

Connecting with the Soul through Death Imagery

workshop

European Psychosynthesis Summerschool
2006, Sweden

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a gravestone from Sicily in Italy, circa 3000 B.C.

This workshop is about exploring what 'Death' contains for us.

Which experiences are connected with death and dying and what psychological and spiritual content does it hold for us.

The 'domain of death' in our psyche is connected and filled with our personal experiences of death and dying as well as with the deeper layers of our transpersonal being.

As dreams are the royal road to the unconscious (Freud), imagery is the imperial road. In the workshop several kinds of imageries lead to 'the domain of death', among others:

- a. imagening one's own death
- b. going through the 'door of death'

In all religions dying is a holy proces

Death is seen as returning to a **transcendental state** of being

Meditating on death, in order to realise one's true nature, is advised all over the world

Just two examples:

Krishna when he speaks to Arjuna says:

The soul is not the perishable, transient body. She is the imperishable, undying Self in each human being. When you know this, why would you have fear? I am that soul. I reside in the heart of each human being. I am the father and mother of this world, create and give life. I am the Beginning, the Middle and the End. Everything has come from Me, everything is permeated by Me. No creature exist without Me. Whatever path people go, they go My path. Wherever they go they reach Me. (Bhagavad Gita)

Jesus said: only when the seed disappears in the soil, it will become alive. (New Testament)

When you visit my grave, it will seem like you see my gravestone dancing.

Brother, do not come to my grave without a tambourine! Because a sad person is out of place at God's feast. (Jalaloddin Rumi)

Science

In modern physics there is sustained evidence that space and time are constructs . . . they, space and time do not exist apart from our consciousness. . . **Reality is beyond space and time**
a reality beyond this mortal life?



Death is the greatest unknown, the object of our biggest fears, but also our most loyal companion . .



Exploring death one may encounter some of the following contents of one's psyche:

fear of death

pain

loss of meaningful persons

meeting with meaningful deceased persons

unused talents

liberation

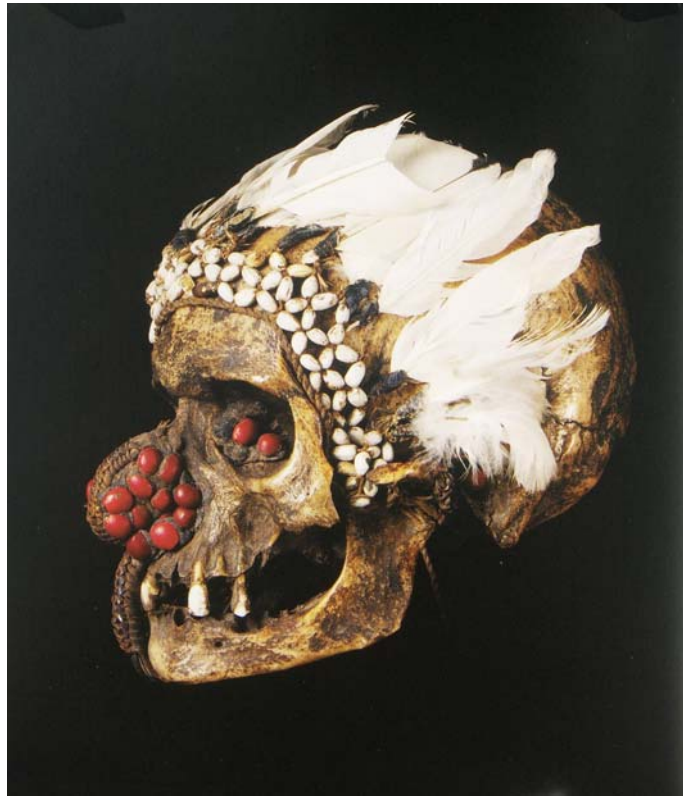
transcendence



And here it all begins. Consciousness is born. **The cycle of life and death starts . . .**
(*Rembrandt, etching, Amsterdam*)



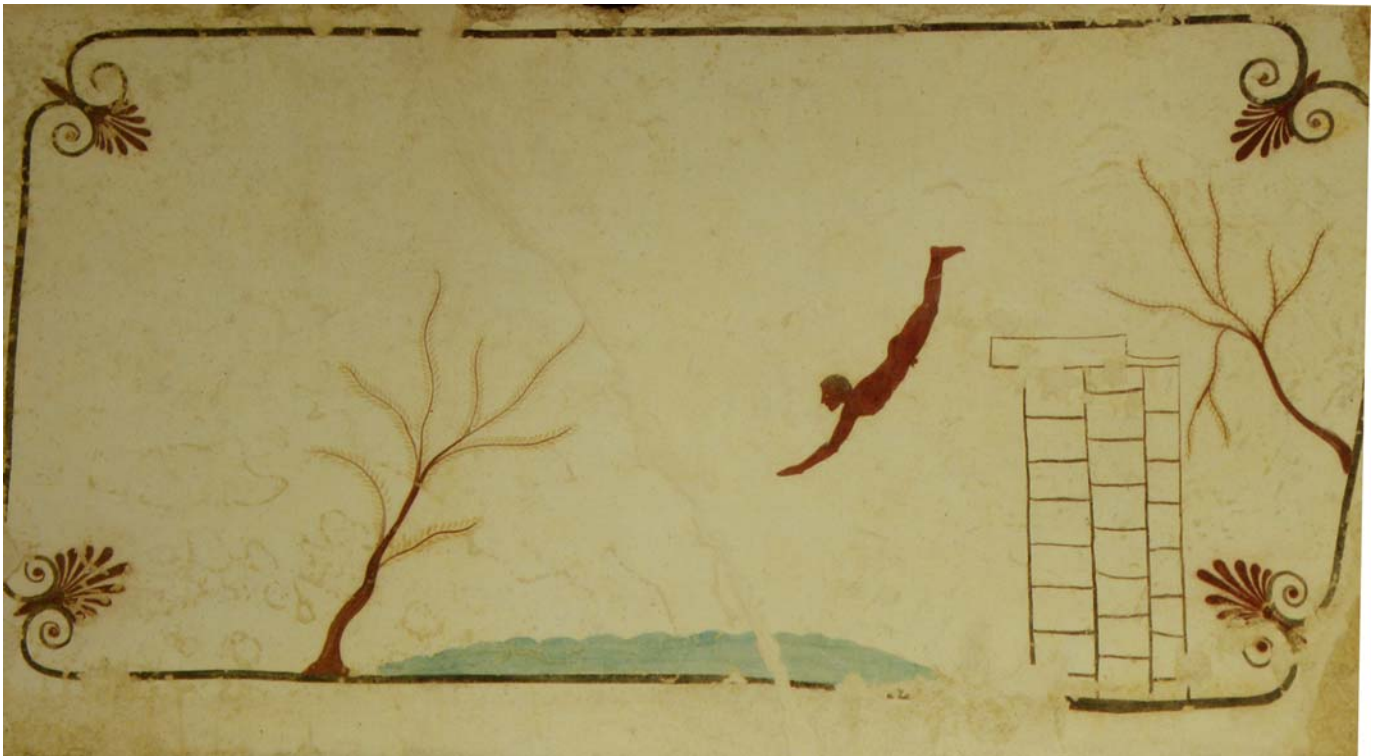
And ever after we are searching for the tree of life.
(*Masaccio, fresco, Florence*)



*In all spiritual and religious traditions (as far as I know)
death is considered to be a holy place and dying a holy proces.*



Death is a great unknown domain in our psyche. The ultimate mystery of ourselves.
Going into that part of our psyche may hold surprises.



Ceiling of Tomb of the Diver, Paestum (ca. 480-470 BC)

Diving as a passage to the afterlife.
The shore beyond, a safe haven with the olive tree of peace.

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Going through the ‘Door of Death’

After she visited Death – in her imagery she went through ‘the door of Death’ – a woman (in her forties) told:

In the land of Death I could dance again!

Until my 15th year dancing was my great passion, then a horrible traumatic event happened and I never danced again. Now in this imagery I danced again.

Of course the therapist asked her to show how she danced in the domain of death ...



In Egypt of the faraos when you die, your heart is carried to the Gods . . .



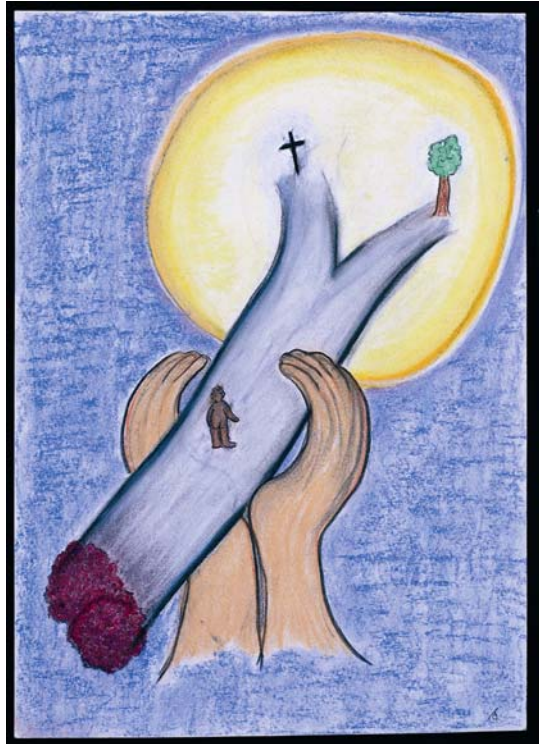
your heart is caried to the Gods to be weighted against a feather . . .
If it is too heavy, too bad for you . . .
if it is light, you go to heaven



A series of photographs made by a young woman one year before she died of cancer. She dematerialised her body in a open field, preparing herself for departing, although she did not seem to be conscious of it.
(Yvette Rogge, Amsterdam)



*I would like to fly away, I am alright . . .
but my love for my husband, the little man that holds the kite, keeps me here*
(Cis Bouten, cancerpatient)



Lifted up

I am going for the first time all alone on journey
and I do't know where the path will bring me.
This path where there is a split between life and death.
I am ready to go that path and feel trust. I am taken up, caried and feel secure.

Clara Taming (cancerpatient)



Painting made by a nurse:

I am the one in red at the left. It is in the night and the patient is in great turmoil, inner storms, fears of dying ... In the night I have time to be with patients, so I do. I hold her and tell her 'it is alright, you may go, you may be at rest . . .'. Then the patient gets silent and departs peacefully.



He is my truest companion, he will never let me down...



Looking into the eyes of Death, where does it take me?

What will it bring?

a song of praise on Death

My loyal friend
How could I forget you?
Always by my side
You never let me down

I can always count on you
To be there, to be there
In the deepest darkest night
When there is pain and no one else
You are the one
The only one
To set me free
To set me free of binds and blinds

Only, when the seed sinks in the darkest soil
It will be alive
It will be alive, rooted and become the tree

When I surrender to your precious womb
I'll be born again
I'll be born at last

Death, is beauty your real face?
Light your true colour
Happiness indeed your state
And love your only name

Come to me
Embrace me
Be me

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