mesaline, and other psychedelics. People who have experimented with these substances often talk about "orgies of vision," "retinal circus," or "optical cornucopia." However, equally frequent are complaints about the inability to capture these visions artistically and bring them back to others. Harriette Frances did not let herself be discouraged by the technical difficulties associated with this task. She was able to create some of the best visionary art I know about anywhere in the world. Her ability to find artistic expression for the images from the depth of her psyche is truly extraordinary!

Harriette Frances' healing journey was a long one and it took her into areas that are not recognized and appreciated by Western academic science. And yet that was where the most powerful healing occurred. I hope this will serve as an important incentive for mainstream therapists to widen their horizons and extend their cartography of the psyche to include these realms. At present, the possibility of reliving birth episodes from embryonic life, obtaining accurate information from the collective unconscious, experiencing archetypal realities, and reliving karmic memories appears to be too fantastic to be believable for an average professional.

Yet those of us who had the chance to work with psychedelics and other powerful experiential forms of psychotherapy, and were willing to radically change our theoretical understanding of the psyche and practical strategy of therapy, were able to see and appreciate the enormous therapeutic potential of non-ordinary states of consciousness. The legal and administrative sanctions against psychedelics did not deter the experimentation, but they terminated all legitimate scientific research of these substances. For those of us who had the privilege to explore the extraordinary potential of psychedelics, this was a tragic loss for psychiatry, psychology, and psychotherapy. We felt that these unfortunate developments wasted what was probably the single most important opportunity in the history of these disciplines.

We can only guess what would have happened had the legislation been more reasonable and had Harriette Frances been able to continue her therapy and self-exploration in supervised psychedelic sessions. It would most likely have accelerated her healing process and taken her to many additional adventures within her own psyche. Those of us who have the privilege to share the artistic treasures in her present book can only fantasize what the images from those excursions would have looked like. And, of course, we hope that her inner journey will continue in the future and that she will share it with us in the same way that she has her extraordinary explorations in the past.

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PROLOGUE: CAULDRON OF REGENERATION:
Psychological Transformation in the Drawings of Harriette Frances
by Tanya Wilkinson, Ph.D.

HARRIETTE FRANCES journeyed into her unconscious with the help of a hallucinogenic drug. She descended into an underworld of dismemberment and regeneration. Her descents were undertaken because she "badly wanted access to the secret part of myself." Her drawings of these journeys function for her still as "unfailing guides, healers, prophets and teachers". What was the situation in Frances' life that called for guidance, healing and instruction?

Her personal struggle in 1963 reflected a destructive split between her rigid gender role, that of the traditional wife and mother, and the talents and preferences of her inner self, an artist. Patriarchal divisions ran through Frances' life, fracturing career, creativity, relationships and self, creating as she has said, "a dichotomy...a duality and ultimately a duplicity" while she longed to be whole. These drawings portray one woman's embodiment of a split in the self and her symbolic, yet visceral bridging of that split. Her journey also maps the separation in Western patriarchal culture between the conscious, upper world realm of rational, conventional expectations and the culturally denied underworld of the unconscious, a cauldron of mysteries and non-rational experience.

Frances' descent proved fruitful and, after many struggles to integrate its revelations, she changed her life. Many women did not and do not return from the underworld. It may be that Frances' profound portrayal of descent and return can provide a light of guidance and faith, a sense of the inner resources of transformation available even to those who feel, as Frances did in 1963, utterly trapped by internal and external social constraints.
The Unconscious as a Storehouse of Transformative Images

What are these inner resources of transformation? Jung's conceptualization of the unconscious provides us with a way of understanding the psychological, emotional and spiritual experience portrayed in Frances' drawings. In general the purpose of the unconscious is compensatory. Normal consciousness in the well-adapted Western individual is necessarily one-sided, dominated by an ego concerned with relating effectively to cultural norms and conventional truth, just as Frances' conscious view of her conflict was dominated by her need to fit in as a "good woman". Conventional truth in the West is heavily masculinized, intellectualized, positivistic and materialistic. Consequently much of human experience that is mysterious, without boundaries, feminine, emotional, spiritual, creative and raw lives in the unconscious, usually in an undifferentiated state. The compensatory purpose of the unconscious is to balance and regenerate consciousness by communicating denied aspects of the self and the world to the dominant, culture-identified ego. (I use ego here in the way that Jung used it—to indicate those aspects of the self that are consciously acknowledged by the individual.) Thus the unconscious functions as a storehouse of forgotten resources which it communicates through the medium of symbolic dialogue.

The forms of symbolic communication between conscious and unconscious aspects of the self are myriad. Images and narratives encountered in dreams, trance states (however induced) and states of reverie, such as daydream, are the most obvious symbolic products of the unconscious. Unconscious material is also woven throughout the warp of everyday life. The experience of inexplicable revulsion and attraction, gripping moods and body states that appear to have little or no basis in external events, compulsive behaviors, seemingly random thought streams, intense responses to people—any or all such experiences may spring from the unconscious. Frances' conscious loyalty to the gender role expectations of her community and her husband made it nearly impossible for her to validate any of the daily communications of the unconscious, although they caused her great discomfort, a feeling of being subject to "demonic intruders". Nonetheless, when the drug LSD opened a gateway to the unconscious, within the safe container of the research project, an archetypal experience of dismemberment, insight and rebirth was readily accessible, the forgotten resources were tapped.

The Necessity of the Container

What conditions are necessary to achieve access to such unconscious resources of transformation? The reality of the psyche is multifaceted and contradictory even in the absence of a major conflict like the one tearing Frances apart at the time of her LSD experience. Although I have used the notion of the storehouse to convey a sense of the resources of the unconscious, it is perhaps too orderly an image. Personal and transpersonal aspects of the unconscious are woven together (it might be more viscerally correct to say mashed together) and do not become differentiated until they are brought to awareness. Repressed pathogens intersect with unrealized spiritual potentials in ways that can be profoundly confusing and sometimes dangerous. So, the experience of accessing the unconscious is not like opening an ordered storehouse and selecting a transformative resource but rather like plunging into a swirling cauldron. Successful access to the transformative power of the unconscious requires an adequate container; the cauldron must have sturdy sides to withstand the chaos of regeneration.

The concept of the container, as used here, springs from the practice of depth psychotherapy. Various names are used in that practice—container, temenos, holding function, frame—to denote a bounded, some would say sacred, space within the therapeutic relationship, a space which is needed to facilitate the symbolic dialogue. The container holds the rich chaos of conscious and unconscious experience, allows a multitude of fragmentary images to be sorted out and deeply felt, to interrelate and be held in consciousness. The container provides a framework for the bridging of split worlds, for the recognition of revolutionary insights which the socially conditioned ego might otherwise avoid.

The ego's task in the process of making such a container is not its usual one of analysis, judgment, categorization and control. Instead the ego shifts, using a more observing, empathetic, aesthetic and perhaps feminine stance which allows all stories to be told, to complement one another, until a picture of the personal myth is built up. This shift in ego stance must be actively supported by the nature of the relationships that nurture the container. The need to actively build and nurture such a container, whether in therapy or out, is particularly pressing for an individual who has been conditioned to distrust inner perceptions in favor of social expectations. The careful, thoughtful process provided by the researchers and their validation of the importance of Frances' experience created a sacred space for her initial contact with the transformative, archetypal energies depicted in her
drawings. Eventually the drawing process itself provided a container for cyclical journeys of descent and renewal.

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