

This article was downloaded by: [T&F Internal Users], [Ms Charlene Brooke]  
On: 07 March 2013, At: 12:23  
Publisher: Routledge  
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered  
office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche

Publication details, including instructions for authors and  
subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujun20>

### Jane Hollister Wheelwright: Pioneer Ecopsychologist, Explorer of Wilderness Terrain, Inner and Outer

C. Doyle Hollister

Version of record first published: 06 Mar 2013.

**To cite this article:** C. Doyle Hollister (2013): Jane Hollister Wheelwright: Pioneer Ecopsychologist, Explorer of Wilderness Terrain, Inner and Outer, Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche, 7:1, 19-33

**To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2013.759027>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Jane Hollister Wheelwright

Pioneer Ecopsychologist, Explorer of Wilderness Terrain,  
Inner and Outer

C. DOYLE HOLLISTER



Jane standing in front of the Hollister Family House, Bolito Canyon, Santa Anita Ranch of Nuestra Senora del Refugio, circa 1920

Jane Hollister Wheelwright was my aunt, my father's fraternal twin. In an attempt to honor her pioneering ideas on the psychological experience of the wilderness, I originally presented this paper as one lecture of a four-part lecture series sponsored by the Opus Archives at the Pacifica Graduate Institute. The lecture focused on Jane and her daughter, Lynda Wheelwright Schmidt, and their writings on the potential psycho-spiritual relationship between human and wilderness. This article addresses six central themes: the experience of merging with wilderness nature, nature and the child psyche, the phenomenon of the realm of the Other or the Big Something, the Wild Thing within the Other, and the dynamic of opposites within physical nature and within the individuating Self. I begin with a poem I wrote in honor of Jane's ninety-fifth birthday.

## Merging

### Spell of the Wild

Looking west, mind moving into setting sun haze,  
 Air visible in sand-stone-sun-beamed eve, from  
 Crest of the ridge, my eyes track the land's snaking way,  
 Along channel island coast.  
 Here, manzanita and tanbark oak  
 Deep green growth blanketing the ridge,  
 Vibrates its life to the eye.  
 Luminous green,  
 Fronting blue sea and sky,  
 Mesmerizes the mind, entrances,  
 Silent, serene and still.  
 And then . . .  
 Wind wanders past the ear, its  
 December nature bites and breaks the  
 Blue green seduction and draws  
 The eye to the sand stone rocks below.  
 Like diamonds on rattlesnake's back,  
 Lit brightly they glow rose-golden at dusk,  
 Primal stone sculptures  
 Carved with Zephyrian artistry,  
 Twisted, hollowed, and bored.  
 The ancient imaginal mind wanders . . .  
 It sees the ancestors sheltered below,  
 Warmed by fire in cold black night,  
 Stick figures and stories circling in smoke filled caves.  
 The gate to the other world is open . . .  
 The gate to the Other is open . . .

I am alive, again, to the spell of the wild,  
 And the wild is alive in me,  
 I am the wild, and the wild is me.

Jane and Lynda refer to the unique “spell” of certain moments between wilderness and themselves as merging. Explained as a subjective state or unique consciousness, or, perhaps, lack of consciousness, merging occurs in certain moments when one is in intimate relationship with wilderness. Merging does not necessarily happen any time a person interacts with a natural environment, even if that person has had extensive relationship with the wild, though experience of wilderness certainly helps. Merging, understood as a psycho-spiritual experience (as opposed to the pathological, clinical symbiotic relationship), is not a social encounter. In nature, merging takes place when one is personally isolated and interacting with a natural environment—most likely an environment with which one is familiar. Both Jane and Lynda propose that merging is hampered by talking. In speaking with Lynda recently on the phone, she said that she and Jane used to try to experience this merging state when they were walking together on the Hollister Ranch beach. She said that it never happened. Merging, in the sense that Jane and Lynda consider it, is not a social event, even for those who are intimate with a certain landscape.

Though it is difficult to describe in words, even to understand, I feel I know exactly what they are talking about and have found poetry as the only medium through which I am able to describe it, as in the poem that begins this article. I recall, as a child, having had this experience when I was hunting alone in the backcountry, walking on the beach, or riding my horse. At the time I did not know what was happening. From a more mature perspective, I now know when it happened, and I can remember, quite clearly, these specific occasions in my youth.

Merging is an experience that comes about through the senses. The portal seems to be via external, sensual, natural stimuli. For me, the stimulus comes from many sources: wind visually moving through trees or passing by the ear, the sound of the ocean waves when walking along the beach, the warmth of the sun on the sand at the beach, a certain light reflecting off a sandstone rock at sunset or sunrise. Perhaps the most potent stimulus comes from the experience of being embraced by pure silence, the psychically penetrating noise of pure silence.

Merging brings with it a paradigm shift in the mind and body. Lynda writes about the beginning of the merging experience:

I remember times alone on the ranch and the quiet that would surround me as I moved along a trail or over the hard, wet sand at the beach. Sometimes I would stop somewhere and sit, and after a while I would become half-drowsy and entranced. Then I would seem to meld into the setting, sink into the grass or sand, wriggle in until I fit into it rather than on it. Thinking and self-awareness would fade away, and I would float, seeing and hearing nothing at all. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 34–35)

She adds, “I sink into unconsciousness and namelessness and flow along in the wild” (36).

In my recent conversations with Lynda, she explained, “Merging is below or beyond ego. It’s like the earliest mother-child experience. Land as mother, returning to the source, like being back in the ocean, submerged. We all come from there, you know?” Lynda continued to describe to me how she now goes in and out of this state when she walks the coastline of Maine. She drifts in and out of self-consciousness and this other hypnotic, entranced state of being somewhere else.

Both Jane and Lynda talk about having to pass through some kind of anxiety or fear about being alone in nature before the boundaries dissolve. “The enormity of the wilderness [brings] home to me my vulnerability and frailty,” says Lynda (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 35). She quotes her mother as saying, “You know you do not have answers, only a constant questioning: What is that sound? What is that rustle? What is making those grasses move?” (35). In my view, it is this solitary confrontation with the enormity of the wilderness, so filled with unknowns, that creates anxiety initially. The conscious ego needs to know and control; it becomes anxious in the face of so much that is not within its domain of control. The ego must recognize that in the wild it may be impotent or even an impediment to survival. If one is to merge with the wild, there is a letting go of self-control, followed by a sensorial joining with the spontaneous interplay of the active environment. Paradoxically, this surrender of control, a counterintuitive gesture, is exactly what is needed to achieve greater personal safety in this wild natural world.

This confrontation with nature brings to mind a passage in one of my favorite poetry books, Gary Snyder’s *Myths and Texts*. In it, Snyder articulates this collision between ego, the wild, and merging in his description of John Muir on Mt. Ritter. Imagining Muir climbing Mt. Ritter, Snyder writes:

After scanning its face again and again,  
I began to scale it, picking my holds  
With intense caution. About half-way  
To the top, I was suddenly brought to  
A dead stop, with arms outspread  
Clinging close to the face of the rock  
Unable to move hand or foot  
Either up or down. My doom  
Appeared fixed. I MUST fall.  
There would be a moment of  
Bewilderment, and then,  
A lifeless rumble down the cliff  
To the glacier below.  
My mind seemed to fill with a  
Stifling smoke. This terrible eclipse  
Lasted only a moment, when life blazed  
Forth again with preternatural clearness.  
I seemed suddenly to become possessed  
Of a new sense. My trembling muscles  
Became firm again, every rift and flaw in  
The rock was seen as through a microscope,  
My limbs moved with a positiveness and precision  
With which I seemed to have  
Nothing at all to do.

(1960, 39)

In this poem, Muir, in his fear of dying, is paralyzed. When beyond this initial confrontation with death, his ego panic subsides, something takes over his mind; he merges with his environment, and, with acute sensory awareness, he begins to move up the mountain, ego consciousness transformed, no longer an individual man climbing the face of a mountain. He and the mountain have merged into one.

In the merging process, the penetrability of personal boundaries and the ability to relinquish the habitual dominance of the ego's functions are central. If one's boundaries are too inflexible or the ego is too dominant and cannot move aside, merging will not occur. Fear and defensiveness will win, and death, in some extreme cases, may result. Merging is a kind of fusion between human and nature.

Merging for Jane often seemed to be triggered by the beauty she saw in nature. I am reminded of something that James Hillman said at Pacifica in a Nature/Psyche conference (2007). Roughly paraphrasing, he said that the natural world engages the aesthetic; it presents us with beauty. Beauty ignites love. Beauty stops us, and we are sensitized. Similarly, Jane writes about riding her horse on the ranch,

The Indians spoke of the "thinking heart"; that was what I was doing, thinking in beauty, living in beauty. Riding down that beautiful canyon in the primeval setting, I felt myself lifted to an impersonal level, making me somehow right with my surroundings. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 142)

Jane poetically continues in another part of *The Long Shore*:

All in all, the elements were loving the coast. "Love" can be a pretentious word, but it adequately expressed the enfolding, bathing subtlety of the evening's gold wash, which stretched beyond imagination. The evening was made of the thinnest silk. (99)

Her response to the aesthetics in nature clearly invoked the merging process for Jane and accessed deep feelings within this sensate thinking-type person.

In her later years, Jane experienced this merging as a kind of death, a dying off of a more civic, egoistic consciousness and a rebirth into something far greater. She writes, "Merging with something as big as nature, as big as wilderness, gives one comfort" (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 174). It is a "merging that makes me feel alive . . . Merging is one word for dying. And then there is rebirth" (174). Merging into wilderness world, a world so much greater than her personal world, has psychological and spiritual significance. As she progressively allowed herself to merge with the wilderness world around her, ultimately the experience gave her comfort by anticipating her physical death, when she would merge with the transpersonal and the infinite.

## Nature and Children

The relationship between the child and raw nature was important to Jane, especially with regard to the merging experience. Her childhood immersion in nature was the foundation from which her theories emerged. However, the quality of merging with the wild in childhood is different from the quality of merging in adulthood. Jane started her life in Chihuahua, Mexico, where she lived until she was around four years old. Before she went off to the Santa Barbara Girls School at about age twelve, she ran wild with her fraternal twin, my father Clinton, on 25,000 acres of wild land along the Gaviota Coast.

In Jane's paper "The Land and the Soul: A Balance of Nature," the child psyche merging with nature and the power of this relationship is a central theme. She begins by telling a story about a gopher and my young son, Kyle.

I recalled watching my nephew's three-year-old son recently. A gopher, small as it was, had caught his attention, and he became totally uninterested in us adults. As he watched, the gopher ran backward as fast as it ran forward. His father, raised in the area as was I, commented on it to the child, who became totally transfixed. He was probably considering what a feat it would be if he could go backwards that fast!

When there was no wildlife on the terrace, the boy would annoy his father by clinging to him and wanting attention from us. But when the animals were around, the change in his behavior was dramatic: he and the chipmunks and birds were all together in their own world. Adults did not interest him. I think this illustrates how a child contacts nature directly. This is what I call the naïve approach. It develops in childhood and can be retained throughout life if it is not belittled or repressed by too much civilized input and if it is revived from time to time in solitude in nature. (2011, 45)

A unique connection is made between the young psyche and nature. The ego of the child is not burdened with the developed functions that will come later in life. Still with the capacity to attach, innocent and alive, for the small child there is no boundary between the realm of the wild and his or her naïve child psyche. Lynda explained in a phone call her idea that early in life, merging "flows like water," back and forth, with "no ego separation." According to Jane, this ability of children to merge instinctively with nature makes communing with nature in childhood a prerequisite for deeper merging experiences as an adult:

Children instinctively know how to value nature in their natural childlike ways. Nature within them resonates to nature without. To put it in more technical terms, formation of instinct by exposure to wilderness has to happen at an early age when the environment imprints onto what has surfaced in the child as its human inheritance. The earlier the child is imprinted by wilderness (that is, wild animals, climatic factors, vegetation, silence), the more likely the primitive psychological layer, corresponding to Native American culture, will be uppermost and can meet the outer wilderness impact. In such a case, the amalgamation of instinct and wilderness is set for life. (2011, 45)

Naturally, Jane had strong views about the consequences for the individual who was not exposed to nature early in life:

As I sat and savored the day's experience, it occurred to me that for those individuals not exposed directly to wildlife in childhood but raised on a diet of Disney fairy tales and scientific accounts, it is necessary that another human being provide them with the connecting link to wilderness. Such people have never felt the immediate impact of nature and, once past childhood, cannot ever spontaneously grasp the sense of what nature is all about. Only a child experiences the magic feeling—*poetry*, if you like—of the freely functioning wild animal. (2011, 45)

Jane was unwavering in her belief that children who are only exposed to nature via science in classrooms and books or from television, via animation, are simply not able to experience the *instinctual* depth in the way they do when it comes directly from raw contact with nature.

Deepening her view on children and nature, Jane writes:

I think small children exposed to nature and to wild creatures come face to face with an inherited level of potential experience within themselves that corresponds to what primitives know. In other words,

this psychic region, when constellated by an actual experience of wilderness, will resonate to the psychic stratum laid down eons ago when human beings' adaptations were determined by the wild environments in which they lived. (2011, 50)

She adds, "These experiences will draw children down to deeper psychic layers in themselves—in psychological terms, to the world of the archetypes, including the Self" (50). Jane continues, "The child's first-hand experience would be the real thing. And this is the first step toward the reality that they will need for the rest of their lives. It will help to preserve their instincts and give them psychic depth" (50–51). According to Jane, childhood immersion in nature becomes a necessary "first step" from which the individuating Self may evolve.

Relevant to this theme of the thin boundary between nature and the child psyche are some personal observations of Jane's unique relationship to the betwixt and between, which, I hypothesize, was a result of her early childhood immersion in nature. The boundaries between Jane's waking life and her dreaming life, as well as between her inner life and outer environment, were very thin. She merged, or fused, with dreams and nature easily; she was not a person rigidly clinging to the ego function or fearful of engaging the unconscious internal and external elements.

I had my own personal experience, talking to Jane over the years, of the naturalness with which she experienced other realms. One day she said to me while we were talking up at her ranch property, "So, Doyle, I had a good conversation with your father the other day." My father had been dead for some years at that point, so this was rather startling. She proceeded to tell me a dream. She said she was walking at the beach when she saw a curtain-like object and decided to walk through it. On the other side she met my father where they had a brief conversation. She asked him how it was over there on the other side and how he was faring. He told her that things were peaceful and that he was doing fine. She said this is what she wanted to know so, finding out that all was okay with him, she returned back through the curtain to the physical world. She told me this as if she had just met him for a chat and wanted to reassure me, as she herself had been reassured, that my father was doing well in the spirit world.

On another occasion, she told me the story of her father's death. He had rapidly become very ill. She was sitting beside his bed. Suddenly, he pushed up on his elbows and said to her that he was "done in." Then he passed. Jane said that immediately after his passing she watched his soul, a bright light, leave his body. It rose up into the room and drifted away, out through the ceiling above. She spoke with the same certainty here as she had spoken of her dream, as if it were an absolute matter of fact.

A third example of the way Jane passed between realms occurred right after Joe Wheelwright, her husband, died. Jane and Joe lived next door to us in Santa Barbara once they had to come in from Tepitantes, their ranch property. One morning, soon after Joe's death, I went over to her cottage to visit and Jane said with great joy in her voice, "Say, Doyle, I saw Joe last night. He came through the room right there," pointing up into the air, "and moved right along here in front of me," again pointing to the flight path above her chair. "He was rather long and seemed awkward in his flight, but he was okay. He was flying pretty well for a beginner!" Again, this was said in a way that conveyed her experience of the spiritual realm as certain as her experience of the physical world.

The veil between Jane's consciousness and other worlds—the dream world, nature's realm, even, perhaps, the spirit domain—was thin and easily transversed. Perhaps the thinnest veil was

that between wilderness nature and her child mind, where the foundation for a deep instinctual life was laid. The relationship between Jane and nature was like a fusion between mother and young child. In essence, Mother Nature was a surrogate parent for Jane. Of nature as parent she writes, "In my encounter with the mesas . . . messages from the land itself . . . were telling me that here was my living home and real parent" (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 21). Lynda affirms this idea of nature as parent: "My mother and I realized that in the absence of personal mothering we both had turned to the ranch for mothering" (xv). Not only was wilderness the mentor for a deeper psycho-spiritual life in Jane's later years, but, in the absence of more consistent human parenting, nature became the primary source of maternal nurturance for both Jane and her daughter. One might say that, as the individual passes through life's stages, for the one whose child psyche has connected to the wilderness, the nurturing "Mother Nature" will always be there to embrace one within the merging experience.

## The Other and the Big Something

Both Jane and Lynda further explored the altered consciousness of the merging experience and attempted to describe more specific experiences inside this fusion with nature. They refer to that which one merges with as the Other or the Big Something. Lynda states:

I find I have to feel alone to merge, so that I can make an intimate connection with the wilderness, with myself as a creature of nature, and with the sense of awe that is the hallmark of the Other, the reality that is greater than oneself. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 35)

Jane writes:

On the ranch I had unconsciously found, through experience after experience, that there is an Other greater than me out there. Because I usually came through my adventures unscathed, I concluded that the big something must have been on my side. (190–191)

The Other that both refer to is not something that can be measured. In fact, Jane was adamant that too much time had been spent on measuring nature scientifically rather than endeavoring to describe the phenomenological subjective, psycho-spiritual experience within the merging process. Both women describe merging with a power so much greater than themselves, and, for Jane, this power had a benevolent and protecting quality.

Jane describes the Other as an experience of being inside perfection. When one has merged with the Other, one has the experience of being inside wilderness, one is fused with perfection. "The demands that nature makes in wilderness environments bring out the best in all forms of life within its domain" (Wheelwright, 2011, 54). Note that she separates nature as a force or power that shapes wilderness or environment from the environment itself. She continues:

Perfection seems to be its goal because those that do not fit—for whatever reason—do not survive. The harsher the environment, the more fantastically beautiful is all of life. Take the Arctic, for instance . . . Life that survives on the tundra and in overwhelming snow and ice is miraculously so constituted that one could truly say a perfection is achieved in that particular evolved stratum. Perfection and all-inclusiveness are attributes of the divine according to the way humans have imagined their gods and goddesses ever since Homo sapiens emerged. (54)

In my dialogues with Lynda, she reflected that “there was a sense of the divine” when merged with the Other. Trying to understand the experience of the Other is a challenge, one that may best be approached via the medium of poetry.

William Wordsworth captures the relationship between the individual and nature as the Other in his wonderful poem, “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey”:

And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is in the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean, and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore I am still  
 A lover of the meadows and woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
 In nature and the language of the sense,  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my moral being.

(Quoted in Witherspoon, 1951, 718)

Wordsworth poetically resonates with how Jane and Lynda describe their experience of the Other and the Big Something as so much greater than their individual consciousness. In my personal experience, merging with the Other brings forth an experience of the greater interrelatedness of all things, of which I am just a small part. There is a deeply felt cellular sensation of belonging to a vast interconnected harmonious whole, an earth household if you will, an exhilarating experience.

## The Wild Thing

Jane and Lynda describe a timeless, archaic, deeply instinctual experience within the present of a merging moment with the Other, an experience they refer to as the Wild Thing. In one of her descriptions of merging, Lynda concludes with the words, “It was a strange, timeless condition” (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 38). Jane reflects on a special moment at the ranch, “that night, in its continuous movement the wind was like a wild thing. Fresh and cold and strong, it was saying something—something about a past still living in the present” (41).

When Jane refers to the past still existing in the present, within the sound of wind on a chilly ranch night, or the realm of the infinite, or when Lynda refers to the timeless quality within the experience of the Other, I believe they are sensing the archaic, indigenous self reaching up from the collective unconscious. Jane says of herself and my father Clint, regarding their insouciant upbringing on the ranch, that the wild's "tyrannical power, its unknown mystery, must have drawn us all down to a level known only to the aborigines, which [as children] we could not articulate" (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 23). As children, the instinctual experience with the wild occurs via the pure "being" with one's instincts, living them out unknowingly and unconsciously. In adulthood, the connection with the instinctual experience, the Wild Thing, has a "knowing" quality to it. As an adult, I find, when in the merging phenomenon, that there is an objective awareness of this archaic world, a more mature consciousness, and, consequentially, the possible articulation of the indigenous mind and the value of the truth and wisdom within it. There is a "knowing" that one is in "pure being."

When I asked Lynda about the Wild Thing, she stated that it was the indigenous person within us. It is the "instinctual response to life in contrast to the domestic or urban response." Lynda talked about this instinctual life in contrast to urban life using the example of her dog. She said that her dog when in the house was a very different dog than he was when walking on the beach. On the beach he suddenly became active—alive and curious—specifically and myopically hunting with his nose. At home he was passive, Lynda-pleasing, a domestic canine. By example of her dog, Lynda illustrated the effect of wilderness on her own deep instinctual life.

The Wild Thing bears resemblance to Jung's two million-year-old self, the primal or archaic self that exists within us, the indigenous soul (Jung, 1931/1964, CW 10). Jung was aware of the relationship between the civilized, ego-bound, socialized individual and the wild one who resides deep in the unconscious. "Every civilized human being, however high his conscious development, is still an archaic man at the deeper levels of his psyche" (§ 105). Jung also said, in an article from *The New York Times*, October 4, 1936, "In the last analysis, most of our difficulties come from losing contact with our instincts, with the age-old unforgotten wisdom stored up in us." Jane and Lynda recognized how important intimate experience of wilderness was in having a connection to the archetypal realm, to the archaic psyche that Jung describes, a connection to the timeless instinctual Wild Thing and the wisdom within it.

Jane, however, struggled to maintain a connection to her indigenous soul over her lifetime. Even though she spoke clearly to the sacredness of the indigenous soul within, she also addressed how difficult it was to experience it when negotiating the more domestic realms of her life. Jane refers to this difficulty as a lifelong endeavor to "mend my primitive-modern split" (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 49). In fact, Jane often referred to the primitive-modern split as Jung's diagnosis of her. In "Dreams of a Lifetime," she notes, "I was also fortunate that Jung was interested in the primitive and modern split in Americans. Being a good example of that, I quickly resonated to Jung's interest" (2009, 49).

Reconciling her primitive-modern split was a constant struggle for Jane throughout her life. Much later in her years, she reflects on the relentless difficulty of social extraversion even for one used to living in wilderness: "I am left feeling inferior, an extraverted moron or a moronic extravert, and I am. I wonder, then: is there a price for solitude, reflection, consciousness?"

(Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 176). She continues, “As children, my twin brother, Clinton, and I experienced wilderness in a way which was dramatic and shaped us in such a fashion that any understanding or appreciation of civilization was virtually lost” (2011, 53). She recognized the conundrum of her connection to wilderness and her need to function in a social, civilized world. “We never realized that we were coping with a huge pair of opposites and needed to find a third state which could reconcile these apparently opposing ways of life—at least on our continent” (53). For Jane, holding the tension of these opposites, specifically the tension between the primitive and the modern, would be central to her lifelong individuation process.

## Nature and the Self

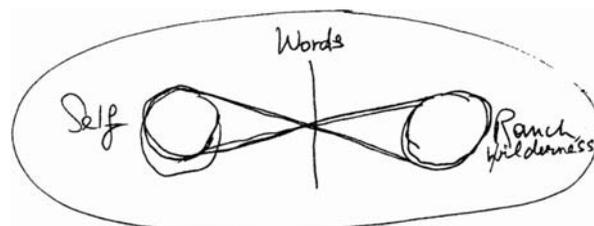
A major theme for Jane in her later years, when she was living at Tepitates and continued to wrestle to define the world within the Big Something, was her progressive realization that Nature and Self were parallel universes. The internal world and the external world were related and reverberated back and forth. Gradually she came to the hypothesis that the outer world was a reflection of the inner world. “Slowly the equivalent greater-than-me inner Other made itself felt as more constructive. This all-encompassing inner Other finally manifested concretely in a confrontation with the depths of my psyche” (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 191). She adds:

This knowledge of the similarity of the inner phenomenon to the outer experience came to me only in my old age. My yearnings for the elements of the past had evidently had a corresponding yearning for the Self, the greater-than-me within. (191)

When she pondered her motivation for writing *The Ranch Papers* in 1988, the passionate memoir of her relationship with the land, she observes,

Immediately I “knew” that my work on these papers was for my benefit, that the Self, my psyche as a whole, needed to speak and thereby also find for my ego its (her) right place in the Self’s scheme. The writing would somehow explain that I was honoring an archetypal psychic totality—something vastly bigger than “me” in me. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 149)

For Jane, the realm of the Self and the realm of wilderness nature, the Other, were in relationship to one another. Regarding the image below, drawn by Jane after a night of lucid archetypal dreaming, she writes, “Perhaps inner and outer enhance each other where they join. The left circle refers to the subjective, the inner psychic totality, and the right circle refers to the outer, or physical, totality” (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 151).



Reproduced from Wheelwright and Schmidt (1991, 150)

The diagram illustrates the way Jane recognized the mirroring of the two worlds in her later years. The area of overlap would be the place where the conscious individual stands, in a sense, the bridge that can join the inner world and the outer world through the process of merging both with nature and dreams. Words were Jane's creative medium. She made sense of her world through words. As she stood between the archetypal, subjective realm of the Self and its outer physical manifestation in the wilderness, she states, "Where the lines cross is where the words stand and where the meaning concentrates" (150). She continues, "What is rare is to discover that one's inner self also needs what is outside in order to come to fruition—that the midpoint is also where the creative drive and impulse happen" (151).

Another way of articulating this juxtaposition and the interplay therein: the external ecosystem and the human internal ecosystem are parallel systems, or the soul of nature and the soul of the individual are resonant. Contact between these two worlds results in enhancing the depth and power of the instinctual and creative life force or source within. In fact, toward the end of Jane's paper on nature and soul, "The Land and the Soul," she quotes E. L. Grant-Watson, writer and biologist: "If the instinctive animal could find a conscious utterance—if instinct . . . could be endowed with self-regarding intelligence, it would say: *I and my environment are one*" (Grant Watson 1954, 20). Here are Jane's own words:

Perhaps one could say that this "beyond ego" experience was and is an experience of the archetype of origin, and that this inward-outward manifestation is the source of creativity. I feel sure that this is so, because I nearly always come to life at those times when the inner, self-regulating system connects with the outer reality—when I am in Tepitatas with wilderness around me. This is the time when the outer, elemental forces stimulate the inner, and the inner greater-than-me enhances the extraordinary meaningfulness of the outer. It is an experience of completion. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 192)

## The Inner and Outer Play of Opposites

Jane's exploration of the resonance between psyche and nature continued with her lifelong interest in the dynamic of internal and external opposites, which she was particularly dedicated to throughout her life.

All the sensate opposites are also present together in wilderness: blistering heat and bitter cold, icy winter storms and scorching summer sun, lush greenery and parched ground. Silence is enhanced by animal sounds and by winds that gently blow away the pesky deer flies in July or forcefully drive one indoors in midwinter. And there are untold numbers of opposites between these extremes. (Wheelwright, 2011, 55)

It is my speculation that her keen awareness of the opposites in nature was what allowed her to experience opposites within herself. The ubiquitous experience and endurance of polar extremes in physical nature provided a paradigm for Jane to deal with the opposites within her personality, specifically with her most encompassing opposites, the primitive self and modern self.

Jane actively lived out with purpose Jung's Principle of Entropy, whereby the psyche distributes energy over one's life into a greater state of wholeness, a more evolved Self (Jung, 1928/1960, CW 8).

She firmly believed and often called attention to Jung's assertion that "the opposites are the ineradicable and indispensable preconditions of all psychic life" (1955–1956/1963, CW 14, ¶206). More specifically, her effort to maintain the tension of the opposites of her ego consciousness and the world of the Other, the Big Something, and the Wild Thing generated a more vital, transcendent, and individuated Self. This process progressively evolved over the course of her life. Her ability to maintain this tension resulted in an activation of the transcendent function, the emergence of the third. I think this is all represented in one quote toward the end of "The Land and the Soul." Regarding transcendence, she beautifully says:

In old age, I am realizing more and more how crucial the play of opposites is to my well-being and my extension of consciousness. When I no longer take sides with one opposite, thereby maintaining the psychic imbalance, but instead remind myself that what is to me the unpopular opposite must be essential to life and then try to find out what it is in terms of my life and experience, then I immediately feel healthier and my following dreams refer to harmony. (2011, 52)

Lynda concurs:

Eventually I realized that, first as a child in the wilderness then as an adult, I had learned "both sides"—ruthlessness and empathy... And I learned that it is necessary to be able to "hold the opposites," choosing between the two if I must but never denying the value of the opposite. "Everything has its season." (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 63)

Ultimately, it is my belief that Jane's understanding of and relationship to intrapsychic opposites, grounded by her experience with nature's physical extremes, helped her transcend most of the tension of the opposites in her life, including the tension between the primitive and modern, radical marital typological differences (Jane a sensate, thinking, introvert type and Joe, her husband, an intuitive, feeling, extrovert type), life and death, the physical realm and the spiritual realm. As well, Jane's experiences of merging with wilderness and her endeavor, along with her daughter, to describe what lies within the psycho-spiritual interplay between human psyche and nature resulted in subjective principles that would become imbedded within the foundation of her ecopsychological orientation to the planet. A pristine example of this is an observation she made late in her life as she worked with a primary set of opposites, life and death. Exhibiting a higher state of the individuated Self, she realized the importance of her own death while she observed nature's perfection in its cycle of regeneration.

Life and death, and the overall continuation of life, are what matter. Without death there could be no continuation, for there would be no opportunity for nature to promote new life. "A life for a life" is a part of this message, for humans as well as for wildlife. Were I to live forever, how could my descendants get past me and into their own lives? Even if I proved to be the greatest thing on earth, I would still be a physical and psychic deterrent to future life. (Wheelwright and Schmidt 1991, 189)

As one who had the privilege of knowing her, I can attest that Jane was a person of depth, intensity, intelligence, and originality, passionately engaging internal and external nature to the end.

In conclusion, I recall the night of her death. I still have a clear picture in my mind's eye of Jane lying on her bed shortly after passing, surrounded by her Native American artifacts. It had been an unusually warm night with Santa Ana winds blowing hot inland air to the Santa Barbara

coastline. When I looked at her lying on her bed, she seemed so serene and at peace, seemingly accepting, perhaps even welcoming, death. She had evolved into such a beautifully individuated human being and now her life in this world was over. As I looked upon her lying there, I was content, within myself, to see such tranquility represented on her face. And yet, in spite of the serenity of the moment, my impulse was to quickly open the sliding glass door that separated her room from the outside. I wanted her room to be open to the beautiful night wilderness, out the door, just beyond her bed.

Joanne, my wife, asked, "Why are you doing that?"

Pausing, I replied, "Well, I wanted to make sure Jane's soul could get outside, so, I want the door open as wide as it can go."

Joanne replied, "Don't you know that souls can go through walls?"

Again, I paused. "Well, yes, maybe, but I wanted to make sure *this soul* had a direct route! And, besides," I continued, "Hollisters like their windows open wide."

#### NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Grant-Watson, Elliot. 1954. Some aspects of instinctual life. Lecture delivered at the Conference of the Guild of Pastoral Psychology at Bristol, July, in London, England.
- Hillman, James. 2007. Nature and human nature. Lecture delivered at the Changing Perspectives conference at Pacifica Graduate Institute, March 16–18, in Carpinteria, California.
- . 1928/1960. On psychic energy. *The structure and dynamics of the psyche*. CW 8.
- . 1931/1964. Archaic man. *Civilization in transition*. CW 10.
- Jung, C. G. 1955–1956/1963. *Mysterium coniunctionis*. CW 14.
- Snyder, Gary. 1960. *Myths and texts*. New York: Totem Press/Corinth Books.
- Wheelwright, Jane H. 2011. The land and the soul: A balance of nature. Ed. Betty Coon Wheelwright. *Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche* 5(4): 43–59.
- Wheelwright, Jane H. 2009. "Dreams of a lifetime." Ed. Betty Coon Wheelwright. *Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche* 3(3): 47–51.
- Wheelwright, Jane H., and Lynda Wheelwright Schmidt. 1991. *The long shore: A psychological experience of the wilderness*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Witherspoon, Alexander. 1951. *The college survey of English literature, revised, shorter edition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to Lynda Wheelwright Schmidt for our "merging" phone dialogues; Kathleen Barry and her belated husband, Roy Mankovitz, for the sponsorship of the Jane Hollister Wheelwright Opus Archives lectures; and my editing assistant, Marisa Huston.

C. DOYLE HOLLISTER, MA, MFT, has a master's degree in Literature and a master's degree in Counseling Psychology. He is a practicing psychotherapist as well as Adjunct Faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute. He wrote "Letter to Jane Wheelwright, April 27, 2004" (*The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*) and has an interview in *How We Have Changed: America Since 1950* (written by Rick Phalen). *Correspondence*: 490 Paso Robles Dr., Santa Barbara, CA 93108. E-mail: cdhduende@aol.com.

**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, Jane Hollister Wheelwright's nephew, C. Doyle Hollister, synthesizes the central themes of psyche and nature posited by Jane and her daughter, Lynda Wheelwright Schmidt. Six themes are addressed: the process and experience of *merging* with nature, nature and the child psyche, the realm of the *Other* and the *Big Something*, the experience of the *Wild Thing* in a Jungian context, and the dynamic of opposites within physical nature and within Jung's transcendent *Self*. This paper was presented at Pacifica Graduate Institute on November 11, 2011, as part of a lecture series on Jane Hollister Wheelwright sponsored by the Opus Archives.

**KEY WORDS**

ecopsychology, Hollister Ranch, indigenous, instincts, C. G. Jung, nature, opposites, Other, Jane Hollister Wheelwright, wilderness