

"Introduction"

## **Jung and the Ancestors**

**Beyond Biography,  
Mending the Ancestral Web**

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stories is integral to and representative of our collective story. Bond suggests that in the collective psyche at this moment in time, the new collective myths and stories will come to consciousness through the experiences, dreams, and stories of individuals. The individual stories shared in this book, as parts of the story of life on this planet, may contain and elucidate the unfolding collective narrative.

Telling stories, or as one of my teachers often says, “talking story,” has great power. “Talking story” opens an exploration into what has been buried, lost to consciousness, waiting to be remembered. Storytelling, by nature, is an interactive, collaborative, and reciprocal process that is created within the relationship between storyteller and listener. It is a way of knowing ourselves, each other, and our world. Listening to or reading the story of another—imagining the story from one’s personal perspective, measuring it against one’s experiences and beliefs, feeling its truth—the possibility exists that our understanding of ourselves, our personal narrative, and even our conception of reality will be engaged. In this dialogue between teller and listener “reality” is constantly being created and recreated.

As storyteller, I will serve as a guide through the landscape of the phenomenon of the lived experience of the presence of the ancestors in the here and now. I invite each reader to be open to and be aware of the ways in which you may be touched, moved, disturbed, challenged, and provoked, when you feel resonance and dissonance with what you are reading. I invite you to allow the stories shared in this book to set your own inner life in motion, to reveal what may be waiting to be discovered in your own story.

After finishing the book, I realized that every story, except for Jung’s, was a woman’s story. It was not intentional. My clients and the individuals who participate in the workshops I offer have all been women. It would only be speculation to try and explain or understand why this is so. I believe that our experiences and the dynamics that come to light in our stories are not gender specific. It is my hope that this book also speaks to men and their relationship with the ancestors.

I invite you to engage with and question the ideas and experiences that are shared in this book—to think critically and measure them against your own experience.



## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction to the Work

*What the ancients did for their dead! You seem to believe that you can absolve yourself from the care of the dead, and from the work that they so greatly demand, since what is dead is past. . . . Do you think that the dead do not exist because you have devised the impossibility of immortality? . . . The dead produce effects, that is sufficient.<sup>1</sup>*

—Ezekiel to C. G. Jung in *The Red Book*

Whatever one believes about what happens after our hearts stop beating, our ancestors have both a physical and psychological reality. Their bones and flesh lie in the ground on which we walk everyday of our waking lives, in the ground on which we build our homes and cities, in which our food grows, and in which our bodies will also come to rest. Their stories feed our memories and define how we see ourselves in relationship to our personal and collective history and to the land. Their DNA inclines us to particular diseases and links us through time to the origins of life on this planet.

How do we know them? How are they known to us? They speak to us through the stories that endure each generation’s telling. Our conscious memories of them live in these stories, in their letters and diaries, in particular fixed moments of their lives captured in photographs, in family heirlooms, recipes, and rituals. Over time memories can change or be forgotten, details and emphases altered as they are subjected to each person’s, each family’s, and each culture’s editing. These absences, this forgetting, result in breaks in the continuity of the far reaching historical story of which our life is one small but integral and significant part. Our connection to the deepest roots of our being is tenuous as a result of these discontinuous threads. The loss of stories from our personal lineage and the absence or omission of significant parts of our shared collective history as it was experienced and enacted by our ancestors, I would suggest, leave us standing in relationship with ourselves, our families, our ancestors, and the land

and all beings on shaky ground. Although lost to consciousness, the stories of our ancestors live in the reality of the unconscious psyche.

Every memory, every story, has both conscious and unconscious aspects within it. From a Jungian perspective, every narrative has its shadow.<sup>2</sup> This shadow contains memories that are too painful or traumatic to remember and aspects of ourselves that are contrary to our ideas of who we are individually, as a family, and collectively. Some family memories are taken to the grave to linger in these shadows. What is absent in these stories is as important as what is present. Although forgotten, intentionally or unintentionally, excluded parts of our ancestral story, like any repressed memory, continue to haunt us in the present. As Ezechiel tells Jung, the dead produce effects. The shadow, both personal and collective, is the Hyde to our Jekyll. As Jung so graphically states, “mere suppression of the shadow is as little of a remedy as beheading would be for headache.”<sup>3</sup>

We tell our story, turning the details over and over, adding, subtracting and embellishing, until we find a way to tell it that holds the truth of our experience. Stories shape our perceptions of each other, our world, and ourselves, giving meaning to our experience, history, and our lives. Stories highlight our differences and serve as bridges to our common humanity. Within our stories are the places of our wounding, our longings, and the possibility of reimagining ourselves and our world. Family stories take on mythic significance, ground us in our being, and place us in relationship with the larger family of which we are all a part. From our stories we derive a sense of self and a sense of how and where we belong. We are, by virtue of the stories we tell.

An old Chinese proverb tells us, to forget one’s ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without root. A friend of mine was in an academic class sitting in a council circle with her classmates. Her ancestry is typical of many Americans—a melting pot of other peoples and cultures. Another member of her class was a Native American woman. (My use of the generic term *Native American*, rather than using the particular name of this woman’s people, is in the service of protecting the identity of my friend and her classmate.) The Native American woman, holding the talking piece, shared her experiences of how difficult it had been, was, and continues to be, living in America. As my friend listened to her classmate’s story, she saw that this woman knew who her people were. She knew the stories of her ancestors, and through these stories, her world, her history, herself and her place in the larger story of her people from their moment of creation through time. Her people’s stories were her stories. Through the horror of dislocation, re-education, assimilation, and genocide, this woman and her people strove and often fought to remember and to stay connected to their traditions and their ancestors. Whether we are forced to or we make

a conscious choice to break away and move from the land of our ancestors, that land, its history and peoples are still a part of us. We are, even when we find ourselves on new ground, rooted in psyche and in our bodies to our origins, our ancestry.

This Native American woman’s story stirred a longing in my friend. As she sat in circle listening, she felt the absence of her own identity with a people, with their stories and traditions, with a land that connected her with her origins, with her ancestors. She felt a longing for this kind of connection which reached back through time and into the future, connecting individuals in a community to their roots. She recognized and longed for that same sense of belonging that her classmate had been born into. Her personal story and history had origins that were unknown to her, scattered across other continents. The indigenous ground of all the peoples she had a genetic and historical connection with had been transformed by civilization and progress. Her ancestors, with their stories and traditions, were absent from her conscious way of being in the world. Her longing, inspired by another woman’s story, was an indication of their presence. Perhaps this longing for a sense of deep belonging is met from the ancestors with an equally compelling and insistent longing.

Where do I come from? How many of us can remember asking this question as children? How many of us have been asked this by our children and our grandchildren? To what tribe do I belong? And, how did I get here from there? Where do I come from informs the question, where am I going? Knowing where we come from and who we are related to informs how we are in the world and provides a foundation for our actions. These questions and the insistent “why,” so characteristic of that time in each life when one’s world begins to extend beyond the individual self and family, are deeply, commonly shared, human questions.

Some of us can trace our personal family trees through genealogical records. Many of us cannot, because records are inadequate; even those of us who can often find large gaps in our family trees. With current advances in genetic testing, we can now follow the trails of our ancestors through identifying markers on our DNA across continents and oceans, sometimes to very specific locations on the globe. Technologies exist which can tell us what percentage of our blood links us to other Asians, Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans.

Jung’s conceptualization of the collective unconscious provides a psychological framework that, like genetics, allows us to trace the footprints of our ancestors across time and space. Rather than being derived from consciousness, the unconscious provides the foundation for and is the root of consciousness. According to Jung, the collective unconscious is “the mighty deposit of ancestral experience accumulated over millions of

years."<sup>4</sup> "[A]ll human experience right back to its remotest beginnings" is contained here.<sup>5</sup> Universal, "it not only binds individuals together into a nation or race, but unites them with the men of the past and with their psychology."<sup>6</sup> This imperishable world is our psychic heritage, the legacy of our ancestors, "to which each century adds an infinitesimally small amount of variation and differentiation."<sup>7</sup> In his encounter with the unconscious, the spirit of the depths teaches Jung that the dead "bear the future and the past in the depths. The future is old and the past is young."<sup>8</sup> The unconscious, this land of the dead, is a world of accumulated and potential memory from the lives of our ancestors *and* descendants. It provides the psychological ground of our existence.

What would happen were we to listen deeply to our ancestors? Imagining this as a journey to the underworld, rather than entering the underworld like Hercules to capture its guardian Cerberus and return with him to the upper world, this is a journey like that of Ulysses' who entered the underworld humbly, approaching and making offerings hoping to receive help in his quest to return home. He meets his mother there, listens to her story and returns to the upper world with greater wisdom. Or it could be compared to the deeds of Aeneas, who makes offerings to Apollo seeking his aid in finding a new homeland for his people. Hearing Apollo's prophecy of great hardship and war, Aeneas wishes to enter the underworld to visit the spirit of his father and ask for his counsel. He begs for help and makes sacrifices to the gods. Receiving their aid he descends into the underworld and encounters a throng of the dead. Here he learns the fate of his yet to be born descendants. Or like the descent undertaken by Inanna, who leaves the upper world to attend the funeral of her shadow, underworld sister Ereshkigal's husband and grieve with her. The intention of this journey from the upper world of consciousness into the underworld, the land of the dead, the unconscious, is to approach humbly, to listen, seeking counsel and hoping to return with greater wisdom.

What is being asked from us in the present in relationship to the past and unfolding future? For Freud, it was the recovery of lost and repressed memories for the sake of healing and the adaptation of the instincts to the requirements of civilization. For C. G. Jung, it was facing and integrating the personal and collective pieces of the shadow in service to a sense of wholeness. For Malidoma Some, a Dagara elder who offers the wisdom of his African ancestors in service to the healing of people in modern Western culture, this same question—what is being asked in the present moment?—is critical not only to our personal well-being, but to the well-being of our family, our community, and the larger collective body of which we are all a part.<sup>9</sup> The ideas explored in this book originate in my personal story. Recognizing that I was being addressed by the ancestors in the same way any

unconscious aspect of psyche gets our attention—through physical and emotional symptoms, family patterns, synchronicities and dreams—I have spent the last ten years actively engaged in personal research, dialogue, and ritual in an attempt to come more consciously into relationship with these figures of my past.<sup>10</sup> Each of us, through our experience over time, will come to our own perspective regarding the nature of the "reality" of the ancestors. This book, through theory and story, will be an exploration of our relationship with them and theirs with us, with particular attention given to the influence of their particular past on our immediate present and imagined, hoped for, and perhaps dreaded possible future. It is not necessary to have a particular perspective regarding the nature of our existence after death to fully engage with what is presented in this work. What is required is curiosity.

Depth psychology has its foundation in the personal stories of its theoreticians, practitioners, and their patients. Through the individual stories of men and women, analysts and patients, depth psychology has illuminated and brought many of us in Western culture back into a more conscious relationship with the world of the unconscious, those parts of our psyche, our experience, lying outside of our conscious awareness. Our personal relationship with this "invisible" world that is our inheritance is essential to our personal and collective well-being.

Jung's autobiography, told as his personal myth, is one of the stories of origin, one of the creation stories, of depth psychology. It is the myth of one of the founders of depth psychology and, I would suggest, one of its founding myths. Described within the pages of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* are a collection of Jung's experiences, dreams, and visions that reveal some of the original material that provided the foundation for Jung's theoretical work. Many of Jung's stories, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 are stories about the relationship between the here and the hereafter, the living and the dead.

In his autobiography in the chapter titled "Visions," Jung describes a visionary experience he had following a heart attack. In this vision he knew that his life was situated in the much larger context of those who had come before and those who would come after him. He writes,

I had the feeling that I was a historical fragment, an excerpt for which the preceding and succeeding text was missing. My life seemed to have been snipped out of a long chain of events, and many questions remained unanswered.<sup>11</sup>

Each individual's story as described by Kimmie Johnson, a writer and teacher who explores earth based healing traditions, "is at the center of a spiraling wheel of kinship" inseparable from that of the greater community

of which we are all an integral part.<sup>12</sup> As “historical fragments” integral within “a spiraling wheel of kinship,” each of our stories in its living and telling, carries a part of our shared collective memory and wisdom.

To understand Jung and the ancestors, which is the intention of this book, necessitates not only a close reading of Jung, but putting into practice what is learned from him through his theoretical work, his autobiography, and his imaginal dialogues regarding his and our relationship with the dead and the living. Jung’s psychology, in my personal experience, as a clinician and a teacher, provides a broad enough theoretical ground to explore the reality of the ancestors’ presence in the present. The dialogues in *The Red Book* provide insight into the direct experiences Jung had with the ancestors and “the dead.” Theoretically and phenomenologically, Jung’s work is complementary to what Gregory Cajete, Apela Colorado, and David Peat call Indigenous Science.<sup>13</sup> Vine Deloria’s thorough comparison of Jung and the Sioux is an excellent example of the way that Native American understanding and Jungian psychology complement and inform each other.<sup>14</sup> Jung’s psychology is the only one I’ve found that allows this bridge to be made between indigenous ways of knowing and understanding of the world and modern Western psychology. Bringing indigenous traditions into dialogue with Jung provides an expanded framework of understanding that establishes a solid foundation from which we can engage with and understand the stories that are shared in this book. The relevant aspects of Jung’s work and Indigenous Science as it pertains to this phenomenon will be presented in detail in the chapters that follow.

While stories provide the basis for theory, it is the interplay between practice and theory that keeps depth psychology vital. To this end, theory and personal story, mine and those of the women who generously offered theirs, will be interwoven throughout this book. This blending of formal theory, using a more traditionally academic voice, and informal storytelling, using a more personal and poetic voice, is designed to bring theory and experience into direct relationship with each other. Bringing theory with its demand for intellectual clarity into the realm of personal experience with its non-rational insights creates the possibility for a deeper understanding of Jung and his relationship with the ancestors and of one’s own relationship with the ancestors in a personally meaningful way. My hope is that you, as reader, will find yourself reflecting on your own experience of the ancestors. That is one of the goals of this book. Another is to offer practitioners in the healing professions new ways of understanding the nature and origins of individual mental, emotional, and physical disease, trauma, and vocation in the process of healing.

You can read this book objectively for the veracity of its content and its theoretical point of view. However, another possibility exists. This

possibility requires a different attitude, approach, and way of listening than we generally associate with our reading of non-fictional works, one that is more congruent with the tradition of storytelling. Bill Plotkin, depth psychologist and wilderness guide, observes that storytelling “conveys meaning in a way a mere explanation never could.”<sup>15</sup> Stories have the potential to touch both the heart and intellect of both the teller and listener or, in this case, reader.

David Peat describes his experience of listening to Danny Musqua, an elder and traditional storyteller of the Soto people. As he listened to Danny tell stories of his grandfather, he

seemed to comprehend what was being said to me, not in an intellectual way, but directly in my heart. There were times when I was not sure if Danny was talking about his own particular grandfather, the historical individual who had brought him up, or about the Grandfathers themselves, the Old Ones, the ones who had come long before, the spirits who stretched back for hundreds and thousands of years, the Grandfathers who can be seen moving within the hot rocks of the sweat lodge, who appear in dreams, and whose voices can be heard at night. In the space of just a few hours and in what may have been a small way for traditional people—but was very important to me—I was taken into a relationship with spirits that could teach.<sup>16</sup>

I share Peat’s story to offer his way of listening to the stories of Danny’s grandfather as a way for readers to listen to the stories in this book. My intention is to tell the stories that have been shared with or experienced by me in a way that carries their spirit, speaks to the heart and transcends the boundaries of space and time. I invite each reader to find a quality of being present, a quality of silence into which these stories can “speak” and offer whatever knowledge they may contain. I invite you to risk being touched by these stories. The potential exists that something may be sparked that could open the eyes and ears of your heart to the voices of the ancestors in your personal story.

### The Origins of This Work

My story finds its origins at any and many points in time. The ancestral thread of my life can be picked up in this moment in time and traced to one of the many points in time in the lives of my ancestors—to the early sixteen-hundreds, when some of the first Europeans began transplanting their roots from European soil to the continent of North America, and to a specific historical event in the history of this land. The date of my birth, March 29, is the anniversary of the date Providence, Rhode Island was burned to the ground in King Philip’s War by the grandsons of the men

who had given my ancestor, Roger Williams, this land thirty years before, when he was banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony by his contemporaries for heresy.

The effect of the European presence on this land was traumatic and devastating for the native people. The burning of Providence was traumatic for my ancestor. King Philip's War, the native people's attempt to rid the land of the English, was one of the most vicious and deadly wars on this soil. It was devastating to the English and Indians, to the land and the ecology of New England. This ancestral, historical, cultural, and ecological trauma would become part of the symptomatic landscape of my personal trauma. Without knowing my story, you must wonder about what I suggest in this last sentence. It certainly stretches the boundaries of our understanding of trauma. The understanding that my personal trauma in this time was a recapitulation of collective trauma from the time of my ancestor requires an expanded theoretical framework—one that could contain the complexity of my experience. As you continue to read, my hope is that the basis for this will become clearer.

My story also threads its way to the day my ex-husband's ancestor, John Cotton, and Roger Williams, my ancestor, met in England. As I learned more, it seemed that their mutual respect and their philosophical differences continued to exist in some way in my relationship with my ex-husband. Looking at the connections between my personal, familial, and ancestral biographies, and our collective biography, revealed the interconnected intricacy of the web of which each of us is a particular expression at any given moment in time. I began to see how the known and unknown stories of my ancestors were present in my personal symptoms, inclinations, dreams, and visions, and, ultimately, how the ancestors were deeply implicated in my fate. I wondered if and how our ancestral and cultural legacies continue living in our bodies, through our relationships, in both matter and the timelessness of psyche, as do other unconscious contents.

Tracing the origins of our symptoms to our personal and immediate family history is commonly accepted in depth psychology. As I researched the story of Roger Williams, I discovered that the origins of my symptoms, personal suffering and the teleological intention in my life had threads that tied me not only to his life, but also to the collective history of this continent and to the land on which he lived and in which his body was buried. The more connections I made between my life story and Roger's, the more I understood my complexes, inclinations, interests, fears, and choices. Ultimately, making and understanding these connections resulted in healing, transformation, and a clearer understanding of the

telos of my life. Even though we may not be consciously aware of the connection between our life and the lives of our ancestors, our ancestral and cultural legacies continue living unconsciously in our bodies, relationships and in psyche.

Who am I? Who and how am I in relationship with the rest of the world? These are basic human questions. My initial interest began in response to my daughter's insistent and stubborn curiosity about the ancestor her grandmother, my mother, said we were directly descended from. Prior to her interest, I thought the story about our family's relationship with this ancestor was just a story. I discovered in doing research with my daughter that I was actually a direct descendant of this important historical figure. As this ancestral dialogue unfolded, I discovered that the ancestors who were speaking to me were not limited to my personal ancestry. They included ancestors from other people's lineages, the ancestral people indigenous to this land, a black robed priest who haunted the women in my mother's line for centuries following the spread of Christianity to the British Isles, and finally, the ancestors and elders of the rich academic tradition of which this work is a part. The more I understood the depth and breadth of these connections, which seemingly transcended time and space, the more what appeared to be random and unconnected parts of my life began to form a more coherent whole.

As I shared parts of my ongoing story with others, I found what resonated for them were not the particularities within my personal story. After all, I was not talking about an experience that was common for people in our culture, nor does anyone else share the particularities that coalesce to make my story uniquely mine. It seemed that listening to my story opened listeners to a new way of understanding her or his own story. Sharing my story served as a catalyst that evoked a desire in others to learn more about the lives of their ancestors. My story was like a spark that evoked questions within these listeners—questions regarding what lived within and behind what each individual knew consciously about their symptoms, family patterns, personal idiosyncrasies, inclinations, and purpose in life. Talking with others, I discovered a sadness regarding what was not known and had been lost and a longing to reconnect more consciously with the ancestors whose life anticipated theirs. Each person wanted to know more about the people and the stories of those who had walked this earth before they were born. People wanted to know more about my experiences and what I had learned from being engaged in this seven-year conversation with the ancestors. It seemed that my story was a not only a catalyst, but also a possible map for navigating this “new” territory. What do the dead have to do with the living? On what do our futures rest?

### Unbidden Visitations

My maternal grandfather, who died when I was in my early twenties, returned to me on a wave of emotion. I was enraged, feeling the pain of the legacy of sexual molestation in my family. I was writing a letter to my sisters and mother that I never intended to send. I titled it, "the cost of abuse." I wrote as I felt the pain of all the losses associated with that initial trauma. Sobbing, screaming, writing, my bones shaking, I thought I could never forgive him, my grandfather, for what he had done to my sisters, my mother and me. Suddenly I felt a wave of pure love surround me. In that moment, it was incomprehensible. The love was so pure, so palpable, and in some way that I didn't understand, recognizable. I smelled cigar smoke and knew immediately it was my grandfather's presence. The psychologist in me reduced it to compensation, as if in response the love began to modulate. Surrounded in love, the rage and grief that I had never expressed to him when he was living gathered in my body, heart, and mind. He was a molester; he had no right to love me. I would never open to his love again. I would never forgive him!<sup>17</sup>

The returning memory and lingering effects of my childhood trauma would be the portal through which, years later, I would return to a particular moment in the American pre-colonial history of this land that occurred in the life of my ancestor, Roger Williams. Four years after my experience of my grandfather returning on a wave of love we were asked as part of our dissertation work at Pacifica Graduate Institute in California to do four imaginal dialogues to explore the unconscious aspects of our work. Robert Romanyshyn, the instructor in this course, developed a methodology called Alchemical Hermeneutics.<sup>18</sup> As part of that method he created transference dialogues to differentiate and engage with the various levels of the personal and collective unconscious—the personal, cultural-historical, collective-archetypal and eco-cosmological.

As much as I love imaginal dialogue, I had great resistance to the cultural-historical dialogue. I waited until the last possible minute. I woke up that morning physically shaking and crying, my body, once again, symptomatically remembering the sexual abuse I had suffered. I wandered around the campus trying to trust the wisdom of my body and psyche, wondering why, after all the work I had done, a lifetime of work, this memory in my body and psyche would not come to rest. The pain was more intense than my body had ever felt during other moments of remembering. It was excruciating, unbearable. My mind could not comprehend what I was experiencing. I found myself walking to the chapel on campus. As I entered I noticed a small altar on my right with a few pews. Sitting in this chapel held by the gaze from their portraits on the altar, of Mother Theresa,

Martin Luther King, Saint Francis, Aung San Suukyi, and Christ, I gave in to the shaking of my body and a deep experience of grief.

With the intention of the exercise and my experience and trust in working in this way, I entered into the active imagination inviting the unconscious to speak to the cultural-historical aspects of my dissertation. I found myself at the top of a hill looking down. I both am *and* feel an American Indian presence behind me, within me, even as I am aware of my body on the bench in the chapel.<sup>19</sup> His heart is broken, shattered as he sees what has happened to the land. I cannot find words adequate to describe the intensity of this pain. It is utterly unbearable, a sorrow of sorrows. Afraid I cannot tolerate this much grief, I open my eyes and look up at the figures on the altar. The memory of who they are and the compassion they embody(ed) which held and can hold experiences of such deep, unmitigatable sorrow and pain, holds me in this moment of remembering. I close my eyes and return to the dialogue and the man standing on the hillside. This man feels the pain of the land as it is developed, walked on by ones who cannot feel its life through the soles of their feet. His body is the land's body. And my body, through my wound, feels the rape of the land as he feels it, as the land feels it. This kind of suffering and sorrow lives forever until it is deeply witnessed and heard. It is a cry across and from the land that travels across and through the generations.

As I sat both experiencing and witnessing this collective trauma, another presence came forward. He was a tall white man with a walking stick. Although there are no pictures of him, being a Puritan, he thought it vain, I knew instantly that he was my ancestor, Roger Williams. My experience continued as I felt and saw things through the presence of these two men. I wanted to disengage from this rage and sorrow, to dissociate from my body (a familiar feeling). Experiencing the feelings of the land, the "Amerindian" and my ancestor was more intense than anything I had ever felt personally as a result of the molestation.<sup>20</sup> The intense affect and physical memory that was part of the legacy of having been molested seemed to be a portal that connected me to a particular moment in my ancestor's life and to the place and time of an old and unreconciled cultural and historical wounding. "Tell the story, this story. That is all we ask," said Roger and this Native presence.

Jung suggests the following way of understanding the relationship between an ancestral trauma and disturbances in living descendants. It is based on an "energetic" model of psyche—one in which affective energy cannot be created or destroyed, but can be transformed. Unlike Freud's understanding of psychic energy that is causal, Jung's conceptualization is acausal.<sup>21</sup> He writes,

The psychogenesis of the spirits of the dead seems to me to be more or less as follows. When a person dies, the feelings and emotions that bound his relatives to him lose their application to reality and sink into the unconscious, where they activate a collective content that has a deleterious effect on consciousness.<sup>22</sup>

On March 29 in 1676 during King Philip's War, my ancestor Roger Williams stood on a hill with Cuttanque, a Quinitticut sachem watching the town of Providence burn. On March 29, 1952, exactly two-hundred and seventy-six years after the burning of Providence, I was born in Hanover, New Hampshire early in the morning, in the midst of a blizzard. I was born on the anniversary of this very significant date in the history of this land and its people, of America and in my ancestor's life, a date which represented a turning point for Indians and Europeans in what is now called New England. This synchronicity would be one of two dates that would link my life to the life of my ancestor and to the collective history of this land in which he played a significant part.

The pain that shook my body that day, almost to the point of breaking, connected me to a traumatic time in the history of the land and its peoples, to a place in the history of America one hundred years before it was named the United States of America, and to the particular life of an ancestor through my mother line. The experience in this imaginal exercise was evidence of the depth of the link between this deeply personal and traumatic event in my ancestor's life and my personal trauma. Traveling on this one thread within an intricately woven tapestry along the memory of trauma, I found myself at a place of intersecting origins.

Stories of personal trauma often remain isolated and split off from the rest of one's personal story. Untold and unwitnessed, these stories exist like islands of isolated memory separated from the rest of one's personal narrative, or, they may become the monument around which the story of one's life is centered to the exclusion of anything that isn't related to the trauma. Reaching backward and forward in time and through space, discovering the way one's personal story of trauma is connected through the lives of one's ancestors to the greater collective story, can contribute to creating an expanded narrative context. This more inclusive context has an emotional and narrative coherence that is characteristically lacking in the stories of individuals who have experienced trauma.

Through this imaginal exercise for the cultural and historic transference in the work of my dissertation I realized I had been addressed by my ancestral past from and in the moment of my birth. From a Jungian perspective, the coincidence of the dates of the burning of Providence and the date of my birth, March 29<sup>th</sup>, becomes synchronistic and meaningful. The concept of synchronicity was conceived of by Jung as a way to understand

and explain certain kinds of "remarkable phenomenon . . . of the unconscious" when the principle of causality is an insufficient explanation.<sup>23</sup> Synchronicity, as defined by Jung, is "the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state."<sup>24</sup> Synchronistic phenomena, according to Jung, are evidence that psyche has a material aspect and matter a psychic one. These events, by definition, transcend the physical limitations of space and time, and are associated by meaning rather than cause and effect.

The experience in this imaginal exercise was evidence of the depth of the link between my ancestor Roger's life and mine. Making this connection, first physically and emotionally, then cognitively, provided a context that revealed a deeper meaning in and understanding of the trauma in my life. Even after thirty-three years of conscious work on the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels, I did not feel free from the effects of this trauma. The ancestral, historical, and cultural memories that are synchronistically linked to my memory of personal trauma informed and were an integral and necessary part of my process of healing. Seeing the relationship between my childhood trauma, my ancestor's trauma, the cultural-historical trauma and the trauma to the land made possible a more complete transformation of the pattern of abuse in my family.