselves known to us. The map shows us “where” to look.²⁴ And psychotherapists, counselors, educators, clergy, life coaches, parents, and other human development facilitators can use this map to help people undertake an inventory of their psyches and further cultivate their relationships with Self, subpersonalities, Soul, and Spirit.

The Nature-Based Map of the Psyche helps us see which of our psychological resources might be underdeveloped or completely cut off from awareness. Without a comprehensive map, we might never know what we’ve been missing. Hidden and latent facets of our horizontal wholeness (our Selves) often hold the resources we need to solve personal challenges, move through blocks, overcome inner resistance, see our way forward, succeed at careers, develop or improve our relationships, uncover the secrets of our Souls (and live them), and cultivate our personal relationship with Spirit. And hidden and unconscious subpersonalities can control our perceptions and behavior as much as the parts we know consciously, so there’s great value in having a map that helps us discover which subs might be operating outside awareness.

The representation of the psyche on the universal nature-template of the seven directions makes it easier to understand psychological complexities, elevates into awareness what has fallen into forgetting, and re-establishes an order that is both comforting and constructively disturbing — comforting because it evokes our original wholeness; disturbing because it summons us to a long and demanding journey.