

The path of the artist to the healer

Foreword by Helga Weule

*Artists throw a stone into the water.
Manifest their soul on the outside,
Touch other people.
Practice constantly and
Without consideration,
To express the diversity and beauty of the world
in concentric circles.
Artists throw a stone into the water.*
Helga Weule, Pucallpa (Peru), Dec. 2000

I first met Paul in 1998 on a “Hero’s Journey”. Manfred had invited me. I was 50 years old at the time. It was not my first hero’s journey, but the first one in the framework of his seminar. I immediately fell in love with Paul's art of playfully putting people on the path to becoming whole. Once again I had discovered an artist whose art has a healing effect on people - on me at least and, as I could observe, also on Manfred and the other seminar participants. With his artwork “Hero’s Journey” Paul touched my heart.

The next year I visited the “Hero’s Journey” again - I knew that I also wanted to practice this art, I was ready to learn: my adventurous path led me on this hero's journey into the great vortex that is the gateway to the other world and my “password” was: “I love. I listen to the sounds and follow the call”. Since then I have grouped my work more around my life's mission “to make available to communities ancient healing knowledge that resides at the heart of art.” So in 2000 I also had the great desire to interview Paul about his “path as an artist” and make a book out of it. That year, with the support of Manfred, my companion, I had something important to do beforehand in the Peruvian jungle, where I have felt most at home for more than 10 years, and Malidoma Somé, Manfred’s new cooperation partner, had invited us afterwards to his house in Northern California. From there we wanted to visit Paul in San Francisco and Paul replied by email to my wish to make a book about the artist’s path with: “A good idea! Too bad it’s not mine - I’ll go along with it!”

In December 2000 we started our journey to Peru and USA. After the dramatic visit to the jungle where in a ritual Manfred and I retrieved half my soul which had stayed with a mighty tree years before¹, and after a healing stay with Eduardo Calderon's family and his widow Maria, and after an inspiring visit with Malidoma Somé who consulted his oracle for us and initiated me into the art of oracle, we visited Paul at the end of 2000 in his little blue house on a hill in San Francisco. It was so

¹ More on this in Helga Weule, *In verschiedenen Welten wandern. Bericht einer inneren und äußeren Reise ans andere Ende der Welt und wieder zurück. (Wandering in Different Worlds. Report of an inner and outer journey to the other end of the world and back again.)* Wilhering: Bayer Verlag 2013/2015. At buchversand@i-cons.info

unobtrusively inviting that we immediately felt at home. From the window we saw the lights on the San Francisco hills in the evening and the sun shining warm and bright during the day - a beautiful first week of January 2001 in San Francisco.

For five days we immersed ourselves in Paul's life, discovering, admiring, marveling at a work of art, interrupted only by cooking, eating, sleeping, shopping and contemplating Paul's "small works of art" that he produced on the computer. With his words we filled five tapes and our hearts and were very tired from the fullness on the journey home and for a few days afterwards.

To marvel at a work of art, to discover it, is one thing, to create one yourself - and with words - is another. Paul Rebillot is a master of spoken words and those that can touch hearts. We also felt after this week what we have in common: practicing in the field of art and especially in the world of language - it is a strong, very strong medium to separate and to connect - a medium to reach people's

minds and hearts, of course only if this language itself comes from the mind and the heart. The interview material (transcript: Irene Ivan) for the book "The Path of the Artist" remained well-kept with me for almost 20 years. We had other things to do. In the meantime, Manfred and I had built up a European community for hero's journey guides and hero's journey seminars according to Paul Rebillot in the association "Adventure Life", are now training new "hero's journey guides"², developing research projects such as HIT, writing books on



Paul with Helga, Manfred and Giddy Mellick-Felstead

"Heroes and Demons"³ and thus passing on what we have learned from Paul.

Paul's "Kleinkunst" are computer-designed photographs with small, open everyday stories to go with them. Paul has left various "greatnesses" behind him on his life's journey: the stage of the theatre, heavy themes such as life, death, love, madness and initiation, and has now landed at "everyday life" - the successful transformation of great myths and magic, in which he feels at home, to magical everyday happenings. We have also learned from Paul in this area.

Paul's life story, which became visible to us in the interviews, is an impressive example of the abundance that life, love and death hold for those who are not afraid of them. They are the jungle through which the artist's heroic journey becomes visible - for those who also walk this path. To go

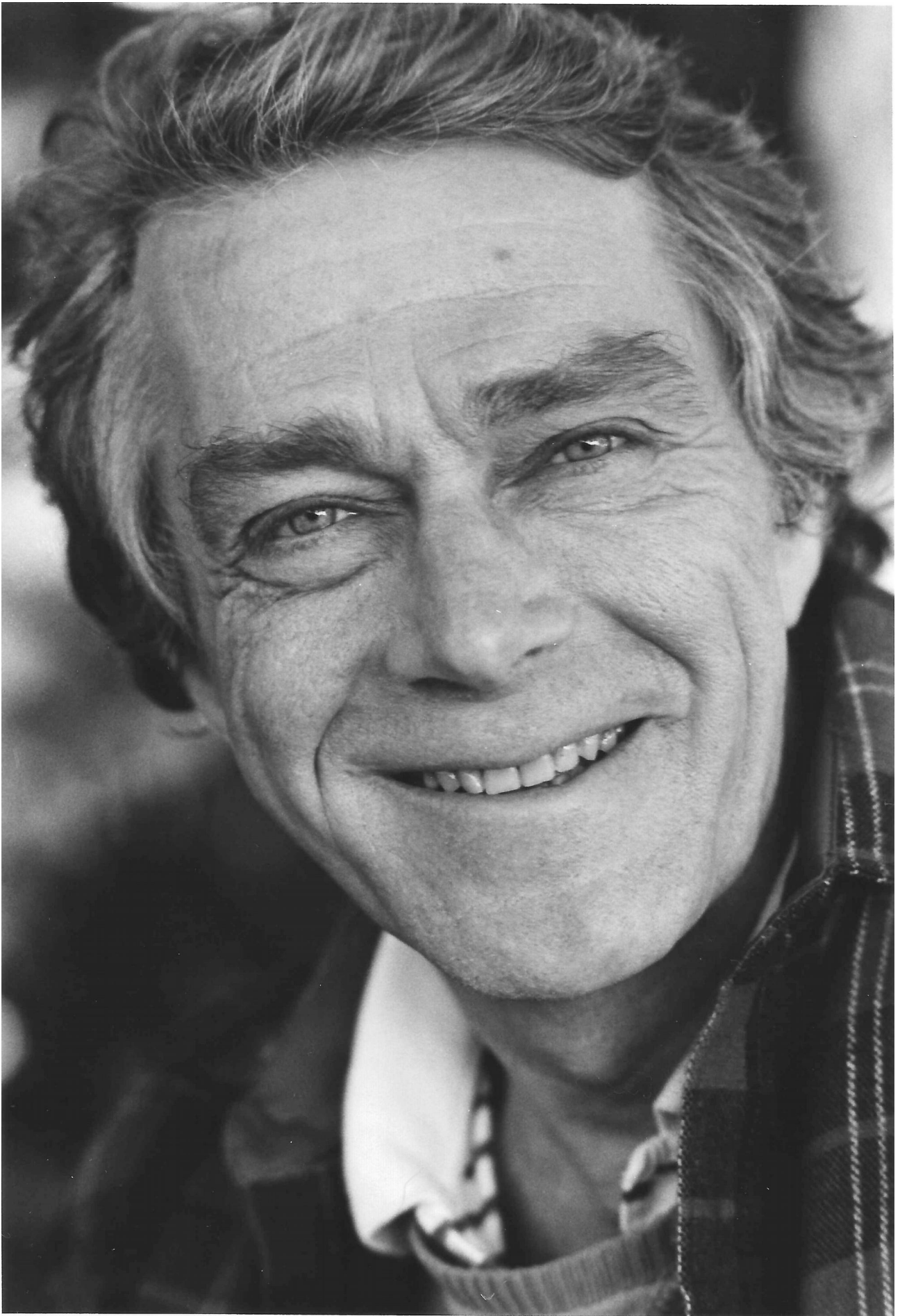
² See www.adventurelife.eu

³ Results of the HIT project in: Helga Weule & Manfred Weule (eds.), *Among Heroes and Demons. 25 people from 6 countries explore feelings and shadow themes in a cooperative research project*. As PDF on www.adventurelife.eu

into the jungle, you have to have a good reason and a goal. I know this from my own experience. That's how every new "hero's journey" begins - including this one.

Conducting the interview with Paul despite my poor English skills was one hero's journey, giving shape to the interview material was another. But as is well known, when the hero takes the first steps of his journey, helpers already come along the way: in this case it is Manfred, who accompanied me on my great journey to the Peruvian jungle, to Malidoma Somé and to Paul, and helped me with the interview and the translations, and Franz, with whom we jointly implemented the idea of publishing the material as a contribution in this book on the occasion of Paul Rebillot's 90th birthday. Last but not least, Paul himself helped with this work, as an important ancestor of our joint work, whom we also want to honor with this.

The following conversations are excerpts from the interviews and they are structured around the central topic: The path of the artist from performer to healer.



Conversations with Paul Rebillot

Conducted, recorded, and edited by Helga Weule & Manfred Weule

Starting point and obstacles

Helga: Paul, what is the “whole” that you do? Is there a symbol for it, your mission in life, your work as an artist?



Paul: Yes, my symbol is my logo that I drew - I drew it on my first trip to Europe. I didn't have much luggage at that time, a duffel bag, like sailors have, with my name on it and I thought, now when I come to Europe and work, I need a logo for my work. At that time I was already leading seminars on three topics: Family Circles, Hero's Journey and Death and Resurrection. And that meant three things - as in the logo. But if you look closely, it also becomes six and more, it repeats and multiplies itself. It's such a

principle of Gestalt. You can see the light side and you can see the dark spaces. And you see depth. In my logo, which I have had for more than 20 years, the circles are not quite in the center ...

Helga: The circle itself is a strong symbol for something alive ...

Paul: Yes, you can also turn the circles around, then you get different visual things. I also want to make a website, a very simple one, with little buttons to click on, like my symbol, and when you click on them, they turn around.

Helga: In exhibitions about sensual perception there are some of these optical gimmicks with circles.

Paul: Yes, interesting, you could also make mobiles out of it, ... that's what I love, to use a symbol in different dimensions, with different materials, ...

Helga: ... a strong symbol ...

Paul: ... yes, it came to me on that first trip to Europe in 1974 when I needed a logo. I was sitting and waiting for the train and thinking about a logo, and it came to me without thinking. It precisely symbolizes my dramatic trilogy that I went to Europe with at that time: the family drama, the heroic

drama and the spiritual drama ... and it reminds me of something else now when I look at it longer. There is something like paintings of people who have gone through the dying process, that is, who have gone to the land of death. There is this big circle that looks like a tunnel, down into the land of death. And when I have done the Death and Resurrection workshop and people enter the dying process, they tell impressions afterwards that remind me of this symbol.

There are many meanings of this logo - and I also find this very interesting that when I first came to France and got out in Paris and looked around, I noticed a big French bank - and it had exactly this logo, so not exactly like mine, a bit different. But it was the same feeling as my logo. And I thought: maybe I could earn some money with the logo ... *(All laugh)*

Helga: I realize now that I can't think of the next question and that I can only enter the conversation very slowly - also because of my poor knowledge of English. The first idea for the artist's path came very quickly, surprisingly and very clearly - and now, when it comes to realizing it here with you in the little blue house, I get really breathless and can't think of anything. No question, no English ...

Paul: But I think that's the characteristic of the creative process. The idea comes, steps on stage and says great: Oh yes, here I am! And then we sit there, we who have heard and seen this idea and realize that we would like to clean the table or put something away or do something else - just not work on the realization of the idea. That is the creative process. In this situation we then think: Oh no, no, it's not going to work out, what's it good for, who's going to read such a book anyway and why should I of all people write this book when there are a thousand other wonderful writers. *(All laugh)* We call that resistance in Gestalt and it comes and it's there and then we have to tidy up the desk and take a blank sheet of paper and get a good pen ready and notice that the windows are clean too and we can actually start working.

Helga: Oh yes, I was thinking all the time whether the potatoes for lunch are finally ready ...

Paul: ... well, I thought about it myself, but they're in a saucepan and it whistles when they're done. So we still have time. *(All laugh)*

Helga: But the key word resistance also reminds me that at this point in the creative process, all the bad experiences we have had in our lives with book writing and projects of this kind can come on stage. When we tell them, they are out, maybe gone, and thus no longer a hindrance, and we have sufficient confidence to engage in the process.

Paul: Yes, I had a bad experience with my publisher on the last book I wrote ... and I think that's also a question of our culture. I wrote about it in my last newsletter, that the artist counts for nothing in our culture, is not valued. Who is valued instead is the businessman - not the artist. The artist has the idea and it is his genius that makes the idea a creation, a new creation. But the one who then visibly manifests it in the world is the one who makes the money out of it.

I had a good friend, a very good, close friend and lover. He created the “singing telegram” in 1970, where you can call and say I want to send someone a birthday telegram and then someone comes to your door and sings the telegram to you. This “singing telegram” is now world famous. It started from him in San Francisco. He made a little money out of it. But then a company came and took his idea, bought it from him - and that company then made millions from it worldwide. The idea came from him and he got a tip - the company made millions. Let them make millions too. I just think that the creative genius, the artist who gave birth to the idea, is like a mother. He should also be appreciated and honored like a mother who gives birth to life. But in our culture, in our society, the mother is not honored. She gives birth to new life, but she is not really worth anything.

All: the potato cooker whistles: lunch break.

Call, life purpose and the heritage of the ancestors

Helga: In your life, your hero's journey, the term “call” plays a big role. Is it really a call or an image or what is it?

Paul: My main sense is hearing, this main sense then sometimes switches over so that an image appears like a flash. As a director, I then knew I had to stage this play when I got a vision with numerous additional sensory impressions.

Helga: That's interesting, because we hardly experiment with our senses any more.

Paul: Yes. You certainly know NLP, they do that. In my concept of the “hero's journey”, for example, I do that too. I try to open all the gates of all the senses and not limit the work to just one sense, so that a person who is more of an auditory type, for example, also learns to open their eyes.

Helga: And in the hero's journey it is important that the whole body is involved as a sense in movement and dance.

Paul: Yes, the body is the most important part of my work in general - I also call my work with people “embodiment”. It comes a bit from the astrological determination of my soul: I am a Taurus at the transition to Gemini (19 May), and the ability here is to bring ideas into matter. My father is just the opposite: he is beginning Gemini and ending Taurus, 21 May.

Helga: Was he also an artist?

Paul: Yes, in his way he was. He worked as a process engineer in a car factory. At any time a new machine came into the factory, he would study it and learn its process, how it worked, and he would teach it to the men. He was a process worker. He was a process man like myself.

And what he did for his entertainment, his joy was, he made little worlds, he was like an inventor. At Christmas time three quarters of our big front room was taken up with a world he had created, with valleys and hills and volcanoes and rivers and a train ran around it of course and there were houses and smoke came out of the chimney and there was a lake that had fishes swimming in it and



Paul Rebillot with his parents
and elder brothers

there was a waterfall and there was a moon that moved over the mountain, all these things he had created and he made that out of his own imagination in the basement! And when Christmas came we took it all upstairs and we put it out in the front room, and people came from miles just to see this little world that he created! Well and I'm doing the same thing! I'm creating little worlds in my pictures, in my workshops, I'm creating little worlds, I'm carrying on the work of my father.

Helga: And you are also a process worker.

Paul: Yes, exactly, so I stand on my father's shoulders and am in touch with my ancestors. (My grandparents were all already deceased because of the large generation gap). And my mother was a poet, she was a little Polish peasant woman you know, kind of a tough little woman. She didn't quite fit the image of the loving

mother - like showing a rose to her child with a mild expression and a gentle voice. My mother was more like holding the rose out to you and saying sternly: smell it! She was like that, you know what

I mean. I always thought, she was kind of dumb, ignorant, because she only went to the third grade at school, because she came from a large family and when she was finished with third grade, she had to leave school and work to help support the family. I never thought of her as being particularly gifted and intelligent.

And then one day after my father died, I was in my bedroom and I heard her talking out in the yard, where my father used to raise roses. My mother's name was Rose. I heard her talking in the garden from my room. I didn't know who my mother was talking to. Then I went and peeked out of the window and saw her talking to a rose. She said, "Oh you beautiful roses, he loved you so much, he took care of you and you made his life wonderful!" And I realized that she has a poetic soul. I had not realized that until that moment. When I realized that, I became aware that I was also following in her footsteps, because I also have a poetic soul. So that's the way that I am, the two streams of my father and my mother coming together through me and carrying on the work of my ancestors, you know.

Look, I am convinced that the moment of one's conception is the moment where your life purpose takes root, where we decide the purpose of our lives. As spiritual beings we know what our next job is going to be because we know what our last work was, and what we have to do the next time. And then we look around and find the couple that is uniting in love right now, that is exactly the right couple for us to be born into this world.

My mother, much more than my father, was very very Catholic, very "Polish", very family-oriented, and she had a virgin for her mother. Her real mother died when she was two years old and so my aunt Helen, the eldest daughter in the family, took over as mother at the age of 19 and became the mother of my mother. And when a very wealthy man courted her, she told him: I will marry you only if you adopt all my younger siblings (9)! He finally agreed to adopt her sisters but not her brothers, whereupon Helen said: then nothing will come of it! And with no relationship experience, my mother had a virgin for a mother, a virgin mother who knew nothing about sex and making love. So my mother was afraid of sex. I am convinced that she also had problems with sex because of her Catholic upbringing and that she would never have made love to my father without thinking of a child. This was at a time in Detroit in 1930, in the middle of the great financial depression in the United States. My father came to Detroit from Ohio because the streets there were "paved with gold": "Motown" was what they called Detroit and there were a number of factories where you could make a lot of money. So he came to Detroit to make money, because my father didn't come from a rich family in Ohio either. And he married my mother. They lived in my Aunt Helen's house and still had to support the family. So the financial depression weighed very heavily on them and money was always an issue in my family, a poor family.

That's how it was when in the middle of August 1930, that is, in a hot, sticky, ugly time, my father and mother came together and made love, an act of hope in a time of despair. And that is the meaning of my life: to be an act of hope in a time of despair. My whole life has been determined by seeing the light when there was too much darkness or working out the darkness when there was too much light. For example, when I was in Findhorn⁴, I was seen as the devil because I showed them the darkness. Because it is never the case for me that there is only light. My spiritual task in life and my work is to show light when there is darkness and to show the darkness when there is too much light.

I believe that my basic trust is rooted in my mother's and father's idea of putting an act of trust in a time of despair - after all, this shows trust in life. And I'm very optimistic myself, more or less. So I think, for example, that the human race is evolving into something better and I'm always looking at that. ... But there is still the other side of the light and you can't orient yourself towards the light if you don't embrace the darkness. Because the darkness is much bigger and has a more important function in the universe than the light. To be one with the darkness there is to embrace the light. I think that my consciousness is always evolving, transforming, and my work also has the quality of transformation, everything I teach and do has that tendency. But it's not that I don't have moments of absolute despair in between - I think that has to be the case in the course of life ...

I remember now a moment after my experience with my illness when I thought: what is the use, the meaning of my life?

As you know, at that time I went crazy, I felt betrayed by my friends and all these things. And I remember being with friends who used to be students of mine and they could see what was going on with me and how my consciousness was transforming. Many only saw my craziness, but the friend and his wife saw that I was going through a transformation process. They gave me a book to read called "The Master Game" which talks about that exactly. I didn't understand at that time why they gave me this book, later I understood. And he had me come and stay at his house and just kind of took care of me.

And one day I was sitting out in the yard and I was at the point of deep depression: I was thinking about suicide. I thought about how I could do that without hurting my family and my friends, because that's the hardest thing in a situation like that, where you want to kill yourself - how can you do that without anyone knowing it's suicide, without hurting anyone else? So I was trying to figure out how to do it. And I happened to look over to a rose. As I did so, I thought to myself: "all of my life up to that moment I've always been doing somebody else's thing. I've always been coming from somebody else's label. I was Paul Rebillot, teacher at San Francisco College, Paul Rebillot of

4 A spiritual community in Northern Scotland

Stanford University, of this place and that. And I'd never really done my own thing completely, never really said: "ok, I'm just going to be me". And I looked at the rose and I thought, "but the rose does that, the rose isn't there trying to be a daisy or a pine tree. The rose is just being a rose and it not only survives but it has a function for others, it blooms." So I thought at that point: "Why can't I do that? Why can't I just be me? And not to be Paul Rebillot from Stanford University, but Paul Rebillot from Paul Rebillot? Why not be that? I can always do the other, I can always kill myself if I have to, but I can also ask myself why I don't accept myself as I am." And that was a moment of light in a time of darkness. And it was really an illumination for me, and it was Rose, my mother, that gave me the lesson, interestingly enough. I came to this world wrapped in Rose, because that was my mother's name.

Helga: When did she die?

Paul: She died this year (2000) at the age of 102, on Good Friday.

Manfred: Close to one of your themes of death and resurrection.

Paul: That's right. When I visited my mother the last time it was between twelve and three on a Good Friday. And when I heard in Mexico, that she died, it was on a Good Friday.



Manfred: The path from where you were born in such a family to becoming a director and actor, that is, before your crisis, which was decisive, was not a small one. You made big steps.

Three brothers at the 90th birthday of their mother

Paul: Yes, big steps. My mother would have preferred me to become a priest; there were businessmen or lawyers in the family. First of all, I worked through all my hatred, anger and resentment towards my mother, and I did that at Esalen. I also got a Rolfing treatment on my face there. That solved a lot and my tears flowed. When I called my mother afterwards in that mood, she rejected me harshly and asked, "Are you drunk?" I had to gradually figure out how to gain access to her, to make her understand that I was happy, successful and also a kind of priest in my profession. At my father's funeral, I was horrified by the way the priest accompanied her. This only reinforced my

critical distance from the Catholic Church. But then I was once in St. Michel's Cathedral in Brussels and followed the Stations of the Cross, which are beautifully carved there. As I looked at them, I suddenly had the thought: "My God, it's a hero's journey! The Stations of the Cross are a hero's journey!" The last station is the Entombment at the entrance to the underworld and the walk over the threshold. The next station in the middle of the church should then be the image of the risen Christ after all! But instead you usually find that naked man hanging on a tree, suffering, bleeding, as in Brussels. This made it easy for the Romans to make all Catholics feel guilty and to save police in Europe.

But in the church of St. John, which my mother used to visit, I saw the risen Christ with his arms reaching out toward the congregation. I burst into tears, it was beautiful.

Helga & Manfred: As in Assisi, as in Assisi!

Paul: I wasn't there, but it was nice! And when I then also experienced the changed Mass in St. John's in English, with a guitar player and a completely different kind of celebration, I finally found it easier to convey to my mother what was close to my heart. I only wish I had been able to do the same with my father. Until his funeral, I had the image that he was quite indifferent to my development, because I did completely different things than he did. At his funeral, I met all these dignified-looking businessmen in suits. My mother commented: "They are here because your father could have had their job but didn't want it. Because he didn't want to write business mail or get promoted, he preferred to be close to manufacturing rather than in the office." And then when I was introduced to them, one of them said to me, "Oh you're the Paul he was always talking about!" Then I saw that my image had been wrong and I was deeply moved.

And there is something special about my family: because they were not very educated, not very sophisticated, they did not have any prejudices about the artist, because they knew absolutely nothing about it. So I did not have any kind of prohibitions about being an artist and following my dreams.

Helpers on the path of the artist to the healer

Helga: Yesterday we talked about your logo, the contact with your life purpose, about your parents and your path to art. Paul, how has your relationship to art changed?

Paul: I talk about it in my book "Call to Adventure". I was playing in the play "The Sleeping Prince" in front of 2,000 people and in the middle of the play, just as I was leaving a so-called

“laugh break” for the audience after a funny remark, the sentence suddenly went through my head: “What are you doing with your life? Is this what you want - to be standing in front of 2,000 people and have them laugh at you?” Of course when I look now at that, it is not a bad occupation, it’s necessary to have comedians in the world, but that’s not what I wanted for me and so in the middle of the play, in the middle of the stage, I heard my call, which took away - completely took away my purpose out of my life. Fortunately, I was a professional enough to finish the play. But a part of me was lost and that was the part of the seducer, the entertainer, what Orpheus did before Eurydice died. And that led me to go through a series of transformations, including madness and...

Helga: ... and going into another world ...

Paul: And going into another world and this great long adventure to try to find a new purpose in my life, a new direction. I had realized one purpose that was unrealizable by most people in my cast, in my family. I mean that was something you never thought of, standing in front of an audience being a star of some sort! This was not thought of. You worked in a factory. Or like my brother you became a lawyer who worked for an insurance company, or a teacher, but to become an entertainer, that was a magnificent thing, was an extraordinary thing And I had become it at the age of 38 or 39 and the nectar, the sweetness was gone out of it - it was no longer what I wanted.

From that point on I went through a period of nervous breakdowns. I was still doing my things, again, professionally enough, I could do that. But there was always a part of me saying, “What am I going to do now with the rest of my life?” And I remembered, as a kid, as a teenager so in my 20s, I thought, “One day I want to be a composer, I want to be a musician.” And I thought, “Well, maybe you should study music.” But that’s entertainment and I felt there was something wrong. Do you understand? I can’t describe it any better.

Helga: Yes we understand...

Paul: And then I kept thinking, “Maybe I should go to university, study and become a psychotherapist, psychiatrist or psychoanalyst.” Because then I knew that their work was helpful for people, healing, helping them become whole, that kind of thing. But after thinking about it for a while, another part of me said, “But wait a minute, 15 years devoted to the theatre has to be worth something, it’s not just nothing!” So maybe what I need to do is not to go away from the theatre, but to go more deeply into the theatre, it has been an important part of my life so far after all. Not to give away my “music” - like Orpheus - but to find the real depth of that “music”. And so I began to study Greek

theatre, which was, after all, a necessary part of life for the Greeks, sharing a mythology. And mythology is so important for the study of the human soul that the whole 20th century was influenced by a small part of the Oedipus myth! Imagine that the whole 20th century was completely controlled by a very small part, not even the most important part of the Oedipus myth! The most important part is not that he sleeps with his mother, but that he disobeyed the oracle, that he tried to disprove the oracle!

Helga: Yes, yes, that's exactly it. This is an important attack on both good oracles and myths!

Paul: Exactly, and that also includes the fact that myths obviously have such a richness beyond that that we don't realize in our society. That's why I came back to the Greek theatre and tried to understand the meaning of what they were trying to do with it. Why did the Greeks come many miles riding on donkeys, sitting all day in the hot Greek sun and watching theatre? This reveals something that was very important to them, important not only to the elite Greeks, but to ordinary people, craftsmen, shoemakers, street sweepers. They experienced a common myth, they communicated with each other, they didn't just study as we do at university, but they had the common experience of it. And this experience caused a transformation of their personality. Because they couldn't watch Diana or any other goddess kill her son and then go home and send their own son to war, which is the same as killing him. Maybe by witnessing these plays they could purify parts of the darkness within them.

So I began to explore the ritual aspect of theatre, the spiritual aspect, the mythological aspect, the psychological aspect and so on, as an attempt to find what I was doing with my life, you know? That was the question that came up on stage at that point. At the highest point of success on stage, the darkness came and asked me the question. And it took years to study all that and finally develop my own. I had to go through the experience of my own craziness beforehand.

Helga: In this crisis, was there a helpful environment or some people who helped you - like in the myth of Inanna helpers appear when she is dead in the underworld?

Paul: Yes, of course, at that time I also initiated a community - we called ourselves the "Gestalt fools" - as a group of about 25 students we rented a big beautiful mansion in Pacific Heights, an elegant part of San Francisco, and there we all lived together.

Equality was our ideal: everyone has something to contribute, everyone is replaceable. It happened that someone had to drop out of the lead role in a play at the last minute and someone else had to

take over. That went on for about a year.

And in a way, that was a support for me. So I also tried to make spiritual rituals part of our work, but in a more rudimentary way, as is possible in a group of competitive actors with big egos. It was like a group of cavemen trying to figure out how to live together. *(All laugh)* In another way, it was more like an anchor around my neck - they were my students after all. A challenge for me to learn leadership.

So when I went crazy (drugs also played a role), Daddy suddenly went crazy. What did that mean? It was like a disintegration, a great disintegration of the community, with the great leader who always had great words, blahblah ... and suddenly he goes crazy and babbles around. And for many, yes for most, that was quite difficult to accept and they needed that dissolution, that decomposition, to continue to grow. But I suffered with them. So some were helpful and some were not ... I then left that group and met a couple who took me in when I was in the middle of the crisis. I have already mentioned them. Unlike the people I lived with in the group who were kind of terrified of what was happening to me, they were distant enough to observe that this was a transformation that was taking place. So they took me in and it was also in their house that I had the experience with the rose.

Manfred: When you look inside while all this was happening, does something like an “inner partner”, an inner voice emerge that you trust more? An inner dialogue partner?

Paul: Something like an inner guide, well on the one hand yes, on the other hand no, I can't really specify. Because when I completely fell off the chair, went totally crazy and I didn't know who I am, what I am, what this planet is or what my work is on this planet, I just didn't know anything. That was a time when I was locked up (in the psychiatric ward) in a room with two green doors - I told about it in another story - and a man would often come by and push a bowl of food into the room with a stick. Now that I think about it, I must have been very violent at the time, so the man was afraid to go into the room.

I don't remember any violence. That time is not in my conscious memory. Part of the reason is that whenever I came back from my experiences in another world, people would sit around me and stare at me as if something terrible had just happened. So my first reaction was: it's better to build a wall around it. So consciously or unconsciously I locked away my experience of this other world, this other place, wherever it is. And I realized that I have no guidance, no shamanic guidance, that I have no one else to calm me but myself.

And this man brought me food and as time went on he came closer and closer and eventually he sat

next to me. And once, when he was sitting next to me, I ran to the door. He then closed the door and the next time he pushed the food in again. So I could see what the problem was: that I wasn't behaving the way he wanted me to behave, which is understandable in a place like a psychiatric ward. So I ate my food and slowly he came closer again and we talked. His name was Mr. Preebles and I decided that I was one of Mr. Preebles' people, that he was holding a group of people prisoner like me, that he was bringing them food and I was one of his people. I was just trying to figure out where I actually was, you know? Then I found out that if I wanted to run out the door or do other things that he couldn't accept, I could change my behavior to continue to have a good relationship with him. I learned that I don't have to change myself, but I can change my actions if I want to win a friend. This discovery was very important for me at that time. Because all my life before I thought, like most people, that there was something wrong with me and that I had to change in order to live in this world like most people do. But at that point I realized that I don't have to change myself, I just have to change what I do and then I can live in this world.

That was a decisive moment for me and my perception was: I can see myself, I can behave myself and I can perceive others in the same way.

So there was no person, no native guide at that time, no one appeared as a helper....

Helga: Yes, it was more practical and very earthy...

Paul: ... very very earthy. And I think that was part of my craziness, to go beyond extraordinary limitations and then ultimately become real, to reincarnate on planet Earth and be in that place. I am not out there somewhere in space, I belong to planet Earth! That was important for me..

Shamanism, healing and the shadow of the artist

Manfred: In your work you keep the shamanic side more in the background and put the artistic side more in the foreground. Many people do the opposite: they put the shamanic side more in the foreground and the art in the background.

Paul: I understand what you are trying to say and part of it comes from what I call "trickster" character for me.

Helga: You like the god Mercury, right?

Paul: Mercury, sure! For example, I say to someone “try this for a bit” and they try it and find themselves in the middle of a process with a subject matter where they never thought it would engage them. And I know that’s part of my “trickster” in my character and I make suggestions to people, for example, when I’m working, more along the lines of it being experiments of their art or theatre playing than it being therapeutic experiences. I do that because I think when people go into therapy they put blinders on and look at a few things. But when they engage in an artistic experiment, they take their blinders off and they see much more.⁵ And I want people to see more, to get a wider view. I suppose in a way it has to do with the excellent skill of deception that is inherent in artists and shamans. But I’m not sure there is a difference between an artistic work and a shamanic work with people. I mean, if an artist works alone, that’s one thing, but an artist working with people ... no, that’s not true! I suppose you can also be an artist in the theatre and put on great plays and influence people through that process, that’s true.

I think I was like that in that respect. When I was a theatre director, I was brilliant, I was famous, I was in the Who’s who of the West Coast of the US as a theatre director. Because when people saw my plays, when they walked out they were amazed at the quality of the productions. But the direction of my work was a self-reflection. And it was like black magic in a way: I was at the center of what I was doing.

I think the whole process I went through in changing my work from artist as entertainer to artist as healer was the transformation of just no longer putting myself at the center of everything, but putting everyone at the center and making that the orientation of my work.

When I used to be asked for my opinion about, say, a Mozart opera performance, I loved to make grandiose evaluative expert statements. After my episode in psychiatry, simplicity came into my feedback instead, I might say “they did a good job and enjoyed it, I enjoyed it too!”

Helga: Yes, that is a very important difference.

Paul: I think now more in the direction of embodiment and it has to be something like the embodiment of dark forces, forces of shadow. The difference between a black magician and a white magician is: the white magician puts a candle in the center of the room and everybody looks at the candle. The black magician puts himself in the center of the room and everybody looks at him.

⁵ Coming from the theatre, it was obvious for Paul to embody the figures of a myth or dream. This is the trace that C.G.Jung also followed with the “active imagination”. See C.G.Jung, *The Transcendent Function* (written 1916, first published 1958) in C.G.Jung, *Collected Works* vol.8 or in: C.G.Jung, *Zum Wesen des Psychischen* (On the Nature of the Psychic). Zurich: Buchclub ExLibris 1972

Helga: That's a good description!

Paul: Stanford used to say that you turn a black magician into a white magician by making him crazy. *(All laugh)* There's also the story of the thief who goes to see a spiritual master because he can manifest golden plates. And the thief thinks to himself, "That would be great, I could make a lot of money out of it if I could also manifest golden plates." So he goes to the Master who is sitting there with a disciple and says to him, "O Master, I would like to become your disciple because I would like to learn from you to manifest golden plates." And the Master says, "Fine, you become my disciple, get your robe," and gave him more instructions. And he said, "For so many years you will be with me and then you will be able to manifest golden plates." When he had gone, the disciple said to the Master, "How could you do that? The man is a thief!" And the Master replied, "If he can manifest golden plates, he will be a saint." *(Laughing)*

And I think that is also the same difference between the artist who manifests his ego or his own magnificence and the artist who has another function.

I remember once when I was doing the Death and Resurrection workshop, trying to understand what it is that I'm actually doing - because I don't always understand what it is that I'm doing - and I realized that most artists have the tendency to use a medium and through that medium to touch people, the soul of the persons. But in my work, I go directly to the soul level, work directly with the soul. Maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration now when I say that, but I really believe that's what I do. I work directly on the soul level of people and that makes it shamanic, doesn't it? That's why it's also important for me to constantly clarify my alignment, because if I'm working with people's souls for my own magnificence in the process, it's very dangerous work. A friend of mine often goes to Bali, I have never been there, and he told me that he met a very intelligent well-known university professor in Bali who has developed a concept that artists imagine and manifest the vision of the future of humanity. Their work is to express this vision of humanity, which people then realize step by step. So for me, that's a very good idea of what an artist is.

And that is also my image of what an artist has to do. I have to have a vision of humanity in my work. In all my work I strive for more wholeness, completeness, beauty as a vision for people. And although I experience dark and sad moments, disappointments and all that, I have never lost that vision, never changed that direction. And I never quite reached it, just like Moses or Martin Luther King never reached the promised land. But I felt it was my job to keep that vision, that positive vision of humanity alive. When I hear all the despairing and disappointed people, I perceive it more as disappointment than as truth.

Helga: That's very clear now what you said about shamanism and art. Does music play a special role in your work?

Paul: Yes, one of the things I loved about directing plays as a theatre director was to give the plays a musical background, music as the completion of the plays. And I spent hours, whole nights, cutting tapes and putting them back together ... I also did some experiments with that in plays like 'Yaro's Daughter' and the 'Bacchae' based on Euripides. I was very interested in the effect of sounds on the psyche and on people, both positively and negatively, and I think I apply these theatre experiences with music directly in my current work.

In the Hero's journey, my harp leads the group process and I only follow my harp.

Helga: I also experienced this in the same way, during the supreme ordeal in the hero's journey. There I also see a connection to shamanism. My experience with shamans is that their songs, music and rhythms play a very central role. Also because they have often led me into the other world.

Paul: That reminds me of Stan Grof. When I was able to do the Hero's Journey with one of his training groups, he introduced me as someone who brought the art into the therapeutic scene. And I felt very honored by that and then in the evening a shaman from the Yaqui Indians from Mexico did a ritual. And he made music, sang, danced, he did all that. And then I said: "I didn't bring art into the therapeutic scene. I just brought it back to where it belongs, that's all. Because it was always there in the old traditions." Art has always been related to therapy. From the beginning, art was in relation to the therapeutic process, was part of it.

The great elements that have come to us from Africa are singing, sound, rhythm and chanting. There are the choruses and the kind of ecstatic experience with God, the love relationship with God that Christianity and especially Protestantism lack. It's just too much effort to be good and work-oriented and all that, to then also have a love relationship. *(All laugh)*

Stan Grof, by the way, brought the Yaqui Indians to Esalen. It was my first encounter with these shamanic traditions. They also use peyote, but it was taken from them at the border because it's illegal in the US. But I still had a bag full of peyote buttons and I thought I would like to give them to the Indians as a gift. And I prepared some peyote tea that night and put it outside their door. And when they woke up in the morning, they saw the pot of peyote tea and drank it. They never knew who they got it from, it was like a godsend to them. I could then observe them in their rituals, partly participate in them with my musical instruments, we made music together. And at one point they made little works of art, out of wood that you also make pencils out of, they dipped that in beeswax

and then with colored yarn they made beautiful pictures, a lot of work and good art! And then they went down to the sea and did their ritual. And the shaman stood on the beach with the artwork in her hand and shouted to the ocean just as if she were shouting to the neighbor in the next house, “Come on! I made you something. Go ahead and take it from me. So go ahead please, take it from me now!” She was talking normally like to another person and that’s a very different relationship to the spiritual world, much more familiar. And I watched the sea and it rose and rose and actually took the wood from her hand and then sank again. The wood disappeared and never reappeared.

Helga: That’s the essential thing about rituals, that the other world gives signs. And what did you do then, Paul?

Paul: I had seen that. Then I went to my room and got a picture of myself, a pointillist portrait. And when no one was around, I went down to the sea and did the same thing they did. I did it my way, told the water that I was a child of the sea and would come back there again one day. And I asked that the sea accept my gift.

Manfred: In the cosmology of the West African Dagara, you belong to the element of water with your birth year 1931.

Paul: Really? Yes and the same thing happened as with the shaman before and it was a very special moment for me! ...

But there is something else that bothers me a bit before we move on to another topic. In this day and age, the idea of shamanism has become a kind of “spice of the day”. Everyone wants to be a shaman, a shamaness. I think that is a bit dangerous. I don’t want to be called a shaman. So someone like Malidoma Somé, your friend, he is a shaman. He went through an initiation process and had many experiences. So he is a shaman. But if someone, for example, has taken part in a workshop of Michael Harner or someone else and says “now I am a shaman” - I am very very suspicious. And I don’t want to have anything to do with that. So on the one hand it is true when people call me shaman, because I have gone through a shamanic experience. But on the other hand, I don’t want to be called a shaman.

Helga/Manfred: We agree with you very much. It's always a question of where someone has to go through or has gone through. And a question of culture: we don't live in a culture where shamans can grow up.

Paul: That's true. There are shamans in our culture as well, but they are not given much attention. We have healers, we have shamans, everything, but they do their work in their own way. They go through an important experience and live their own life. There is a Rinpoche, I think it was Rinpoche Trungpa, who once talked about "spiritual materialism" as he called it.⁶ And that's when you try to make a material thing, a commodity, out of spiritual issues like shamanism. There is a lot of that in the New Age movement and that is what makes me suspicious. It repels me, my body resists it because I just don't believe it.

I remember a workshop in Findhorn. The leader was a nice woman and she was teaching people aura reading and things like that, which is a spiritual subject. I think it was before she started the workshop and the participants were already sitting in the room, she wasn't there yet. When I entered the room, one of the participants asked me, "Paul, do you see the aura?" and I answered, "No, I don't. Why should I? Why should I? I have no reason to see the aura. If I had a reason, I would see it!" And in Findhorn there was a man, I don't remember his name, who saw the god Pan. And he invited people to go out to see God Pan. You should go into the forest and everyone should look behind stones and behind plants and see nature spirits, satyrs and God Pan. Even I was looking and suddenly I stopped and asked myself, "What are you looking for? I mean, if they want to come to me and talk to me and if they have a reason to contact me, they will go into contact!" It is spiritual materialism to go out and say, "Yes you know, I saw God Pan. Look how good I am!" I think that's a dangerous part in any spiritual movement and there's that in the New Age movement as well.

Helga: One could say that the demon of resistance on the path of the artist to the healer is materialism, or how do you see it, Paul?

Paul: Yes, I think that for me the shadow or the reverse side of the artist is the businessman in me. All my life I have spent more time managing and organizing business and money than I have spent on creative activities. For me, the creative has to be completely free, then I can be creative. I made most new creations when I didn't have to think about making money. Like here with my little artworks that I do, just for the joy of doing them, because I love doing them, with love and for love. When I make them because I have to make money - and I have to make money - I have more difficulty with it. Maybe that's a neurotic function of mine and I wish it wasn't so. But it is! I mean, I could also focus more on business, spend more time on it, but I notice that the more I do that, the less creative I am in the direction of heart-enjoyment of my magnificence, I mean, it's

⁶ Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1975): *Spirituelle Materialismus (Spiritual Materialism)*. Freiburg: Aurum or Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1989): *Spirituellen Materialismus durchschneiden (Cutting through Spiritual Materialism)*. Kuesnacht: Theseus

more of a heart-enjoyment in the way of a practical foundation. And then that for me is the level of business - I don't know if that's even the case or just my experience of the area of business - there are elements of ... - what's the word I'm looking for?... - Inauthenticity, not being authentic. In certain areas of business you have to be manipulative and you have to ...

Helga: ... does inauthenticity have something to do with roles? To slip into roles, like actors have to do or like managers sometimes have to slip into roles? ...

Paul: ... you mean, could it be like that?

Helga: Yes.

Paul: Well, an actor, whatever he is, has to be as sincere and authentic as possible in whatever role he is playing. I mean, that's the goal of an actor. When you play Judas - and Judas is a very ambiguous role, yet you want to play Judas - and Judas doesn't think he's doing anything bad. He thinks he's doing something right. And then you have to figure out how to play the role authentically. When I was teaching acting and actors would ask me, "How can I become a better actor" I would answer, "Become a better person!", a more holistic person, one who has integrated every part of himself.

So for me, the role of the successful and creative businessman is in a way a shadow, a dark excluded part. (...) I think it has to do with my family. I was born in a depression and I am partly the result of that depression. And the conflicts I had with my mother and father always revolved around money. Money and how to get money. My family was very cut off there and the worst thing for the family was when someone was living on welfare or state support and couldn't earn their own money. All these things were always kind of in my head and I'm afraid that's one of my biggest shortcomings.

To this I would like to relate that in my Kabbalah studies since 1971, I had formulated the focus: "*Surviving naked in this world*". For almost a year I also wandered around like a penniless nomad. Though I never became rich, on the other hand, I did not suffer from destitution or poverty. However, when the British Queen once visited California, there was an incident when I needed the help of an intangible helper.

There was a landslide a mile (about 1.6 km) both south and north of my house in San Francisco: the road was blocked and the landslides were dangerous and impassable, we were trapped. But I had my rent to pay, bills for this and for that, and I was afraid I wouldn't get to Esalen, I wouldn't get to

Europe to lead groups there ... What could I do?

I couldn't do anything, I was locked in. And so I went into meditation, went on an inner journey, went in a boat and met the owl, my power animal. I asked it what I could do in this situation? In reply, the male owl kept dropping mice into my boat until it was full. And then he said to me, "How much do you need?" After all, I had everything, food in the fridge, enough money to buy food for the next day, everything worked out. It was just my worries about not being able to meet my responsibilities. That was an important lesson for me, what kind of food I need to feel safe. I was secure in physical survival. I was insecure in meeting my responsibilities, in meeting other people's expectations of me.

Myth and art, magic and healing

Helga: Which role do myths play in your work, Paul?

Paul: One of the myths that I have worked with for myself is the myth of Orpheus, the musician, the great musician and his relationship to art, as it changes after he goes and tries to bring Eurydice back from the land of the dead. Because previous to that he was the greatest musician in the world and he sang and every man and every woman listened to him and he plays in the rock theatre and he plays in the valley and everyone comes and applauds, men, women from far away and the rabbits listen to him and the grass parts before him, ... he is a charmer, his art is seductive, it gets him what he needs.

And then he falls in love. So his heart opens. And he falls in love with a woman who dies very shortly after they fall in love. And he is so overwhelmed with grief of her death that he decides to go to the land of the dead, to Hades, in order to try to bring her back because, really, it's too soon for her to die. So he goes, takes all his courage and goes to the entrance gate of the realm of Hades. There is Cerberus, the monster with three heads, the three-headed dog, barking at him. He plays his harp and Cerberus is charmed and lets him in. And Orpheus goes and plays and charms everyone, everyone he meets until he gets to the center of Hades where he meets Hades and Persephone, the queen of Hades. And he says he's playing for his love, for Eurydice, and they both listen and think for a while and then say, "Yes well, you can have her back to the land of the living with one special consideration: she takes you by the hand and you go with her to the gateway into the land of the living, but you must never look back at her until you get out with her into the sunlight!"

So he takes her by the hand and he runs, runs, runs and he's so happy that he got her, that he can

feel her hand and comes rushing out of the cave, of the entrance of Hades and he as he hits the sunlight, as he feels the heat on his body, he turns around to greet her - but she is still in the shadow. And she goes back to the land of shadows and in this moment his relationship to his music changes. Because he no longer plays music to seduce and to get what he wants. But he plays the music from his grief, from his love, from his need, from his relationship to Eurydice ...

Helga: ... from his pain ...

Paul: ... from his pain. And it becomes a kind of healing music. He tries to heal himself, he does it for the mountains, for the trees, for everything. And then in the midst of this process the maenads come and tear him to pieces. They destroy him like a shaman, you know, and he becomes a shaman at that moment because everybody on the path of initiation to become a shaman is torn apart, torn to pieces, that's the beginning of a shamanic path. And they tear his head off and throw it into the river and there his head floats on top of the river chanting and that is the singing of the water. Yes, it's the singing of the water. So it goes beyond his just expressing his grief to the expression of the voice of nature, you see? So it goes into a spiritual level at that point. In the meantime, the Muses, who loved Orpheus because after all he was an expression of their greatness, come and gather his body parts and bury them in a tomb. And it is said at the end of the story, that the nightingales, the birds of the night, sing more sweetly there than anywhere else in the world. And that, for me, is the story of transformation from art as seduction, art as entertainment, art as whatever, to art as healing and to art as the expression of the heart!

Helga: When did you come to Esalen and what were your experiences there?

Paul: After my experience with madness and when I came back to the present, I was very vulnerable, very lost. I tried to come back to this reality step by step and I lived for about a year in a group I had organized, the "Gestalt Fools". Yes these were former students, some helpful, some not. And I was no longer the central person ... After a year I wanted to leave the group. At that time I was very much into magic, rituals, studying the Kabbalah, I think I was doing some kind of shamanistic training with myself, I had no teacher, nobody. At that time I had given away all the things I had owned, I had nothing left, no money, no car, nothing. I only had a little robe, my tarot cards and my magic square with me and so I moved through California.

Helga: You did that for two years?

Paul: Not quite, more like a year. And it ended up in Esalen. For most people Esalen is super great, an extraordinary place. For me it was like coming back to a normal middle class society from where I was before in my craziness ... Have you been to Esalen once?

Helga and Manfred: No, never.

Paul: When I saw Esalen for the first time, after having worked with the four directions of Kabbalah, I knew it was perfect for magical rituals: the earth to the north with the mountains behind, the fire to the south where the sun moves across the ocean, the air to the east where the sun rises and the water to the west where it sets. I thought, "This is the place I have to stay!" The place was built on an old native American burial ground. They found skeletons of native Americans buried there in a meditation posture facing the sunset. It was a sacred place and I had to find a place to stay. So I got involved in the whole psychological, spiritual, whatever, Esalen project. I found a guy there, Hector Pastera was his name and it was like two old shoes finding each other again, so the right and the left, we were on the same path. He was a heart specialist in New York and he came to Esalen to try LSD, because Esalen was big in experiments with mind-expanding drugs⁷ and he became a Rolfer and a teacher of bioenergetics and Gestalt. When we met it was like a non-sexual love affair, we loved each other.

And he introduced me to Dick Price, the man who created Esalen. He and Michael Murphy were the two men who created Esalen. Dick Price had been born a twin, he first, and his younger brother died. And my older brother (not twin) died when I was five years old and that changed my life in a way.

In my otherworldly vision, when I was in my madness, I was from the planet Pluto and the idea was that at some point my wife and I were separated from the planet Pluto and from each other to be re-born on the planet Earth. There we were to find out why creatures do not realize that they are all one being, that they experience themselves as separate even when they should be together. What are the rules of separation that keep human consciousness separate? And if we could find each other again here, we would have the key to human consciousness. That was the great turning point that came to me in my existence in another world.

And when I met Dick Price - he lost his younger brother, I lost my older brother, and both were very important in life - I felt that perhaps he was the partner I was looking for? He taught me Gestalt, was a Gestalt therapist and through that he taught me to ground myself, I learned through

⁷ Claudio Naranjo, *The Healing Journey*. Psychotherapy with healing drugs. Therapy protocols. New York: Random House/Pantheon books 1973

Gestalt more and more to ground myself again. And that was a very important experience for me - whether he is my partner from my myth or not. But that's why I wanted to work with him.

That was also the meaning of Esalen for me, that through Gestalt work I learned to ground myself more and more.

Precisely because I was in this place in the other world in my madness, I also found it very difficult to find out what the difference was between the other world and this world and to differentiate between what is real and what is fantasy. Through the Gestalt experiences I learned that and at the same time I began to teach Gestalt in the process. I learned both, in fact that's how you become a Gestalt therapist.

I sat like a bear in the room as a Gestalt therapist, listening to people and working with them in a very non-directive way. Because Fritz Perls was a very non-directive Gestalt therapist, he was very lunar, although he was the star in the Gestalt sessions. But he could make the person who was working the star of the session. And that was very important for me to learn as an actor and director, because I was solar. So to learn to be more lunar, that is, to follow the process more than to direct it.

Helga: We group dynamics trainers do that too. That's the way groups can form. And every group-building process is also a hero's journey for everyone. How does this relate to our theme "from artist to healer", Paul?

Paul: Learning to follow the process more than to lead it, that's an important thing. A former student at San Francisco University, who was very Catholic, called me and asked me to be a teacher in their master's program for a weekend. I thought he wanted a Gestalt seminar, but when we talked about what the weekend should be about, he said, "We don't just want to learn Gestalt, we want to learn more of these archetypal things, like how you teach the Tarot, for example." And because I did a hero's journey years ago at Turlock Hospital with the people there and thought about a hero's journey process - you remember the story - so now I thought this is a good opportunity to develop that process and I said okay. And I designed the hero's journey process just for a weekend. And a few years later I was invited to a very well-known therapeutic congress called: "The Artist as Healer". It was organized by Carl Stone - he called his method "voice dialogue". I was supposed to show an example of hero's journey training there. And I did it and the confrontations took place on stage, with music and theatre elements and I was a very gentle facilitator. The audience came closer to the stage and learned and participated, were involved in the dialogue. And at the end, the hero and the demon said to each other, "I can heal you, I can love you". Then I had the actor take off the blind-fold and he then said the sentence: "I can heal me, I can love me" - like in the hero's journey.

And suddenly I saw from the stage how the audience and everyone was moved to tears. That's when I got the answer to my question, which had also appeared on stage years before: "What should I do with my life?" That's exactly what I wanted to do. It was like hearing the music of Orpheus after he lost Eurydice - I heard it then on that stage and saw the change.

Helga and Manfred: That was a great gift you received there.

Learning and teaching

Helga: You often mention the phrase: "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." That is a spiritual principle. How has this principle shown up for you in the field of art?

Paul: I remember when I was about 13 years old, I was sick for a year. I had to lie in bed for a whole year. During that time I started drawing and painting and producing art. I had never done that before in any way. And I thought at first, "I should study art, nude drawing or something like that." But then I kept thinking, "Well, if Michelangelo knew how to do it, then I must know how to do it!" This thought must have risen from the collective unconscious - I mean such thoughts at the age of 12 or 13! And that was support from my parents, a kind of mindfulness that I could do things I didn't know I could. Even though they were both very shy people, they gave me the confidence that made me think: if Michelangelo can do this, why shouldn't I be able to do art?

And I remember further that there was a teacher who appeared on my path, as a helper for this path. I met this wonderful woman, her name was Evelyn, back in Detroit where we lived. A friend had told me about her that she was a wonderful woman, like a myth, very Catholic or religious and very, very sensitive and beautiful. If someone had given her something, whatever it was - a broken doll, a rose, a diamond ring: she displayed that in her house. None of the gifts were ever hidden by her, because she thought: if I got a gift, people must see it. So I also wanted to give her a gift and I painted a picture of the Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. I painted her face and she had a somewhat oriental expression and I painted her hands as if she was about to pray for someone, but they were not touching. She had no body - and that was the picture. I had worked hard on it, especially on the mouth representation, because I wasn't entirely happy with the mouth. And I gave the picture to Evelyn and she looked at it. And I said meanwhile, "I didn't get it as good as I could, especially the mouth." She then pressed the picture to her chest and said, "How dare you say such a thing! This is one of your children! How would you like it if a mother said to someone "my child is okay, but not as good as it could be"? And that child would then have to be better all his life. Don't ever say that

about one of your children again!” That was an important first lesson for me as an artist. And Evelyn put the painting in an important place in her house. So she was an important teacher for me.

Helga: Oh yes, and this kind of experience with art that you had - that artists don't appreciate their own art enough - is something that many people do, and not everyone encounters such a teacher.

Paul: Yes, there was something about her that particularly touched me, she touched me deeply. Once when she was looking at my picture of Our Lady again, she said to me, “You will travel to the Orient one day!” And indeed I travelled to Japan and it was a very important part in my life and influenced me a lot. This wonderful woman saw that in my picture. And the exciting question for me is: did she see that in the picture or did I decide then, when I got the offer in the army: Paris or Japan, for the Orient, because Evelyn said so? Who knows?

Helga: Yes, who knows? I think it doesn't matter - the teachers show up when the students are ready. Were there other teachers?



Paul with Carol Proudfoot-Edgar

Paul: A very close friend is Carol Proudfoot -Edgar, she is of half native American, half Irish descent. An uncle taught her the native American teachings. In the Hero's Journey she had a strong image of a wolf with the stigmata of Christ: the invitation to include the Irish tradition as well, which she did. She gave me this drum, she instructed me in Indian rituals, it is very important for me. When I met the owl, I found out that one of her names is “Grey Owl” ...

Manfred: ... so you developed a high resonance in all owl issues through this ...

Paul: Yes, right. *(All laugh)* When I lived in Big Sur, I liked to sit on the terrace and call the owl as soon as I heard its call in the distance. And soon after, I'd hear her call from a branch nearby. To find out what it wants, you have to ask it. No question, no answer. -

I suppose teachers appear to me very briefly, someone I met only once, for example, and learned from him or her, like Evelyn. I didn't have the nourishment of a master - except Dick Price, he was a Gestalt teacher and I called him my master. I saw him as a master. But that's only in Gestalt and not in the realm of art, because in the realm of art he didn't know, no really. Dick was brilliant as a

Gestalt therapist and it was fantastic to watch him work with someone....

Helga: ... was he a healer?

Paul: He was a healer, but he was also a magician in the art of Gestalt. He would say a word and suddenly something would happen, it was magical to watch. But he was also blind in certain other things, he was blind to group processes, he didn't really understand group processes. He understood individual processes but not group processes.

On the one hand, there was a strangely exhilarating blindness in his relationship with me. After all, I was his cooperation partner for a while and he let me work with his groups and I basically controlled the group process. And one of the ways I do that with groups is to play theatre or offer artistic exercises so that one interacts with the other. And he used to call what I did "little games". You know, he didn't think they were as important as the individual processes. There was "the work" and "Paul's little games" and I was quite offended by that. I didn't realize how offended I was by it until after he died. But it always hurt me and at the same time I believed him because he was my master: my master says these are "my little games".

That's why I was surprised when this man invited me to shape the weekend in San Francisco. And he didn't want "Gestalt" from me, he wanted "my little games", as he said "my archetypal stuff that I was used to doing". So he suddenly gave "my little games" a different meaning. On the other hand, Dick had his blind spot when he said, "You know, I don't understand why some groups become group and have a sense of community and others don't." He never strained to perceive that some were those groups I had led with him. They got a sense of group because I encouraged that. It was not a magical process, it was a group dynamic process.

In this area, it was a way in which I learned from Dick at the shadow level. I learned to appreciate the value of my own work by seeing that he didn't value it that way. And I didn't realize that until he died. Then I suddenly said to myself: "wait a minute, these are not just little games."

Manfred: Does that have something to do with learning through pain?

Paul: Yes, yes, that's right. That's this dark and light side that we've talked about before, sometimes I've learned through the dark side and sometimes I've learned through the light side.

Manfred: I think there is a very important aspect in what you mentioned earlier, that it is necessary that someone from the outside confirms that you are on the right path with your work with groups

and the archetypes. Maybe it's the same in the field of art and also spirituality, that sometimes we need people or something from the outside to give us confirmation or a recommendation on which way to go and where to put more energy ...

Paul: Yes, I think we need feedback because we don't live in a vacuum. If we try to do that, that's crazy, that's exactly what craziness is. That's why the hero's journey is so important to me, because it's an individuation process, but it happens in the context of a group. We get feedback from the outside and that is also leadership. And sometimes we get positive feedback through affirmation and sometimes it is also necessary to be betrayed, like Dick did with my "little games" - that was a kind of betrayal and that is also necessary.

Recently I experienced a very big betrayal by these people in France who created a big organization with my work, a worldwide organization, and then betrayed me by trying to steal my work. I felt like I was crucified by this, because I hoped that they would help me spread my work and reputation so that I could also retire and so on. And suddenly they betrayed me and turned against me completely. And when that happened to me, I noticed once again the value of my work. But first I had to go through the pain that such a betrayal causes at my age. And then after that I started to reevaluate my work. And I also approached the re-evaluation of my work in the way that I tried to make myself smaller, not bigger. Smaller not in the sense of less important, but just taking smaller steps instead of trying to do anything great.

So I believe that betrayal is as important as confirmation - it's just not as pleasurable!

Helga: On the subject of learning and teaching, one last question: How has your relationship with children, young people, students developed?

Paul: I started teaching at San Francisco College in the 60s, before the new generation of 60s came, and I remember observing that change well. Because when I started, my students sat in classes with an attitude of "show me what you've got" and the following years they sat with an enthusiasm for learning. And that enthusiasm for learning generated an enthusiasm for teaching in me. So I soon found the students to be my teachers. I learnt how to teach from the enthusiasm in their eyes.

When my father died, I had to quit my job so that I could support my mother. I did that by teaching in a Secondary school, which are children between the ages of 12 and 13 who are just going through puberty and transitioning from child to adult. I loved teaching these children, I developed exercises and did a lot with them, and they were part of this group who did not wait when learning, but were enthusiastic.

I always felt very close to them, even though I was 20 years older than them. I knew that I could learn a lot from them. Because my generation was called the “silent generation” and the image of that generation was that we were waiting for something. Just like the disciples were waiting for Christ. And my feeling was that what I was waiting for was the 60’s generation. Because I felt like them and being involved in the political, social and spiritual revolution in the 60’s was one of the most important phases in my life ... it was a wonderful time and we could die for our faith, great time, my students were my teachers at the same time ... So in that time I was a person who builds bridges, both between generations and culturally: from father’s side my family is from Alsace, which is between France and Germany, and from mother’s side from Kashubia, which is in Poland on the border with Germany. I feel like a bridge between this and that, even here in San Francisco with the Golden Gate Bridge.

End and beginning

Helga: We have started with “the whole”, now the time is slowly coming to an end. It is comparable to the three phases of life as described in Chinese tradition: 20 years of learning, 20 years of struggling, 20+x years of learning to become wise. Paul, so my question: what were ultimately the most important events in your personal journey as a healing artist?

Paul: I think the first important event, the experience on stage, was in the middle of my life, it was the call to a new direction in my work. And the next actually most important event for me was the death of my partner.

At that time I was living my life, everything was well planned and I thought that everything was going in one direction and suddenly, out of the blue, a bump comes and I had to completely change direction. That was when I found out that my partner had AIDS, that changed everything for me. Because our relationship, which was a very intimate, personal relationship, was also supporting my work. And at that moment, however, I understood that it was the other way around: that the work was the support of the relationship. And so all my energy from that point on went into the relationship. Yes, of course, there were problems in the relationship -



Stanford Eugene Cates

as in any - ours was a homosexual relationship and the most common problem in such relationships has to do with monogamy. Stanford, my partner, was not monogamous and by cheating he caused the problem - he got AIDS and brought this into our household, our family. I was angry with him; when I found out, it tore me apart.

Helga: Oh yes, I can well imagine that!

Paul: And one of the pieces was, "I told you to be careful! I don't like it when you cheat, but I can accept it. And you cheated and you weren't careful!" It was like a betrayal, another betrayal in the relationship. The one I felt safest with, the one I was in bed with and loved, suddenly there's a monster between us, the AIDS virus, you know?

And my first reaction was to throw him out because I didn't want him to continue living in my house. But that couldn't work because my heart was too connected to his. Interestingly, we also had less sexual contact during that time and I think that was my body protecting itself and me. My body knew what my conscious mind didn't know yet. I loved him very much, but I wasn't sure I wanted to be there for him in that stressful situation. That also happens in every relationship. Then I went to Europe and he couldn't come with me because he was undergoing treatment. And while I was gone, I was reading a book about AIDS, and in the process I went through all the stages of the dying process. And the book said: maybe you don't want to read this now because you're just starting out. But I read it and after I read it all the way through, I realized that being with someone when everything is good is easy. But it's important to be together when it's not easy, then it's really important. And that's what you say to each other when you get married: I want to be with you both in good times and in bad times. So not only in the easy-going, dancing, bright and good times, but also in the dark times. So I thought about it for a long time and that's when I realized that the love I felt was stronger and bigger than the kind of fear and all the other things I felt too. So I called him from Europe and when he was on the phone I told him these wedding words: you are my partner for good and bad, for rich and poor. And he was very moved by that. In reality, I was telling him: I am with you until the end of your life. And later we also brought a priest of the Episcopal Church into the house and gave us our marriage vows. So, in effect, we were married. That was an important event for me, to go through that process. Going through the dying process was not easy; it was hard. What I discovered in the process was the ability to love without expectation that something would come back to me later. You know, it was no longer: I will scratch your back if you scratch mine, simply because he was no longer able to scratch my back.

You know, the great gift I received was to realize that I could love without promises and that was

very important. Accompanying him step by step in the dying process was a very moving and powerful maturation process for me. There would be many stories I could tell about that, for hours, because so many things happened in that process, which is after all a process of living and dying, and there are a number of things that are connected to my work. At one point I said to another friend of mine: I don't know if I'm capable of going through this? And he replied: but you are doing this process of "death and resurrection", why don't you build it into your life now? And that was what I did.

Stanford and I both went through the process of death and resurrection. The death process took about 8 months, 8 months from discovering he had AIDS. So we went through that process, step by step, as best we could and tried to complete it as much as we could. At the end, when he died, I wrote an article called *He Died a Cured Man*. Because that's what I had felt he was, that he had gone through the greatest healing in the course of his dying. Dying is not merely getting sicker and sicker, but it can also be that you feel better and better, and that was it. So the house where he spent the last week of his life was glowing, it was full of light. It was like we were living in some kind of sacred place because he had cleaned so much, burned so much stuff, that the place really glowed. And people would call me and say, I'm not going to come because I want to remember Stanford the way he was. And it was also like, he wasn't the beautiful man he was before. His face had pimples that were festering, his body ... so he was in terrible shape. But what was shining through him was so unimaginably beautiful, so I answered the people: you're missing something, you're missing the most beautiful moment in this man's life if you don't come to see him just because you're afraid of dying or afraid of how to meet someone who is dying. Because that's why they didn't come. Some were afraid of AIDS, some were afraid of dying, and some were just plain afraid. There was a couple that were friends of mine that came to Arizona from Switzerland and they didn't even call when they were in Arizona. And when I talked to the woman about it when she was there, she said to me: you're making me feel guilty. And I said to that, fine. You can also feel guilty because what you did was inhumane, unconscionable, to be so close and not even call and say "hi!" I also did everything to make her feel guilty because she also still said, I feel like a sister to Stanford! But a sister would not behave like that.

Helga: Paul, you said that you could tell many stories about your accompaniment of Stanford's dying process. Which ones come to mind now?

Paul: Yeah. It was about the last two weeks and Stanford was sitting in the bathroom in the tub. It was the last bath he could take in his life and we were talking about the idea of him taking his own

life. He didn't want to sink into depression and he asked me, "If you were in my position, what would you do?" You have to know that Stanford was 18 years younger than me, he wasn't even 39 years old. And I replied, "Well, I would look for someone who knew about dying. A teacher. And I would ask him to come to me and teach me how to die." Stanford waited a moment and then said, "But I have you!" and it was a very moving moment for me on the one hand, but on the other hand I also felt a very big burden suddenly land on my shoulders: how could I do this? I am not his teacher, I am his lover. Do you understand how difficult it was for me to take on this role and how many layers there were?

Helga: Yes that is a role confusion that is difficult.

Paul: At the same time a guy came, he's passed away now and I don't remember his name. He was a Zen priest in San Francisco, years ago he was a transvestite, then a drug addict, and finally he transformed into a Zen priest. He came to visit us at Stanford. And I was very happy about that because I thought: maybe he can help Stanford, teach him something. And Stanford, who I had just taken out of the bathroom in the wheelchair and dressed, was now sitting in the wheelchair in the middle of this room where we are now, and he said to him, "Tell me something about death". And the guy (he was very well known in San Francisco) answered him, "Me? Why me? I'm not dying right now. You can tell me something about death! You're dying! You have to tell me something!"... *(All laugh)* ... "What should I tell you, you have to tell!" And when he said that, I felt the great weight fall from my shoulders, it relieved me. Stanford was dying - I could teach him something about life, how life becomes more complete, that's my Gestalt work - but how to die or what death is, I could learn from Stanford, I couldn't teach him anything. That was a moment of great realization for me ...

And in Stanford's last month, after we got married with a priest, I had to go to Europe, I had already cancelled part of my trip because I was also writing the book "Call to Adventure", which was subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation. From Europe I called Stanford and he said, "Please come home as soon as possible!" and I came because I sensed what was going on. However, I was to do a "Death and Resurrection" workshop in the south of France another month later and since I had informed about Stanford's condition and all that in my newsletter, people were watching us what we were doing now or how we were doing with each other. Claude, the organizer of the workshop, suggested to limit the group to 50 participants because I was alone, without an assistant. I also didn't want more, although I knew of a waiting list of 20 participants. So I discussed it with Stanford, who was also more of a businessman, and I discussed with him whether I should increase the group to 60

participants. And he said, "Do it! No question!" and I said, "But if I do it, you have to help me. You have to help me in some way to run this group. You can't be there, but I need your help in how to run a group this size." A week later, Stanford died. And his death was in some ways the help I got from him, because it was a very powerful experience. And I was able to bring that experience as an example in the workshop and the participants were very moved and felt that Stanford was there with them. He was with me.

And I think now that my experience with madness was a transformation from artist as seducer to artist as healer. And the death of Stanford brought this movement from the outside in, it opened the heart.

... Two little examples of that: when I was sitting with him in the bedroom, we were watching TV or something, and I was holding his hand and tears came. He asked: "Why are you crying?" very harshly and brusquely he asked - he was also an emotional therapist - and I answered: "Because I just thought what is happening to you ..." "But it is not happening now!" he said, "I am still alive! Stay alive with me! I'm not dead yet!" This was also an important revelation for me, how quickly we take refuge in catastrophic expectations of the future and thereby lose the present moment.

There were a number of things I learned from him. He taught me a lot about dying and a lot about love, and that love which is not just sweet and beautiful.

There was another situation I remember. His immune system was very bad and his left foot stank a lot. And when I washed his feet, I used to take a deep breath and hold it because it smelled so bad. And Stanford said, "Can you imagine what that does to me, watching you do that?" And I replied, "For me, it's a question of whether I do it or not. I can't imagine it not smelling awful. I can only do it the way I do it, holding my breath. And I do it because I love you." And Stanford could hear that.

Helga: I remember you talking briefly about your mother's death - that really touched me - she just died this year.

Paul: Yes the death of the mother is also a very important event. Because the death of a lover is one thing, but the death of your mother is on a whole other level of experience. Because suddenly you have no place to come home - there is no home.

The mother is the breeding ground, the matrix, the place where life begins. As long as the mother was alive, I always had the feeling that I could come home. When she died, I realized that I was alone. First was the death of my mother, then the death of Dick Price. He was my teacher and we were very close. Although he also betrayed me and I had to leave Esalen, we came together again, very close again. And I always felt that if I had trouble, I could go to him. When he died, there was

no more room for that.

Manfred: How old was your mother?

Paul: She lived to be 102 years old - she was born in the 19th century and died in the 21st - she lived 3 centuries and not many people can have this experience. She died on Good Friday between 12 and 3 in the afternoon - the time Jesus died on the cross. I was just in Mexico and my brother wrote me an email. It moved my emotions a lot and so I lay down, fell into a kind of half-sleep and had a kind of dream: I had visited my mother at home and she told me that she had been dreaming a lot about my father lately. I replied: that's normal, you'll see him soon and be with him. And she said: but he is angry with me, he is angry with me for something. After some time I asked: where do you have the prayer card from dad's funeral, I couldn't find it? - You know, in the Catholic Church it's customary in our country that you get little prayer cards when someone has died, so you can pray for them. - And she answered: you know, I lost them, I don't have them anymore! And then we both laughed, because we always had joy together. And then I looked for the card among the missals and I found it and I said: there it is! He's probably even more angry now because you didn't look! And then we both laughed even more! My mother had a wonderful sense of humor and that was just the introduction to the dream I had when she died: I saw her get up alone in the night and then fall down and no one was there to hear her. And then she saw my father in my dream. She saw him and he said to her: Rose, here I am, come with me. And she answered: Oh, don't look at me, I am an old woman. And he: No, you are not, you are my beautiful Rose. And she: Don't be crazy, look at my old body. And he: But look, look! And she looked down at herself and saw that she was young again and said: Oh I must be dreaming! And he: No Rose, you are not dreaming! And this dream or vision tells me a lot about the moment when she died, about her death. And when I wrote this to my brother, he said: you have always been very active in imagining. And I replied: I think it was not really an imagination, but a vision. It came so spontaneously, but who knows?

Helga: I think that the things we know, we really know! We just know it!

Paul: That's right. And it was so important for my mother that my father came, so it was a happy union. And at her funeral, which was on Easter Monday, the church was full of flowers and it all looked beautiful ... And I remembered a meditation by the Lama Rinpoche that you undertake when a person dies or has died, in which you are cleansed of all sins. And I did this for my mother. For my sweet little mother who had always prayed for other people. That was her job and she loved to

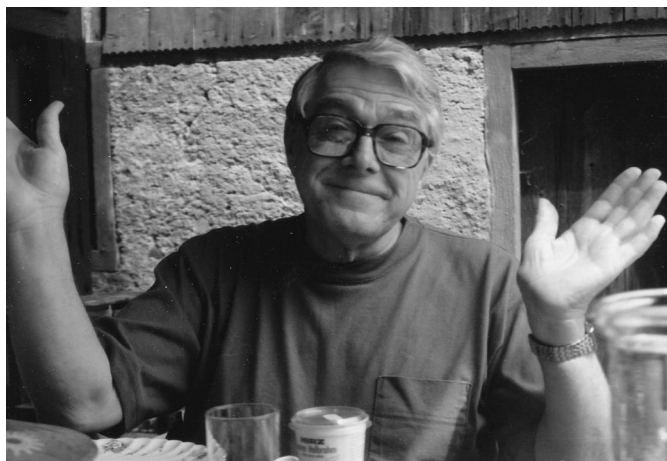
pray for others. I did this intense meditation for her.⁸ And suddenly I realized that I had taken over my mother's job: to pray for her, for others! This realization was beautiful.

Helga: Your answer has brought me a lot now. Because the experience of your mother's death shows me that as an artist and healer you have a different relationship to the other world, that you have allies like your mother.

Paul: Yes, I just wish I would have had that chance with my father before he died. But I was only 28 years old when he died and I lacked the completion of my relationship with him myself. It makes a difference if you have a chance to come clean with someone yourself or if you have to do it in your imagination.

Manfred: In African Dagara culture, the names that people are given are always a signpost for the life purpose that they have. Malidoma, for example, means "Be a friend to the stranger". Do you know a meaning for your name?

Paul: My full name is Eugene Paul Jude Rebillot. Eugene means well-born and Paul means small. Jude has roots in the tribe of Judah and means the one praised by God, because the tribe of Judah is praised by God. And Rebillot may mean rebellion, at least it would appeal to me. Maybe it has other meanings too ... So my full name is: the well-born little rebel praised by God.



⁸ Paul describes: "You imagine the dead or dying person lying down and ask Buddha, Christ or whoever else to stand in front of him/her. First you ask forgiveness for all transgressions (sins) and the Tibetans do this simply by thinking of transgressions of anger by the feet, sex and transgressions of greed by the genitals, ignorance by the solar plexus, transgressions of desire by the heart, envy by the throat, pride by the third eye. I added the crown chakra and transgressions of despair."

Epilog by Manfred Weule

*From childhood, children in many cultures are taught,
not to see too much. Under no circumstances should one dare
to think of oneself as an artist or a poet.
Even if one feels something completely different,
one must come to terms with the agreement,
that importance is given only to those things in life,
whose atoms are so densely packed,
that they can be perceived by all.*

Clarissa Pinkola Estés

In transitional situations of our life, the armor of our own habits in thinking, feeling, acting becomes more permeable, we can more easily perceive signals of longing. Not just any longing, but the longing that leads us again and again to that which gives us meaning and fullness: the inner visionary or the inner artist (Estés).

This is made possible by moments of touch. Or by a real “shot across the bow” as one gets in a veritable crisis - like currently the Corona crisis. Both create new ideas that can become established as new habits. Paul Rebillot freely gives many examples from his life in this conversation - more freely than is usually the case in therapy schools and in stark contrast to many areas of academic life, where inductive reference to one’s own experiences in scientific papers is usually still prohibited as “unscientific”. But how are new ways to be found in the current global crises, if not through interdisciplinary and intercultural cooperation of people who also try to draw from themselves and from nature?⁹ Paul’s contribution to homosexuality in this book is also a very good example of this. Personally, I got a moment of deepest touch in West Africa when a bull gave his life in a sacrificial ritual for my life course to flow again. This made it possible for me to experience that we are food for each other and that we humans are only one of many peoples on earth.¹⁰ To follow my childhood desire to go to traditional Africa, I needed the impetus of a life crisis. Already one of my ancestors, my great uncle Karl Weule, ethnologist in Leipzig, went to Africa in 1907. Following his example, I studied cultural anthropology in West Berlin in the 1970s.¹¹

9 Just one example: Jeremy Narby, *Intelligence in Nature*. An Inquiry into knowledge . 2006

10 Paul told that in a shamanic journey à la Michael Harner he discovered the owl as a helper along the way, and describes in the interview how he once asked it for advice. - Animals have come into my life first and foremost as real animals that have attracted my attention through deviant behaviors. We can open ourselves to animals and learn to “read” the “language” of their response. More on this in: Manfred Weule: *Auswildern im Gespräch mit Tieren (Rewilding in Conversation with Animals)*. Schalchen: Institute Consciousness Strategies Institute 2016. At buchversand@i-cons.info

11 Karl Weule, *Native Life in East Africa. Results of an Ethnological Research Journey* Leipzig: Verlag F.A. Brockhaus 1908. He was able to present ethnological topics in vivid texts. Many *Kosmos* volumes were published by him before the 1st World War. - Paul’s description of his own ancestral work, in particular the confrontation with the Polish Catholic tradition as embodied by his mother, describes a dimension also of our ancestral work as we have learned it

Similar to Paul in ancient Greece and Japan, Helga in Peru and in Africa, I also immersed myself in an unknown culture in West Africa. It enables an outside view of one's own culture and thus provides impulses for interdisciplinary, intercultural discovery.¹² As a German who has lived abroad in Austria since 1993, this has already become an everyday occurrence for me.

When I was just beginning to walk this path with Malidoma Patrice Somé¹³ as a teacher and cooperation partner, I also became aware of Paul Rebillot's Hero's Journey in 1998. The Hero's Journey is a touching experience that teaches the opening of inner gates into the unconscious and the unknown. A seminar process, which in quality and richness of methods is equal to an artistic initiation in the West and leads us - similar to our "Leitbild seminar" - on the track of our own life purpose.¹⁴

By giving the process of confronting the hero and demon of resistance largely into the hands of the participants themselves, he lets them take an initial step of community building in a ritual space. This also addresses what the Hero's Journey immediately reinforced in my life and counseling work: following the trail of the life purpose, inviting inner resistance, doubt, and pain to join me at the table as partners in conflict, and bringing the liveliness bound up in them into everyday life.

Paul also worked in Europe, including France, Germany, Austria and Ireland. And we learned from him and his total work of art "Hero's Journey". In 2003 Helga and I developed with Malidoma Somé an intercultural West African-European learning project "Living Abundance in a World of Scarcity. A training in the craft of spiritual medicine and community building". Ancestral and ritual work of this tradition as well as the art of cowrie shell oracle consultation took its way from there to the German speaking countries.¹⁵

from the tradition of the West African Dagara. See, among others, Helga Weule, *Symbol Constellations & Ritual Prescriptions*. In German in: "PULSAR" May 2020 ; in German and in English on www.i-cons.info/Publikationen

12 More about this in Manfred Weule, *Harzer Ahnenerde. Wiedereinwurzeln durch Sehnsucht, Mutter Afrika und Sturheit. (Ancestral soil of Harz mountains. Re-rooting through longing, Mother Africa and stubbornness)*. Wilhering: Bayer Verlag 2013/2015. Available from buchversand@i-cons.info

13 Malidoma Patrice Somé, *Of water and the spirit. Ritual, magic and initiation in the life of an African shaman*. Penguin Arkana New York 1994. German edition unfortunately abridged: Vom Geist Afrikas. The life of an African shaman. Diederichs Verlag Munich 2000 - Autobiographical account of his experiences. The same: *The Healing Wisdom of Africa. Finding life purpose through nature, ritual and community* - a workbook on cosmology and ritual development.

14 See the description of the seminar "Leitbild. The Fire of Desire" at www.i-cons.info. In 1991 it was called "Leitbild - A Time to Discover Personal Sense."

15 Manfred Weule, *Bridges between Europe & West Africa. Stories of the Visible and the Invisible*. Video documentary (65 min) 2021. At www.i-cons.info/videos/ and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANu_jpt1sCQ

Paul develops in the interview that his work with art and archetypes - embodying and playing inner instances and mythical characters - is a widening and opening work directly in the soul. It speaks to us through feelings. Helga had discovered Wielant Machleidt's "cycle of basic feelings" in 1991 while searching for navigational impulses of self-direction for her training and teaching activities in group dynamics and organizational development within the Austrian Society for Group Dynamics and Organizational Consulting (ÖGGO). We made it the basis of a qualitative data collection among managers.¹⁶

We soon noticed that the process of the hero's journey correlates with the basic feeling cycle.¹⁷ Since then, we have used it as a "compass" in the choreography of "hero's journeys of all kinds": i.e. change and development processes and also in processes of group and community building. We have to admit: this "map" unfolds its usefulness only in processes of self-directed learning. In essence, "training" means nothing other than: drawing from oneself one's own images and creative ideas.¹⁸

In 2006 we guided a Hero's Journey for the first time with participants from 5 European countries. They subsequently formed a network, the association "Adventure Life", which aims to train hero's journey guides and to introduce elements of the hero journey into adult education and training by organizing hero journeys as a learning field, promoting members' own projects and holding practice-oriented in-depth seminars. This context gave rise to the Erasmus+ funded, 19-month research project "Heroes of Inclusion and Transformation (HIT)" in 2019, wherein 25 people from 6 countries explored feelings and shadow themes in their own professional practice and culture in a cooperative research project.

Paul did not create a "school" as an institution, he saw himself as a process worker. So people in many countries continue to work with his approach, mostly as innovative small groups. Some of them have their say in this book. Paul's 90th birthday and the planetary dimension of the Corona crisis could be occasions for celebrations, meetings and exchanges.

16 Helga Weule & Manfred Weule, *Die emotionale Organisation (The Emotional Organization)* in: Dr. Ewald Krainz and Dr. Ruth Simsa (eds.) *Die Zukunft kommt - wohin geht die Wirtschaft?* (The Future Is Coming - Where Is Business Going? Social backgrounds for management and organizational consulting). Betriebswirtschaftl. Verlag Th.Gabler, Wiesbaden 1998 and on www.i-cons.info under "Publications".

17 Helga Weule & Manfred Weule, "*Basic Feelings as a Compass for Hero's Journeys of All Kinds*" March 2020 on www.i-cons.info under "Publications"

18 Masterly exposed by Daniel Quinn in "*Ishmael*" and "*My Ishmael*" In the latter it says: "I can't teach you anything unless you tell me what you want to learn." This gives "instructors" or "trainers", that is, counselors, therapists, and teachers, the role of a birth attendant, a midwife. Quinn therefore calls it maieutic learning. "*Ishmael*". New York: Bantam Books 1992. "*My Ishmael*" New York: Bantam Books 1997.

Why do I express this hope? To give the present form to the interview with Paul took a long time to mature, at least for me. It was only when I was collecting texts for this book at the time of the Corona crisis that I realized what vision Paul had given us in his text “Dancing with the Gods”.

An encouragement to follow our own vision, our inner artist, our life purpose, and thus to be a cultural factor in bringing about a new age: the age of the child, of the full androgynous human being.

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Translated by Manfred Weule, using the transcript of the conversations

Text reviewed by Paul J. Mellick