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In the wake of vicarious traumatization : making meaning through Jungian theory and engaged Buddhism

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ABSTRACT

Despite the many parallels between primary and secondary exposure to trauma, the latter is still relatively understudied, especially among psychotherapists. Bearing witness to the brutal abuses that our patients have endured is vital to the work of analysis, but what often functions as a salve to the storyteller may simultaneously be experienced as an assault on the listener. Vicarious Traumatization (VT) can have profound impacts upon a helper's sense of identity and deepest conceptual schemas. While this phenomenon is widely recognized in the literature, it is rarely addressed in a holistic manner. This thesis, rooted in my own experience of VT, begins to explore the ways in which Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism may offer models for confronting the pervasive reality of human suffering. Specifically, I look to Jung's *Answer to Job* and Thich Nhat Hanh's "Please Call Me by My True Names" as resources for rebuilding shattered paradigms and recovering a sense of meaning.

IN THE WAKE OF VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION: MEANING MAKING THROUGH JUNGIAN THEORY AND ENGAGED BUDDHISM

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Vicarious Traumatization and Secondary Traumatic Stress

In recent decades, the field of psychology has begun to awaken to the profound effects visited upon psychotherapists as a consequence of their work with trauma patients. In 1990, McCann and Pearlman offered the term "Vicarious Traumatization" (VT) to refer to the changes in a therapist's inner world, beliefs, memory, psychological needs, and identity that stem from repeated empathic engagement with traumatic material. They conceived of the effects of VT as pervasive (potentially impacting all aspects of a practitioner's life), cumulative (underscored and augmented by the aggregate of a clinician's caseload), and likely permanent (even if worked through). McCann and Pearlman were primarily interested in disruptions in the cognitive structures (i.e. the schemas or mental frameworks we use to understand the world) of trust, safety, power, independence, esteem, and intimacy.

Five years later in an essay entitled "Beyond the 'Victim': Secondary Traumatic Stress" (1995), Figley and Kleber approached this phenomenon from a slightly different vantage point and coined the term "Secondary Traumatic Stress" (STS) to refer to the harmful biopsychosocial effects of indirect exposure to a traumatic event through a significant other's relationship to a trauma survivor (p.78). They use the term "significant other" broadly to include family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and helping professionals (p.79). In each case, trauma exposure generates a parallel though comparatively subdued response to that of the survivor, as characterized by intrusive thoughts/images, numbing, avoidance of

certain situations, and hyperarousal (Figley, 1995), creating a significant disruption in the course of daily existence and producing a troubling sense of powerlessness (Figley & Kleber, 1995, p.78).

VT and STS are obviously closely related terms, and are often used interchangeably in the literature. Amidst several conceptual similarities, we can identify three key differences with regards to the formulation of onset/duration, population involved, and phenomenological emphasis: 1) Whereas Figley believes that one severe exposure to traumatic material is enough to trigger STS, McCann and Pearlman understand VT as the result of cumulative exposure to traumatic material over time. 2) Figley's initial writings on STS developed out of his research on how the experiences of assault survivors and combat veterans impact their romantic partners, and his scholarship has continued to cast a wide net regarding the types of relationships in which STS can occur. Conversely, McCann and Pearlman began writing about VT specifically as it pertains to psychotherapists and have continued in this vein. 3) Finally, whereas Figley's interest in STS gravitates toward symptomatology, McCann and Pearlman's scholarship on VT tends toward discussion of abstract changes in belief systems.[1]

While the aims of the present thesis align more naturally with the concerns addressed in the literature on VT, more scholarship currently exists on STS because the diagnostic parameters are broader – requiring just one meaningful exposure as opposed to many over time, inclusive of lay people and various sectors of workers within the helping profession rather than concentrated on psychotherapists, and

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[1] See Baird & Kracen, 2006, for a synthesis of VT and STS.

more testable because concrete symptoms are easier to measure than complex, and

sometimes unconscious, shifts in belief systems. In addition, a surprisingly large

portion of the recent scholarship on VT is comprised of dissertations, which

accounted for nearly 40% of the studies on VT that I encountered. While this figure

indicates a significant growing interest in VT among junior researchers, it also

further limits the pool of scholarship on VT, as the standards for dissertation

approval are generally not as rigorous as the standards for publication in a peer-

reviewed journal.[2] Finally, much of the literature treats the constructs of VT and

STS as interchangeable, making it impossible to isolate scholarship only on VT

(Baird & Kracen, 2006). Consequently, the current thesis utilizes studies conducted

on both phenomena.

Scattered throughout the literature on STS and VT are references to the

devastating effects that clinical exposure to traumatic material can have on the lives

of helping professionals. Surveyed clinicians reported symptoms that manifested

physically (fatigue, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, flashbacks, changes in eating

habits, migraines), emotionally (anxiety, irritability, grief, rage, guilt), behaviorally

(aggression, substance abuse), interpersonally (withdrawing from significant

relationships, intrusive thoughts/images arising during sex), and professionally

(self-doubt in relation to competence, feelings of powerlessness and cynicism, a

decline in productivity, desire to avoid going to work, decreased sense of purpose

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[2] In this regard my approach follows Baird & Kracen (2006), who coded doctoral theses as a level of evidence below peer-reviewed journal articles.

and meaning).[3] Such a panoply of reports illustrates the multiple levels on which

VT/STS can encroach upon one's life. When the American Medical Association

estimates that 60-80% of trips to the doctor are stress-related (Nerurkar, Bitton,

Davis, Phillips, & Yeh, 2013, p.76)[4], it is imperative to consider how the symptoms

associated with STS can pose a serious threat to a practitioner's quality of life.[5]

In turn, these harmful effects reverberate back to mental health patients

through the therapeutic relationship. Negash & Sahin (2011) name loss of empathy,

loss of respect, and depersonalization as three common results of STS/VT, all of

which impair a clinician's ability to join with a patient (p.4-5). They describe

depersonalization as "a process whereby the therapist develops a disparaging

attitude toward the client," and may even blame the client for their own misfortunes

(Ibid, p.5). In a national survey of almost 600 licensed, doctoral-level, practicing

psychologists, researchers found that one-third of respondents reported high levels

of depersonalization (Ackerley, Burnell, Holder, & Kurdek, 1988, p.624, 629). The

"silencing response" is a related coping mechanism characterized by selective

listening, redirection, and active avoidance of certain material (Baranowski, 2002,

p.162). It may result in clinicians minimizing patient distress, feeling/expressing

anger toward patients, feigning interest, not believing patients, blaming patients for

their experiences, and feeling numb before sessions (Ibid, p.162-163). According to

Baranowski, this reaction is rooted in feelings of powerlessness, fear of not being

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[3] Shannonhouse, Barden, Jones, Gonzalez, & Murphy, 2016, p.202; Figley & Kleber, 1995, p.94; Killian, 2008, p.35.
[4] This may make stress the number one proxy disease killer (Jarali & Radhakrishnan, 2013, p.156).
[5] For an overview on the empirical literature linking trauma and poor health, see Green and Kimling, 2004.

able to contain a patient's emotional response to trauma, fear of how listening to

trauma narratives will effect the clinician, and fear that the clinician's own

worldview will not be able to sustain the injurious impact of a client's experience of

suffering (Ibid, p.161). On the other hand, clinicians who are in "an intrusive phase"

may insist on uncovering details of a patient's trauma before the patient is ready

(Munroe, 1995, p.217). Unsurprisingly, these maladaptive defense mechanisms can

result in a substandard level of care, inaccurate documentation, and unethical

patient treatment (Negash & Sahin, 2011, p.6-7). Since the therapeutic relationship

is commonly viewed as the primary agent of healing in work with trauma survivors

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.15-16), how therapists metabolize the vicarious

trauma they encounter will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the

therapeutic alliance. If therapists do not learn to skillfully navigate this work, they

are likely to jeopardize their own wellbeing and that of their patients.

  While the literature on this phenomenon is sprinkled with citations of

various self-care techniques, several studies have found no significant correlation

between the frequency with which specific strategies were employed and a

reduction of symptoms associated with STS among clinicians (Bober & Regehr,

2006; Killian, 2008).[6] These results demonstrate that there are limitations to what

discrete coping mechanisms can accomplish in the face of traumatization, and that

self-care as it is currently understood may be a necessary but insufficient

component of mental health. As classic texts on trauma indicate, the ability to make

meaning of one's experiences is crucial to the task of integrating disturbing events

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[6] In a review of the research that has been conducted on VT and STS, Baird & Kracen (2006) found that personal trauma history was the most important predictor of VT in clinicians.

into one's personal narrative.[7] Elaborating on the century-old work of French

psychotherapist Pierre Janet, contemporary trauma experts van der Kolk and van

der Hart theorize that people dissociate after a traumatic event when their

experience is incompatible with existing mental structures or schemas (1995). In

her comprehensive review of the literature on trauma and meaning making in the

last three decades, Park (2013) posits that high levels of distress persist when

trauma survivors cannot assign a meaning to their traumatic experience that

coheres with their basic orienting systems. These fundamental assumptions about

the self, the world, and the future are often unarticulated and only become

conscious with the cognitive dissonance that ensues after a trauma (Janoff-Bulman,

1989). In the wake of distressing experiences, individuals face the task of either

reframing the trauma as less damaging/somehow growth inducing or revising their

worldview to accommodate a place for the trauma (Park, 2013, p.65). Resolving this

discrepancy in one way or the other is vital to restoring a sense of order in one's

conceptualization of the world and in moving forward with some degree of

acceptance.

> For McCann and Pearlman, this task is inevitable for trauma therapists:

> It is our belief that all therapists working with trauma survivors will experience lasting alterations in their cognitive schemas, having a significant impact on the therapist's feelings, relationships, and life. Whether these changes are ultimately destructive to the helper and to the therapeutic process depends, in large part, on the extent to which the therapist is able to engage in a parallel process to that of the victim client, the process of integrating and transforming these experiences of horror or violation (1990, p.136).

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[7] "Meaning making" can refer to a survivor's search for comprehensibility and/or a survivor's search for significance. For an overview of the different kinds of meanings that trauma survivors construct, see Park, 2010.

While several studies have highlighted the importance of this search for meaning in the wake of traumatization, few have chronicled the lengthy process of such paradigmatic shifts over time (Park, 2013, p.68).

This study follows one such attempt at reconstruction in the aftermath of VT, exploring Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism as two possible schemas by which a therapist might begin to make sense of a world full of trauma, suffering, and even evil. While many scholars hold that it was the dynamic relationship between Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung that gave birth to psychoanalysis and set the agenda for its evolution over the past century (Henderson, 2015), the Jungian corpus typically goes unexamined in contemporary, mainstream psychodynamic training programs. As one of the few pioneering analysts to explicitly grapple with an epistemology of theodicy, Jung's groundbreaking insights into the problem of suffering as set forth in his 1952 text *Answer to Job* warrant careful consideration. Published in the wake of World War II, *Answer to Job* represents Jung's own subjective attempt to come to terms with the unimaginable brutalities of Hitler's occupation, which Jung witnessed firsthand as an army doctor. As such, it advances a model for how a seasoned clinician might endeavor to make sense of his or her own extensive vicarious traumatization.

We might look upon Vietnamese spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh's formation of Engaged Buddhism in the midst of the Vietnam War as a comparable attempt to respond to immense suffering. Simply put, Engaged Buddhism is the application of Buddhist teachings to the resolution of social ills (Queen, 2000, p.1). As a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Nhat Hanh's writings have attracted a wide

readership in recent years, especially amongst younger generations who have grown disillusioned with traditional religion. Secular Buddhism – a form of contemporary Buddhism that discards the deities associated with Asian Buddhism but holds to the analysis of suffering laid out in the Buddha's early writings – is becoming increasingly popular in the West (Slott, 2015, p.279). In fact, early psychoanalysts such as Carl Jung, Sandor Ferenczi, Erich Fromm, and Karen Horney were conversant with Buddhism and other strains of Eastern philosophy, and Jung frequently mentioned Buddhist ideas in his writings (Epstein, 1995, p.2). A renewed interest in this ancient knowledge has recently resurfaced in the mental health field. The practice of mindfulness, which resides at the core of Buddhist psychology (Germer, Siegel, & Fulton, 2005, p.xv), has been taken up by broad swaths of the psychotherapeutic community and has even been endorsed as a useful intervention by the American Psychiatric Association (Shonin, Van Gordon, & Griffiths, 2014, p.123).

In this chapter I have sought to sketch the constructs of VT and STS, describe the state of the research on these phenomena, and introduce the two theories I will use to deepen my understanding of Vicarious Traumatization. In the following chapter, I will develop a conceptual framework for Jungian thought and Engaged Buddhism, identify the methodology for analyzing these two theories, and consider the strengths, limitations, and biases of my approach.

CHAPTER 2
CONCEPTUALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

The following textual analysis will be grounded in Jung's *Answer to Job*

(1952) and Thich Nhat Hanh's "Please Call Me by My True Names" (1978). In

choosing a reinterpretation of a biblical book and a poem by a Buddhist monk as my

primary texts, I realize that the religious valence of this psychological profile on

trauma may warrant a word of explanation.

Both texts speak beyond their religious origins. Jung repeatedly wrote that

he was concerned with psychological, not theological, matters (Bishop, 2002, p.63),

and in the preface to *Answer to Job*, he describes religious statements as psychic

confessions based on unconscious processes (1969, para.555). Jung believed that

the collective unconscious was a storehouse of mythological motifs, or archetypes,

that signify primary psychic experiences (Jung, 1960, para.325). Because these

archetypes reside in the unconscious they cannot be accessed directly, only

obliquely through mediums like art, religion, dreams, myths, and behavior.

Consequently, Jung saw the biblical Job as an archetype with universal resonance

and significance.

Similarly, we can look past the religious trappings of Buddhism to find a

philosophy centered on cultivating a particular understanding of the self in relation

to suffering. As Thomas Merton wrote in the foreward to Nhat Hanh's account of the

war in *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, the aim of Buddhism is a total clarification of

consciousness, not some kind of theological salvation (1967, p.viii). For this reason,

the mental health field has recently begun to assimilate a number of Buddhist-

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derived interventions into the treatment of a wide array of disorders. Shonin et al. (2014) cite the efficacious use of Buddhist-inspired interventions for patients suffering from depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, sleep disorder, substance-use disorders, and schizophrenia, as well as the psychological distress that often attends health problems like chronic pain, coronary heart disease, fibromyalgia, HIV, and cancer (p.129). That they neglect to mention trauma indicates that further research in this area is needed.

Finally, in an increasingly secular world, psychotherapy is being called upon more and more to take up the questions that, in times past, most individuals would have turned to religion to answer. Contemporary couches are overrun with patients searching for compelling ways to make sense of how they relate to themselves, others, the world around them, and their own mortality. We see these themes in the stated purview of existential psychotherapy, a dynamic approach to therapy born out of Irvin Yalom's extensive clinical experience and organized around the existential issues of freedom, isolation, meaninglessness, and death (Yalom, 1980, p.25). We can also recognize the liminal nature of religion – which functions as a kind of bridge between heaven and earth, mind and body, interior and exterior – in psychotherapy, which analysts like David Henderson conceive as a "disciplined journey into the between" (2015, p.171). Indeed, psychotherapy has long inhabited a place between medicine and philosophy, science and art, the concrete and the ethereal, and resides in the psychic space between past and present, conscious and unconscious, silence and speech, self and other, id and superego, individual and

collective (Ibid). It is a field that knows that the spiritual and the psychological are often inextricably bound.

Methodology

In the subsequent chapters, I analyze Jung's *Answer to Job* and Nhat Hanh's "Call Me by My True Names." Through a close reading of these two texts, I will explore the potential of Jungian thought and Engaged Buddhism as theories with which to think through the phenomenon of Vicarious Traumatization. In the former, I will focus on the concepts of antinomy, coming to consciousness, and the role of Wisdom/Sophia; in the latter, I will focus on the concepts of mindfulness, interdependence, and compassion. Finally, I will consider the imperative to take responsibility for one's shadow side, a theme that emerges in both systems of thought. Through this analysis, I hope to demonstrate how aspects of Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism can be used to augment the treatment of Vicarious Traumatization.

I am not investigating either of these ideologies for any historical truth claims – this thesis is not a Christian or Buddhist apologetic. Nor do these authors envision such an end as the aim of their respective projects. Jung clearly states, "I do not write as a biblical scholar (which I am not), but as a layman and physician who has been privileged to see deeply into the psychic life of many people. What I am expressing is first of all my own personal view" (Jung, 1969, para. 559).[8] Likewise, while Nhat Hanh is an ordained monk, he consistently warns his readers against

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[8] For an overview of factors that influenced Jung's personal view as expressed in *Answer to Job*, see Bishop, 2002, p.31-38.

taking a doctrinaire stance. In his book *Interbeing* (1987), the first three principles

he set forth are proscriptions against dogmatic adherence to any one tenet or belief

system.[9] Engaged Buddhism holds that over-attachment to any one worldview is

dangerous and limiting, and that a capacious quality of thought is crucial when

reckoning with the problem of suffering.

Potential Biases, Strengths, and Limitations

As a former evangelical Christian who was severely harmed by the church's

rigid fealty to "orthodox" interpretations of the bible, I welcome Jung's critical

analysis and re-formulation of a classic Christian text. Even now as a spiritual yet

agnostic practitioner, I can readily empathize with the bewilderment and anger Jung

experienced as he struggled to make sense of the Job narrative. This affective

identification certainly informed my selection of Jungian thought as one of my

theoretical lenses.

Some readers might view *Answer to Job* as a problematic choice for this

project due to Jung's inflammatory tone. Jung anticipated as much in his own

reception, and primed the reader in the *Lectori Benevolo*[10] with the assertion:

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[9] They are: "1) Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth. 2) Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice nonattachment from views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times. 3) Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness" (Nhat Hanh, 1987, p.27-33).

[10] *Answer to Job* opens with the *Lectori Benevolo*, which translates "To the Kind Reader." Edinger interprets this as Jung appealing to the good nature of the reader, who Jung knew he was going to offend in what followed (1992, p.23).

> Since I shall be dealing with numinous factors, my feeling is challenged quite as much as my intellect. I cannot, therefore, write in a coolly objective manner, but must allow my emotional subjectivity to speak if I want to describe what I feel when I read certain books of the Bible, or when I remember the impressions I have received from the doctrines of our faith (Jung, 1969, para.559).

To be sure, many of Jung's readers did see his impassioned tone as a liability, and in turn, were quick to dismiss the content of his work. Weisstub, for instance, accused Jung of writing out of an unconscious complex[11] that distorted his perspective and caused him to overlook important aspects of the biblical text (1993). And yet, as Pearlman and Saakvitne articulate, "the relational space of psychotherapy is shaped by what we bring to it, specifically our personal history, feelings, attitudes, defenses, unconscious processes, conscious reactions, and behaviors, all of which will inform and be reflected in our counter-transference" (1995, p.16). Clinicians can assume a neutral stance and don a muted tone, but masking unseemly personal baggage does not erase it. As Lacanian analyst Annie Rogers writes, we are stitched to our shadows – "There is no place I can stand as a therapist outside and apart from my own shadow and understand [a patient's experience]" (1995, p.295). The only path forward is to own our unrest and seek to metabolize it. The theoretical nature of this thesis provides an optimal space and structure for this author to practice exercising that kind of clinical responsibility.

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[11] In Jungian analysis, a "complex" refers to a collection of emotionally charged images and associations that typically arises out of repressed emotional themes and is organized around an archetype. Jung saw the complex as the royal road to the unconscious and instrumental in the analysis of neurotic symptoms (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 2013, p.34).

CHAPTER 3
THE PHENOMENON

In the years since the APA added "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder", or PTSD, to the DSM-III in 1980, research on the phenomenon has proliferated in the Western world. A cursory search for literature published on "PTSD" in the last decade alone yields over 17,000 hits on PsychINFO, an expansive database containing more than 3 million records of peer-reviewed research. Despite the fact that, in 1994, the DSM-IV expanded diagnostic criteria for PTSD beyond directly experiencing a traumatic event to include "learning about" a traumatic event experienced by a family member or close associate, literature on this phenomenon – most commonly referred to as Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) or Vicarious Traumatization (VT) – is still in a relatively nascent stage. While the symptoms of STS are "nearly identical" to those of PTSD (Jenkins & Baird, 2002, p.424; Finklestein et al., 2015; see Table 1), a comparable PsychINFO search for publications that came out on STS and VT in the last decade yields a mere 497 results.[12]

Of those nearly 500 studies, a large percentage investigate the prevalence of STS among various sectors of the helping field, including doctors, nurses, midwives, social workers, psychologists, transcriptionists, law enforcement officers, educators, EMTs, firefighters, humanitarian aid workers, attorneys, child welfare workers, translators, and priests. Another significant portion examines the correlation of the development of STS/VT with certain demographic variables, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, years in the field, rural vs. urban location, work setting,

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[12] In order to streamline this study, search results were limited to books and articles published in English.

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prior trauma history, and attachment style. A third noticeable sub-group assesses the variety and success of self-reported coping skills, such as spending time with family and friends, reading, exercising, eating well, attending therapy, meditating, praying, listening to music, watching television, cleaning, getting massages, enjoying long baths, using humor, and taking anti-anxiety medication. Throughout these studies, authors repeatedly make mention of the well-documented cognitive, emotional, behavioral, spiritual, interpersonal, somatic, and professional impacts of STS/VT on clinicians (Table 2).

Because the very nature of joining with patients on their journey to healing entails hours of listening to survivors speak of the unspeakable, all therapists will inevitably encounter traumatic material at some point in their careers (Evces, 2015, p.10). In a recent study involving 195 students in a graduate-level social work training program, all of the students reported exposure to trauma in their field placements and/or coursework (Butler, Carello, & Maguin, 2016). Another study found that 60% of clinicians working with trauma victims exhibited traumatic symptoms themselves in their first year of work (Hodgkinson & Shepherd, 1994).[13] While some studies indicate a higher incidence of STS/VT in less experienced clinicians (Hamama, 2012), others indicate a higher incidence of STS/VT in more seasoned clinicians (Salloum et al., 2015). In short, no therapist is impervious to traumatic material and the difficult repercussions it can have on them.

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[13] For a collection of studies on the incidence and prevalence of STS among professionals working with survivors, see Figley, 2002.

Differentiation from Counter-Transference

Though the definition of counter-transference has evolved and splintered into various forms over the years, at its root, it is understood to be a "distortion of judgment on the part of the therapist due to the therapist's life experiences and is associated with her or his unconscious, neurotic reaction to the client's transference" (Figley, 1995, p.13). While counter-transference and Vicarious Traumatization can certainly inform and intertwine with one another – for instance, a therapist experiencing VT may develop stronger counter-transference responses that are less available for conscious examination – these two phenomena are not the same thing (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.34). Unlike counter-transference, which is evoked temporarily by specific situations and by the unique blend of patient/therapist alchemy, VT is permanently transformative and regarded by trauma experts as a "natural by-product of helping traumatized people" (Figley & Kleber, 1995, p.92). The current study takes this view, and holds that VT/STS is "neither a reflection of inadequacy on the part of the therapist nor of toxicity or badness on the part of the client" (Pearlman, 1995, p.52).

A Note on Terminology

While Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Traumatization appear to be the most robust and commonly used terms to describe the phenomenon under discussion, it is worth noting that other appellations exist. They include: secondary victimization, (Figley, 1982), emotional contagion (Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988), and burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Additionally, having named or re-named the phenomenon in question three times now, Figley (1995) has most recently entitled

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it "compassion fatigue," which he believes is a more "user-friendly term" that carries less stigma (2002). While the present thesis draws on scholarship that utilizes this term, I do not employ it myself because I believe it whitewashes the suffering of those affected by trauma.

Finally, though I find the terms "patient" and "client" somewhat problematic, I use them both interchangeably throughout this thesis for lack of a better alternative. While the term "client" foregrounds the notion of economic exchange such that it may condition a therapist to view the therapeutic relationship as a commercial transaction, I do appreciate the word's connotation of a more collaborative enterprise among partners (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.9). Conversely, while the term "patient" derives from a medical model of treatment wherein physicians are regarded as occupying an all-knowing and sometimes god-like position that can disempower those in their care, I believe the etymology of the Latin root *patiens* – which means "to suffer" – better honors the internal state of those who seek psychotherapy (Christmas & Sweeney, 2016, p.9)

Case Study

In my first field placement as an MSW student, I worked at a residential treatment facility for female parolees with a history of substance abuse. Day after day I sat aghast as I listened to the tragic stories of how my patients ended up behind bars and to the heinous brutalities visited upon them as wards of the prison industrial complex. I believe the cumulative effect of this work was nothing short of severe Vicarious Traumatization. Given the confines of this thesis, however, I have

limited my case notes to my experience with one client in particular, a 34-year-old straight woman whom I refer to as D.[14]

At the prodding of her case manager, D initially came to see me two weeks after a miscarriage. I quickly learned that she had an extensive trauma history. Her mother severely physically abused her from the time she was an infant and her biological grandfather (who became her adoptive father) molested her continuously from the ages of 3 to 13. When she was 9 years old he introduced her to crystal meth because, D speculates, it was easier for him to rape her when she was high. She discovered that she was pregnant with his child when she was 13, but managed to get an abortion by having another man pose as her father and give his consent so the clinic would perform the procedure on a minor. After being passed around among a series of abusive relatives and abusive foster care guardians, she obtained legal emancipation at 14 years old and went to live with an abusive boyfriend. She had been raped and assaulted more times than I could count.

D was able to name a few positive figures in her life, but one by one, they all died. When she was 11 years old, she witnessed her best friend accidentally shoot herself while they were playing with a relative's gun. When she was 25 years old, her brother – who she identified as the only person who ever took care of her – was hit by a driver who was so high that, after dragging his mangled body under her car for several miles, stopped for a burger before she called the paramedics. While D was in prison, her biological father – who she later found out *did* want a relationship

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14 Though ¾ Italian and ¼ Mexican, D presented as Latina and felt men looked down on her for this. She had no documented disabilities, but her health was constantly at risk due to seizures and recurrent battles with breast cancer. D identified as a Christian and frequently wondered if the horrible things that befell her were the result of God punishing her for her sins.

with her and did try to reach out to her on numerous occasions, but whose efforts were thwarted by D's mother – died of a heart attack. Not long after I met D, the father of one of her children and the only man in her life who seemed to genuinely care for her wellbeing, was hit by a car and died shortly thereafter. D had also lost a daughter to undiagnosed Meningitis.

Unsurprisingly, D had attempted to take her own life on more than one occasion, though when we began working together she was so focused on reuniting with her three children that her suicidal ideation was low. D and I met for individual therapy about twice a week for three months, in which time we worked to address her self-described co-dependency, her efforts to rebuild relationships with her children, and her abject sense of worthlessness. It was also very important to her to find a way to maintain sobriety, as despite her many attempts to get clean, she reported never being able to go more than a couple months without meth. The agency where I was placed operated on a gender-responsive, trauma-informed model of treatment, and this became the predominant theoretical frame I utilized in my work with D.

It wasn't long before my own trauma symptoms started to emerge. I noticed myself fixating on some of the disturbing details and horrifying images that D had shared with me. I hated all the people in her life who had deceived, exploited, and abandoned her, and I hated myself for being powerless to stop it. She was presently embroiled in an ugly custody battle with her extremely abusive ex-partner, who got her fired from multiple jobs by either calling her place of work and telling her manager about her drug history or beating her so badly that she was physically

unable to show up for work. I frequently found myself fantasizing about his sudden demise in a car crash and I would periodically ask myself, "If I knew I could get away with it, would I kill him?"; I was frightened by how often a voice inside me would whisper, "Yes."

Every week my own therapist came to expect an update on D's situation, punctuated by me sobbing and seething at the people, the institutions, and the God that all seemed to have forsaken her. I began to dread going to work because I knew that I could not undo any of the appalling things that had happened to her (or to any of my clients for that matter). Nor could I believe in the legal system to deliver justice, as I watched it let rapist after batterer after molester walk away with little to no concern for the women and children they had victimized and the women and children they would likely go on to victimize. Rather, I watched in astonishment as a series of judges sided with D's alcoholic, abusive ex-partner; they seemed completely oblivious to not only the vulnerable position of abused women in American society writ large, but to the highly laudable determination and resilience that D in particular exhibited.

I began to refer to D as my own personal Job because it seemed like every conceivable thing that *could* go wrong in her life eventually *did.* Feeling enraged and defeated, I eventually turned to the original Job myth and Jung's re-reading of it in a desperate search for answers. In the following chapter, I will outline my findings as I examine the Book of Job as an archetypal representation of human suffering and Jung's own response to suffering – both his own and that of his patients – as laid out in his *Answer to Job*.

CHAPTER 4
JUNGIAN THEORY

Background

Many Jungians regard *Answer to Job* as "the most complete statement of Jung's essential message" (Edinger, 1992, p.7). Written at the end of Jung's life, it draws upon his entire oeuvre in its portrayal of the psychology of the canonical God-image. It is this psychological representation, rather than the metaphysics of God (which Jung deems somewhat irrelevant), that interests Jung (Adler, 1975, p.33). In his opening remarks, he differentiates between the concept of God as an unknowable, ineffable essence and the concept of humanity's God-images as the symbolic imaginings through which human beings relate to the divine. Jung posits that God-images are archetypes that surface in the collective unconscious and filter through to consciousness as shaped by the particular imagery of one's time and place (1969a, para.555). He is interested in these archetypes because he believes they are pervasive phenomena that human beings involuntarily represent, irrespective of their stated religious beliefs (Ibid, para.660).[15] Religious historian Elaine Pagels explicates, "These stories, whether you believe them literally or not, are shadow images, the mental architecture we live in, and they are pervasive" (quoted in Remnick, 1995). As the raw material out of which we then formulate our conceptual structures (Adler, 1975, p.435), Jung cautions his reader against reducing these symbols to mere simulacra, as they possess an extraordinary

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[15] Edinger expounds that as the core archetype, the God-image "is the central agent and creative authority which determines the functioning of all individuals and all organic groupings of individuals... What that means then is that in all conflicts between nations, creeds – different factions of all kinds – each side will be acting out of a commitment to its own version of the God-image" (1992, p.81).

"numinosity"[16] and evoke tremendous feelings in the beholder (Jung, 1969a, para.558).

Given his socio-historical context, Jung concentrates his attention on the Western God-image as expressed in the Judeo-Christian scriptures.[17] Based on their endurance as sacred texts, Jung views these scriptures as "utterances of the soul" that reveal psychic truths rather than historical or theological truths (1969a, paras.557 and 555). In other words, he holds that the mythological motifs found therein represent archetypes of the collective unconscious (Ibid, para.557). Edward F. Edinger, contemporary Jungian analyst and prolific author on Jungian psychology, explains that this is "the methodological basis for all that follows in *Answer to Job*" (1992, p.27), wherein Jung is taking mythological imagery and translating it into psychological correlates (Ibid, p.43). Edinger views *Answer to Job* as "a depth-psychological examination of the Judeo-Christian myth, which is at the core of the Western psyche" (Ibid, p.11) and as a "model for the process of making suffering meaningful" (Ibid, p.36).

While this makes for a dynamic project, the multiplicity of meanings that Jung assigns to the God-image in *Answer to Job* is sometimes confounding.[18] For instance, Jung conceptualizes the God-image as the core archetype of the collective

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[16] The word "numinous" was coined by the German theological scholar Rudolf Otto in 1917 to refer to the ineffable aspect of the divine. Jung frequently employed the term to describe a quality inherent in archetypes that arouses a visceral sense of awe, wonder, thrill, etc. (http://jungiancenter.org/jung-and-the-numinosum/).

[17] It is not that Jung considered the Western God-image superior to the Eastern God-image, but that he believed that the culture in which one was situated prepared one best for an interface with that culture's dominant ideology (Jung, 1969a, "Yoga and the West," in *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, vol. 11 of *CW*).

[18] In Jung's defense, the same can be said of the Book of Job itself. The Hebrew is complex and there is a variety of meanings that can be derived from the text's "bewildering alternation of genres, styles, and perspectives" (Newsom, 2003, p.261).

unconscious (Jung, 1969a, para.660; Edinger, 1992, p.81), as an analogue of the

individual unconscious (Adler, 1975, p.435), and as a metaphor for the Self[19] (Jung,

1968, para.11). As Edinger explains, "These are the kind of complex, multifaceted

interpretations you get when you're dealing with a true symbol. When a true

symbol is alive it won't stand still for a single interpretation" (1992, p.90). While

some, like Edinger, find this polysemy enlivening and enriching (Kradin, 2014,

p.358), other scholars criticize it as a conceptual consolidation that is both confusing

and sometimes quite at odds with itself (Newton, 1993, p.376).

     In line with the social work ethos that no outcome can be traced back to just

one element and that the notion of "one correct interpretation" is a myth in and of

itself, I embrace the inherent multiplicity in Jung's analysis. Cooper writes that the

story of Job is so complicated "because its message *is* genuinely ambiguous. Only by

oversimplifying, harmonizing, or ignoring data can the reader get the book's

multiple images into focus. And then the image is not that of the book, but of the

reader gazing at his or her own reflection" (1990, p.75). In an attempt to read with

intellectual integrity and honor Jung's own acknowledgement that *Answer to Job* is

an opaque text that requires patient study (Bishop, 2002, p.44-45), I seek to

approach this exegesis with a post-structural appreciation for plurality of meaning.

     Further, *Answer to Job* assumes familiarity with various concepts from

analytic psychology (Bishop, 2002, p.70) and its argument is often elusive (Galdston,

1958, p.778), rendering it a difficult text to summarize. It surveys the entire arc of

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[19] Jung describes the Self as encompassing the entirety of psychic life, both conscious and
unconscious (1971, paras.460-461) and that which compels the drive toward individuation (1969,
para.357).

the Christian narrative,[20] including the Creation, the Fall, the Wisdom literature, the

writings of the Prophets, the Incarnation, and the prophecies found in the Book of

Revelation (Bishop, 2002, p.98). Because the thread of Jung's argument weaves

across time through several important events in the Christian faith, extracting his

conceptualization of the problem of suffering out of its broader context renders a

very partial sketch of Jung's vision. As it is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis

to traverse the whole span of the Christian bible, my analysis will center on the

figure of Job in relation to God's antinomy, God's coming to consciousness, and the

role of Wisdom/Sophia.

Antinomy

Jung identifies his 1951 book *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the*

Self as the most immediate source of *Answer to Job* (1969a, p.357).[21] According to

Edinger, the basic issue under examination in *Aion* is the bipolar nature of the

Christian God-image as symbolized by Christ (i.e. the "good son" of God) and the

Antichrist (i.e. the "bad son" of God).[22] Through an investigation into God's

antinomy, or totality of inner opposites, Jung continues to explore this divine

polarity in *Answer to Job*. In the introduction, he writes of the God of the Old

Testament: "Insight existed along with obtuseness, loving-kindness along with

cruelty, creative power along with destructiveness" (1969a, para.560).

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[20] Though I refer to "the Christian *x*" throughout this chapter, I fully recognize that there are multiple
Christianities and that some would privilege different narratives, scriptures, etc. My use of "the
Christian *x*" is meant as shorthand for the orthodox form of Christianity that is dominant in the West
and to which Jung was responding.
[21] For an overview of the relationship between *Aion* and *Answer to Job*, see Bishop, 2002, p.38-41.
[22] 1992, p.11.

In accordance with this backdrop, Jung's interest in the Book of Job stems from his desire to come to terms with the "divine darkness" unveiled in this canonical text, written – as all biblical books were in the Christian imagination – to glorify a God who is typically worshipped for his supreme goodness. Jung states that he wishes to "learn to know why and to what purpose Job was wounded, and what consequences have grown out of this for Yahweh as well as for man" (1969a, paras.561 and 563).

According to the unknown author of Job's tale, Job is a blameless and upright man who has been abundantly blessed by God. Satan dismisses Job's piety as contingent upon his prosperity, inciting God to hand Job over to Satan with his permission to harm Job and take everything he has, sparing only his life. After Satan kills Job's children, destroys his possessions, and inflicts him with boils all over his body, Job's three friends appear and deliver moralizing sermons that God must be punishing him for his sin. Job insists he is innocent and calls upon God for adjudication. After several rounds of dialogue, God manifests as a voice from within a whirlwind and pointedly questions Job about the nature of the universe. The saga ends with Job repenting and God restoring Job's health, his children, and his possessions.

As Jung articulates, the "unvarnished spectacle of divine savagery and ruthlessness" in the Book of Job evokes a shattering emotion in many readers (1969a, para.561). It is God who calls Satan's attention to Job in the first place,[23] and then neglects to rebuke Satan for his impudent accusations, readily agrees to let

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[23] "Did you notice my servant Job?" Job 1:8. Unless otherwise noted, all passages quoted from the Book of Job come from Stephen Mitchell's translation (1992).

Satan torture Job and kill his family, and fails to defend Job's character even after his honor has been tested. When Job cries out in pain there is no mention of his agony stirring any feeling whatsoever in God, let alone compassion, and when Job asks to hear God's indictment against him, God responds in anger.[24] How is a modern person with a Christian education, Jung asks, to understand this strange representation of Holiness? (Ibid., para.561)

Coming to Consciousness

In Jung's interpretation, antithetical qualities like kindness and wrath, justice and injustice, exist without contradiction in the God-image of the Old Testament because "no consciousness ha[d] ever intervened to challenge the contradiction" (Edinger, 1992, p.12). Job, in his struggle to make sense of what is happening to him, represents this consciousness – the only thing that, Jung contends, humanity possesses but God lacks:

> But what does man possess that God does not have? Because of his littleness, puniness, and defenselessness against the Almighty, he possesses, as we have already suggested, a somewhat keener consciousness based on self-reflection: he must, in order to survive, always be mindful of his impotence. God has no need of this circumspection, for nowhere does he come up against an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence make him reflect on himself (1969a, para.579).

In short, Jung is stating that the experience of weakness or limitation is a requisite for the introspection that presages coming to consciousness (Edinger, 1992, p.45).

By the time we encounter Job in the Old Testament, there have already been ample displays of God's tyrannical rage, jealousy, and destruction, all of which could conceivably be traced back to God's megalomaniacal insistence on being "praised

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[24] "Who is this whose ignorant words smear my design with darkness?" Job 38:2.

and propitiated in every possible way" (Jung, 1969a, paras.560 and 573). God's

express need for adulation leads Jung to construe the God of the Old Testament as "a

personality who can only convince himself that he exists through his relation to an

object" (Ibid, para.574). In this Kleinian reading, God's actions betray an

impoverished sense of identity that is wholly constellated through his relationships

to his devotees. Jung goes on to write, "Such dependence on the object is absolute

when the subject himself is totally lacking in self-reflection and therefore has no

insight into himself" (Ibid). In other words, Jung sees God's fixation on his own

glorification as evidence of God's lack of consciousness.

God's appearance to Job as a voice from the whirlwind exemplifies this

dynamic, as God spends 71 verses self-righteously proclaiming his sublime, creative

power. As Jung observes, God's "thunderings at Job so completely miss the point

that one cannot help but see how much he is occupied with himself" (1969a,

para.587). Upon considering the backdrop of Job's prior utterances about God and

the extent to which they parallel God's hymn to his own creative powers, the mighty

spectacle of the whirlwind does strike the reader as peculiar. In Job's responses to

his three friends, his speech is filled with reverence for God's majestic power:

> He knocks the earth from its platform
> and shakes the pillars of the sky;
> he talks to the sun—it darkens;
> he clamps a seal on the stars.
> He alone stretched out the heavens
> and trampled the heights of the sea;
> he made the Bear and the Hunter,
> the Scorpion, the Twins.
> His workings are vast and fathomless,
> his wonders beyond my grasp.
> -Job 9:6-10

Now consider the opening of God's monologue from within the whirlwind:

> Where were you when I planned the earth?
> Tell me, if you are so wise.
> Do you know who took its dimensions,
> measuring its length with a cord?
> What were its pillars built on?
> …
> Were you there when I stopped the waters,
> as they issued gushing from the womb?
> when I wrapped the ocean in clouds
> and swaddled the sea in shadows?
> when I closed it in with barriers
> and set its boundaries, saying,
> 'Here you may come, but no farther;
> here shall your proud waves break.'
> Have you ever commanded morning
> or guided dawn to its place –
> to hold the corners of the sky
> and shake off the last few stars?
> …
> Can you tie the Twins together
> or loosen the Hunter's cords?
> Can you light the Evening Star
> or lead out the Bear and her cubs?
> Do you know all the patterns of heaven
> and how they affect the earth?
> 　　　-Job 38:4-32

Curiously, every reference that Job made to God's sovereignty – over the earth and its pillars, over the sun, over the stars, over the heavens, over the sea, even over specific constellations – God reiterates and amplifies.[25] In this light, God's questions to Job seem redundant and superfluous. If it is not Job who needs to be convinced of God's unassailable power then, to whom is God speaking in this passage?

In Jung's analysis, Satan's accusations against Job roused God's sense of his own unfaithfulness, both to Sophia[26] (1969a, para.620) and to exiled Israel (Ibid,

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[25] It is odd that Jung fails to point out the irony of such parallel rhetoric.
[26] A fuller discussion of Sophia's role in the Job narrative will follow.

para.581), and thus God's whirlwind display of might and power represents an unconscious attempt on God's part to reassure himself of his omnipotence and moral superiority. Jung writes, "Yahweh projects onto Job a sceptic's face which is hateful to him because it is his own, and which gazes at him with an uncanny and critical eye. He is afraid of it, for only in face of something frightening does one let off a cannonade of references to one's power, cleverness, courage, invincibility, etc" (Ibid, para.591). This awe-inspiring display is ostensibly directed at Job because, in a state of unconsciousness, God disavowed the doubt that Satan had stirred, and in a stroke of projective identification, ascribed his own unfaithfulness to Job (Kings, 1997, p.243-244). As Jung so incisively articulates: "Projections change the world into the replica of one's own unknown face" (1959, Vol.9ii, para.17). In this reading, the God of the Old Testament was not truly relating to the people of Israel, he was relating to his own unconscious projections. This typifies the danger that our refusal to acknowledge our shadow engenders; subject to that which we repress, we will project it onto others and, in extreme cases, terrorize them for it.[27]

Jungian analyst Donald Kalsched describes the God we see throughout most of the Book of Job as a portrait of the bipolar Self brimming with robust, primal energies (1996, p.97). First God idealizes Job, exclaiming, "There is no one on earth like him: a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and avoids evil" (Job 1:8); then God devalues Job in a *tour de force* account of his inconsequentiality (Job 38 – 41). Whereas the God presented in the Book of Job seems challenged by the task of integrating opposing aspects – of both himself and of the other – into a cohesive

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[27] Jung observed this phenomenon in the Nazi takeover of Europe (Jung, 1991, p.172).

portrait of subjectivity, Job appears to be able to hold his contradictory views of God together with some degree of mental dexterity. For instance, in response to the second round of allegations leveled at him by his friend Eliphaz the Temanite, Job laments of God:

> In his rage he hunted and caught me;
> he cracked my bones in his teeth.
> I was whole – he ripped me apart,
> chewed my body to pulp.
> He set me up as a target;
> his arrows tore through my flesh.
> He hacked my liver to pieces;
> he poured my gall on the ground.
> He besieged me like a fortress;
> he demolished my inmost walls.
>   - Job 16: 8-14

Yet virtually within the next breath, Job proclaims:

> O Earth, do not cover my blood!
> Never let my cry be buried!
> For I have a witness in heaven,
> a spokesman above the clouds.
> May he judge between mortal and God
> as he would between man and neighbor.
>   - Job 16: 18-21

Upon close reading, Job's monologues are saturated with these seemingly incongruent characterizations of God – a depiction of God as Job's persecutor alongside a depiction of God as Job's advocate. In short, Job recognizes God's antinomy. In psychoanalytic terms, this ability to grasp the psychic and affective complexity of another would be considered evidence of a strong ego function, and indeed in Jung's estimation, this is Job's crowning achievement (Jung, 1969a, para.567). Jung believes it is Job's capacity to hold the "fullness" of God that, with the aid of Wisdom, urges God to a deeper knowledge of himself (Ibid, para.617).

The Return of Sophia

Biblical scholars classify the Book of Job as "wisdom literature," a well-known genre of writing in the ancient Near East around the time the Book of Job was authored. Characterized by sayings and stories intended to elucidate the nature of reality, the tone and content of the "Wisdom Books" – Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Job – are marked by a more reflective mood than the other biblical texts (Bishop, 2002, p.2). Considered within this cultural and literary context, Jung posits that Job's story functions to "remind" God of his essential feminine counter-part, Sophia.

"Sophia," the term used to refer to Divine Wisdom in the Septuagint,[28] appears throughout the Wisdom Books and is positioned as a coeternal, hypostatized, feminine pneuma (Jung, 1969a, para.609).[29] In the Book of Proverbs, penned around the same time as the Book of Job, it is written that, "The Lord by wisdom (*sophia*) hath founded the earth" (3:19), a role Sophia herself most famously expounds upon in Proverbs 8:22-31:

> The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,
> before his works of old.
> I was set up from everlasting,
> from the beginning, or ever the earth was.
> When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
> when there were no fountains abounding with water.
> Before the mountains were settled,
> before the hills was I brought forth:

[28] The Septuagint is the oldest surviving Greek translation of the Old Testament and is considered one of the most authoritative translations of the Old Testament within orthodox Christianity (Bromiley, 1985, p.1059).

[29] Though this archetypal figure goes by several names, such as *Sapientia Dei* in Latin and *Chochma* in Hebrew, I retain the use of the term Sophia because it is the oldest appellation and carries the most historical continuity. Sophia emerged between 600-300 BCE and occupied such a central role in Greek thought that ancient philosophers referred to themselves as "Lovers of Sophia." The term is employed henceforth in the Greek scriptures and in Gnostic literature (Edinger, 1992, p.53).

while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,
nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
When he prepared the heavens, I was there:
when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:
When he established the clouds above:
when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:
when he gave to the sea his decree,
that the waters should not pass his commandment:
when he appointed the foundations of the earth:
then I was by him, as a master workman,
and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him,
rejoicing in his habitable earth;
and my delights were with the sons of men.

Again, in Ecclesiasticus 24:3-6 she asserts:

I came out of the mouth of the most high, and covered the earth as a cloud.
I dwelt in high places, and my throne is in a cloudy pillar.
I alone compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the bottom of the
deep.
I had power over the waves of the sea, and over all the earth, and over every
people and nation.

Once more, there is an undeniable parallelism – this time between God's

address to Job out of the whirlwind and Sophia's account of her hand in creation.

God summons Job to chronicle his participation in the birth of the world, which of

course he cannot, *but Sophia can.* In other words, when God highlights Job's absence

in the formation of the earth or the seas or the heavens at the beginning of time, the

passage indirectly discloses Sophia's presence and participation.[30]

We may infer from this that God's encounter with Job serves as an anamnesis

to remind God of Sophia.[31] A principle from Platonic philosophy taken up by Jung,

anamnesis refers to a moment when an external event evokes some kind of

unconscious knowledge that erupts into consciousness (Jung, 1969a, para.640). In

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[30] Once more, the fact that Jung fails to explicitly note this is baffling.
[31] Specifically, God's display of virility as a voice from within a whirlwind may serve to remind God
that "Wisdom is better than might" (Ecclesiastes 9:16).

Jung's reading, God realizes the injustice he has done to Job and recognizes that he

needs his consort Wisdom/Sophia in order to act with greater self-awareness (Ibid).

As Spiegelman puts it, Jung sees Sophia as offering God "a more precise rendering of

himself to himself" (2006, p.4).[32]

Reception

Answer to Job was met with a curious reception. As his most controversial

text, Jung expected the book to create its own kind of whirlwind. Though it did

ruffle some feathers – friendships were severed[33] and Jung's reputation suffered

after its publication[34] – it largely went ignored for many years. In a letter dated to

1958, Jung wrote to a colleague that contemporary theologians demonstrated

almost total apathy and indifference to the text, a reaction he had not at all

anticipated (Adler, 1975, p.434).[35] Consequently, *Answer to Job* has been relatively

neglected among Jung's corpus (Bishop, 2002, p.2) and to my knowledge no

"empirical" studies have been carried out in its wake to address the theories Jung

put forth therein. A handful of scholars have, however, entered into dialogue with

the text.

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[32] Ultimately, Jung argues, it is God's realization of Sophia that leads to the incarnation of Christ, the description of which in John 1:1-3 echoes the description of Sophia's activity in Proverbs 8 (1969a, para.640). Jung goes on to identify Christ's anguished cry on the cross of "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" as the answer to Job, the moment when humanity and God unite in suffering (Newton, 1993, p.390).

[33] The most significant of which was Jung's friendship with the Dominican theologian Victor White. Jung regarded White as the first theologian he knew who truly understood his psychology, but White's scathing review of *Answer to Job* mortally wounded the two thinkers' friendship. For a closer look at the unraveling of what may have been Jung's most intimate relationship with another man, see Rutte, 2009.

[34] For an overview of the reception of *Answer to Job*, see Bishop, 2002, p.44-50.

[35] Elsewhere Jung confesses that he put off writing *Answer to Job* for many years because he believed it would cause quite an uproar (1989, p.216), and advised a pastor wishing to dedicate a book to him to reconsider on the basis that *Answer to Job* was forthcoming and likely to have a devastating effect on his reputation (Adler, 1975, p.39).

Kathleen Newton, for instance, reads Jung against himself in several interesting ways. Against the backdrop of Jung's contention that we all possess a shadow side – the darker, even evil, aspects of our selves that we seek to remain unconscious of[36] – Newton beholds Job not as the blameless victim that Jung takes him to be, but as guilty of the same sort of psychic disavowal of which Jung accuses God (1993). In Newton's view, Job's sacrifice of burnt offerings on behalf of his children's possible sins (Job 1:5) reveals an attempt on Job's part to "sustain his sense of innocence by projecting his shadow onto his children" (Ibid, p.379). Jung's principle of enantiodromia – the notion that the superabundance of any psychic force inevitably produces its opposite in the unconscious over time (Jung, 1971, para. 709) – would also imply that Job's extreme virtue would necessarily yield a quality of malevolence. Thus, Newton arrives at a plausible Jungian interpretation in which it is not God's malice but Job's own denial of his shadow side that leads to a compensatory reaction in the unconscious, manifesting in the annihilation of Job's children and possessions, the attack on his physical body, and the betrayal of his wife and friends (1993, p.379).

In addition, whereas Jung sees God's appearance to Job in a whirlwind as "a bombastic maneuver on God's part to defend himself against a growing awareness of Job's moral superiority" (Newton, 1993, p.378), Newton interprets this move as a demonstration of vital life energy in keeping with Jung's definition of libido (Ibid,

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[36] Jung acknowledges that there are rare cases in which the shadow is comprised of repressed positive elements of the personality (1959, para.13).

p.380).[37] Seen in this light, Newton interprets Job's repentance in dust and ashes

not as a strategic move to placate God's anger (as Jung does), but as a recognition

that "God is much more than a moral good object with whom he [Job] can identify"

(Ibid, p.381). In sum, Newton views Job's encounter with God as a coming to

consciousness for *Job*, wherein Job sheds his former defensive self-image and

progresses in the process of individuation[38] (Ibid). Interestingly, she speculates that

writing *Answer to Job* produced a similar kind of transformation in Jung (Ibid, p.391)

In truth, it is quite possible to see how Jung may have identified with Job.

The well-respected psychoanalyst Stephen Mitchell described Job as "Everyman,

grieving for all of human misery. He suffers not only his own personal pain, but the

pain of all the poor and despised. He is himself afflicted by what God has done to the

least of these little ones" (1992, xvi). As an analyst who sat across from a myriad of

despairing patients in his long career, Jung also suffered the pain of many, and he

repeatedly states in *Answer to Job* that he writes on their behalf (1969a, paras.559

and 561).

While the precise impact that *Answer to Job* had on its author remains

somewhat of a mystery, a number of scholars have commented on its seemingly

momentous impact on Jung. Tony Woolfson infers that Jung underwent "some kind

of 'primordial experience' and encountered his own god or daimon when he wrote

his *Answer to Job*" (2009, p.127), and in point of fact, Jung insinuated that his

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[37] In his 1928 essay "On Psychic Energy," Jung writes: "Since, for our concretistic thinking, the applied concept of energy immediately hypostatizes itself as the psychic forces (drives, affects, and other dynamic processes), its concrete character is in my view aptly expressed by the term 'libido'" (In *CW* 8, 1960).

[38] Jung regards "individuation" as the process by which one becomes a whole psychological individual (1969, Vol.9i, para.490).

experience composing this text was somewhat akin to Jacob wrestling the angel (Adler, 1975, p.156). Elsewhere he described it as though a spirit had seized him by the scruff of the neck (Ibid, p.20), and remarked, "I feel its content as an unfolding of the divine consciousness in which I participate, like it or not. It was necessary for my inner balance that I made myself conscious of this development" (Ibid, p.112). Jung's inclusion of the phrase "like it or not" points to his own ambivalence about undertaking this project and to his belief in the psyche's natural, deep-seated ambivalence.[39] In a letter to the analytical psychologist Erich Neumann, Jung confessed that he needed an illness to break down his resistance to writing *Answer to Job* (Adler, 1975, p.34). Considering that Jung wrote this book in one great burst of energy while bedridden with liver disease and reportedly returned to good health upon its completion, it is indeed tempting to view the work as a kind of catharsis for Jung, who reflected toward the end of his life that he would like to rewrite all of his texts except this one (von Franz, 1975, p.161).

Jung wrote *Answer to Job* when he was 75 years old, after a lifetime of wrestling with orthodox Protestant beliefs and extensive study of religious symbolism (Newton, 1993, p.375). When asked if he now believed in God in a BBC interview with John Freeman in 1959, Jung responded, "Now? [Pause] Difficult to answer. I *know*. I don't need to believe. I know."[40] While it is impossible to know what Jung was contemplating in that moment just two years before his death, given his own remarks about his experience birthing *Answer to Job*, one cannot but

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[39] Elsewhere he wrote: "Hence all unconscious nature longs for the light of consciousness while frantically struggling against it at the same time" (Jung, 1999, para.745).
[40] McGuire & Hull, Eds., 1977, p.428.

wonder if his answer was informed by his own Job-like encounter with the numinous.

Context

The fervor with which Jung expressed himself in *Answer to Job* certainly stands out as something of an anomaly in scholarly discourse. Though Jung would repeatedly be criticized for this "non-objective" tone, he continued to reiterate long after the book's publication that this was the only voice suitable to his project. Due to the numinous quality of Job's tale, Jung primes the reader that he will write about this landmark moment in the divine drama with a correspondingly impassioned tone (1969a, paras.561-563). In the introduction to *Answer to Job*, he asserts:

> The Book of Job serves as a paradigm for a certain experience of God which has a special significance for us today. These experiences come upon man from inside as well as from outside, and it is useless to interpret them rationalistically and thus weaken them by apotropaic means. It is far better to admit the affect and submit to its violence than to try to escape it by all sorts of intellectual tricks or by emotional value judgments. Although, by giving way to the affect, one imitates all the bad qualities of the outrageous act that provoked it and thus makes oneself guilty of the same fault, that is precisely the point of the whole proceeding: the violence is meant to penetrate to a man's vitals, and he to succumb to its action. He must be affected by it, otherwise its full effect will not reach him. But he should know, or learn to know, what has affected him, for in this way he transforms the blindness of the violence on the one hand and of the affect on the other into knowledge. For this reason I shall express my affect fearlessly and ruthlessly in what follows, and I shall answer injustice with injustice (Ibid, paras.562-563).

Jung acknowledges here that he knows it is unusual to draft this sort of text in such an ardent manner, but for the sake of the Self's development (i.e. individuation), he must not resort to the defense mechanism of intellectualization; one must feel one's pain if one has any hopes of emerging from it transformed.

Jung wrote *Answer to Job* against the backdrop of a war-torn landscape –

hence the book's "special significance for contemporary readers" and Jung's

repeated claims that he writes on behalf of his patients, many of whom (like Job),

felt betrayed by a God who would allow the horrors of World War II to ravage

Europe. In a 1954 letter to Reverend Evans, Jung described his own experience of

God as "violent" and "cruel" and states that he was reflecting on the troubles of

Christianity as fire rained down upon Germany and as Hiroshima was decimated

(Adler, 1975, p.156-157).

The blood-spattered global stage surely contributed to Jung's sense that he

had a responsibility to write *Answer to Job*, a conviction that he spoke of on several

occasions (Adler, 1975, p.39-40 and p.156). In this light, we might interpret the text

as a kind of call to collective consciousness:

> This involves man in a new responsibility. He can no longer wriggle out of it
> on the plea of his littleness and nothingness, for the dark God has slipped the
> atom bomb and chemical weapons into his hands and given him the power to
> empty out the apocalyptic vials of wrath on his fellow creatures. Since he has
> been granted an almost godlike power, he can no longer remain blind and
> unconscious (Jung, 1969a, p.186).

Strangely, this is the only overt reference to WWII in *Answer to Job*, though Jung

does make the connection between his writing and the atrocities of the time explicit

elsewhere. In a letter from 1951 he exhorts, "It has not yet been forgotten, I hope,

what happened in Germany and what is happening day after day in Russia. Job's

suffering never ceases and multiplies a million-fold. I cannot avert my eyes from

that" (Adler, 1975, p.28). In a way, Jung was writing for Job and even *to* Job (hence

the work's title)[41] – the Job of antiquity as well as "Job as the archetype of *all* of suffering humanity that has been obliged to suffer unjustly because of the nature of reality" (Edinger, 1992, p.19).

In the next chapter, we turn to Engaged Buddhism for insight into the nature of suffering and the perception of powerlessness.

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[41] Gaillard, 2012, p.325.

CHAPTER 5
ENGAGED BUDDHISM

On the other side of the world, Thich Nhat Hanh was also writing to

ameliorate the profound suffering of his people. In his poems and brief

commentaries in *Call Me By My True Names* (1993), Nhat Hanh's intimate

knowledge of the destruction and desolation wrought by the Vietnam War is on full

display (Nguyên, 1994, p.895). In the first poem, he writes: "All around, the horizon

burns with the color of death. As for me, yes, I am still alive, but my body and soul

writhe as if they too had been set on fire. My parched eyes can shed no more tears"

(Nhat Hanh, 1993, p.6).

In the face of such ruin, Nhat Hanh asserts that only love can save suffering

humanity (Ibid, p.23). Though how does one come to love the oppressor? How does

one extend a hand to the one holding out a grenade? I believe Nhat Hanh's title

poem, "Please Call Me by My True Names," offers a guide: through the cultivation of

mindfulness, the recognition of our interdependence, and the expression of

compassion. This chapter is devoted to exploring those themes.

Engaged Buddhism

Nhat Hanh is believed to have coined the term "Engaged Buddhism" in 1963

(Queen, 1996, p.34) after the self-immolation[42] of Venerable Thich Quang-Duc in

Saigon (Nhat Hanh, 1967, p.1; Queen, 1996, p.1). In the following year, he founded

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[42] The reasoning behind self-immolation comes out of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition in Vietnam, where candidates for ordination would traditionally burn small patches of skin as an expression of the gravity and commitment with which they vowed to observe the 250 precepts of the order (Nhat Hanh, 1967, p.106). In the letters they left behind, monks who self-immolated during the Vietnam War expressed hope that their deaths would move the hearts of their oppressors, call the world's attention to the suffering endured by the Vietnamese people, and elicit urgent aid from the global community (Ibid).

the Order of Interbeing with a group of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen to mobilize the Vietnamese people toward social action[43] aimed at actively intervening in the war (Eppsteiner, 1988, p.152). The Order took on projects such as ushering civilians out of war zones, rebuilding bombed villages, organizing anti-war demonstrations, establishing clinics, sheltering draft resisters, forming farmers' cooperatives, and lobbying for an end to the war (Kraft, 1988, p.xi; Queen, 2000, p.4; Eppsteiner, 1988, p.152).

While membership in the Order of Interbeing was relatively modest, its influence was deeply felt within Vietnam and it captivated the hearts of social activists far and wide (Eppsteiner, 1988, p.152; Queen, 1996, p.2). Due to the fact that many members and supporters of the Order died during the war and others emigrated to the West – including Nhat Hanh, who was exiled from Vietnam in 1966 – it is unclear what presently remains of the Order in Vietnam (Eppsteiner, 1988, p.153). Seeds of the movement, however, have sprouted abroad. Contemporary Engaged Buddhists now champion a myriad of causes – such as the educational system, environmentalism, health care, gender relations, prison reform, and racial equality – on an international scale (Queen, 2000, p.5). Their actions are based on the premise that suffering is too immense for any one country or religion to solve on its own, and that we can only save ourselves by trying to save all of humanity (Sivaraksa, 1988, p.17).

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[43] Engaged Buddhist activist and poet Ken Jones defines social action as the manifold endeavors intended to benefit humankind, including individual acts of charity, teaching, organized service, community development, and political activity (1988, p.65), though some Engaged Buddhists maintain that only collective, institutional enterprises constitute "social action" (Queen, 2000, p.8).

Please Call Me by My True Names

It is within this context that Thich Nhat Hanh wrote "Please Call Me by My True Names" in 1978. Given its role in grounding this chapter, I am reprinting the entirety of the text here:

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow—
even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving
to be a bud on a Spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
to fear and to hope.
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death
of all that is alive.

I am a mayfly metamorphosing
on the surface of the river.
And I am the bird
that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.
And I am the grass-snake
that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo,
with plenty of power in my hands.
And I am the man who has to pay
his "debt of blood" to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm
it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears,
so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up
and the door of my heart
could be left open,
the door of compassion.

Mindfulness

The poem begins with an admonition toward mindfulness – "Look deeply."

Mindfulness is often considered the foundation of Buddhism because the root *buddh*

means "awake" (Nhat Hanh, 1988a, p.35). While various strains of Buddhism teach

a variety of spiritual practices, ultimately all hinge on the practitioner deepening

their awareness of the nature of the self, the world, and the relationship between

the two (Jones, 1988, p.69). As Nhat Hanh explains, it is imperative to cultivate daily

awareness so we do not let society colonize our minds: "Society makes it difficult to

be awake. We know that 40,000 children in the Third World die every day of

hunger, but we keep forgetting. The kind of society we live in makes us forgetful.

That is why we need exercises for mindfulness" (Nhat Hanh, 1988a, p.35-36).

The cue to look deeply is followed by Nhat Hanh's observation that "every

second I am arriving." Here Nhat Hanh is referring to the monkey mind, a modern

term derived from an ancient sutra in which the Buddha likened the mind to a

monkey swinging through the forest from branch to branch. In this state, the mind

is in perpetual motion, each branch representing the mind's leap to another thought

or mood. "In order not to lose sight of the monkey by some sudden movement,"

Nhat Hanh writes, "we must watch the monkey constantly" (1987a, p.41).

The practice of watching the mind and strengthening one's powers of

concentration is the bedrock of Buddhism. Nhat Hanh instructs the novice to

neither dwell on a thought nor seek to expel it, simply to observe it (Ibid, p.39); over

time, the mind will become so aware of itself that the distinction between the mind

that watches and the mind that swings from branch to branch will dissolve (Ibid,

p.41). It is then, according to Nhat Hanh, that true mind – a pure oneness that is not

deceived by illusory divisions among things – will emerge (Ibid, p.42).

Interdependence

In Buddhist ideology, the cultivation of mindfulness leads to the recognition

of our interdependence with all forms of life, for, upon looking closely, we see that

what initially appeared to be a discrete entity is actually inseparable from the

elements around it. For example, if we look at a table we can see the forest from

whence the wood came, the cloud that watered the tree, the sun that nurtured the

tree's growth, the logger who cut the tree down, the food that sustained the logger's

energy, and so on and so forth (Nhat Hanh, 1988a, p.37-38). If we attempt to extract

all the "non-table" elements, the table itself ceases to exist (Nhat Hanh, 1988, p.41).

This kind of interdependence characterizes all relationships. For instance, the Chernobyl accident in northern Ukraine contaminated the milk of surrounding countries and a Philippine revolution sparked activism toward democratic reform in Korea (Kraft, 1988, p.xiv). The Jewel Net of Indra, an image from one of the eminent Mahayana sutras that likens reality to "a multi-dimensional net with each knot a jewel reflecting every other jewel," provides a stunning illustration of this concept (Macy, 1988, p.178). Each jewel represents a single cell, thought, action, life form, etc., and in gazing into one jewel, you inevitably see all the others reflected on its surface. As philosophy and religion scholar Alice Keefe so articulately expounds, the Jewel Net of Indra elucidates that "We live in a web of mutual causality in which everything ultimately touches and conditions everything else, with nothing at all existing autonomously and nothing at all standing aloof from change" (1997, p.63).

Nhat Hanh follows the Dalai Lama in his belief that our refusal to recognize this interbeing with our avowed enemies is the root of violence, and that in casting out the "evil other" we simultaneously cast out a vital aspect of ourselves (Puri, 2008, p.27). It is this idea that undergirds his radical identification with both prey and predator in *Please Call Me by My True Names* – as a mayfly and the bird that eats the mayfly, as a frog and the grass-snake that devours the frog, as a twelve-year-old refugee and the sea pirate who rapes her, etc. According to Nhat Hanh, our own sense of humanity is diminished when we fail to see the humanity in those we deem our adversaries, and conversely, we fail to see their humanity because we "are not wholly ourselves" (1988, p.45). True wholeness entails awakening to and integrating one's own darkness (Aung San Suu Kyi & Clements, 2008, p.213).

When Nhat Hanh identifies with both the harmed and the harmer in *Please Call Me by My True Names*, it is not a theoretical position that he takes from some lofty remove but an experiential knowledge that emerged from the grave and somber reality he lived during the war.[44] In fact, the abundance of water imagery may reflect the fact that he wrote this poem while trying to help the boat people – those forced to flee Vietnam in search of freedom abroad (Nhat Hanh, 1993, p.73). In his commentary, he expresses his anger at the news that an actual twelve-year-old girl killed herself after being raped by a Thai sea pirate while crossing the Gulf of Siam and acknowledges the possibility that, had he been born into the conditions that the sea pirate inherited, he may have been guilty of the same crime (1988a, p.31). He potently pronounces that to "wake up" is to realize that the enemy resides not in "the other," but within each of us (Nhat Hanh, 1988a, p.33).[45]

Compassion

Nhat Hanh closes the poem by saying that it is this awareness of interdependence, this awakening of the whole self to its many names that opens the door of compassion within. When we understand that our fates are tied to one another and that injuring the other is to ignore the truth of our shared fragility and desire for happiness, we understand that harm to another constitutes harm to ourselves (Puri, 2006, p.9, 18, 25). If we accept that every part of the universe

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[44] For instance, the stanza about the malnourished child in Uganda and the arms dealer selling weapons to Uganda echoes Nhat Hanh's description of Vietnamese children starving because the bananas grown in their country are exported to the Soviet Union in exchange for guns (1988, p.35).
[45] In a letter to Rev. Dr. MLK, Jr. in 1965, Nhat Hanh wrote, "Their enemies are not man. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, cupidity, hatred, and discrimination which lie within the heart of man" (1967, p.107).

affects every other part, we must also accept that we each contribute in some measure to the suffering of others (Kraft, 1988, p.xiii-xiv). Thus, all enlightenment is incomplete while others remain trapped in delusion (Kraft, 1988, p.xii). The remedy, according to the Dalai Lama, is to develop a compassionate stance toward others that is marked by a genuine sense of closeness to them and a concerned responsibility for their welfare (1995, p.252).

Burmese leader, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and prominent Engaged Buddhist Aung San Suu Kyi has been considered an exemplar of this kind of compassion. Sentenced to 15 years of house arrest after her party won the 1990 national elections and the military junta in power refused to honor the results, Aung San Suu Kyi maintained throughout her imprisonment that she did not feel hostile toward her oppressors because you cannot hate or fear those you love (Aung San Suu Kyi & Clements, 2008, p.165). Clements repeatedly returns to this remarkable statement throughout his interviews with Suu Kyi, yet in her responses, she appears almost bored by his awe of her capacity to love so unconditionally. She does not seem to regard her respect for her captors as particularly exceptional, but rather as a natural outworking of the *metta* that resides at the core of her movement (Ibid, p.179). Most accurately translated as "good will," *metta* is described as follows by the *Karaniya Metta Sutta* in the Pali Canon:

> As a mother would risk her life
> to protect her child, her only child,
> even so should one cultivate a limitless heart
> with regard to all beings.
> With good will for the entire cosmos,
> cultivate a limitless heart

This limitless heart, or what Suu Kyi calls a broadness of vision, endows one with

the ability to see beyond another's violence to their humanity. Suu Kyi espouses

that violence stems from fear, and the practice of *metta* – which inclines the

practitioner to treat others with compassion and kindness – is the antidote to fear

(Aung San Suu Kyi & Clements, 2008, p.181-183).[46]

Historical Roots of Engaged Buddhism

  While service to others has long been a tenet of Buddhism, Queen argues that

the type of Buddhism exemplified in the life and work of figures like Thich Nhat

Hanh and Aung San Suu Kyi constitutes a notable departure from earlier

manifestations of Buddhist social reform in that previous expressions were

controlled by the state (1996, p.18-19). By this measure, King Asoka – an oft

invoked figure in the lineage of Engaged Buddhism – would fall under a different

category because his social projects were state-sponsored. A 3rd century BCE Indian

emperor who historians regard as having instituted the first public social service

program in known history, Asoka launched a number of important welfare

programs (Macy, 1988, p.173). Out of his devotion to the Dharma, he built hospitals

for the poor, imported doctors and herbs from abroad, provided for convicts and

[46] Since assuming the role of First State Counselor of Myanmar in 2016, Aung San Suu Kyi has become a hotly contested figure on the international stage. Many of her once-devoted followers now openly criticize her for remaining strangely silent about the oppression of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority who inhabit the area near the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, and for making no ostensible efforts to revoke the laws that limit the rights of Burmese Muslims. Others, though crestfallen, persist in their faith in Suu Kyi and attribute her inconsonant passivity to the political constraints within which she is forced to operate (for instance, the Army still controls a large portion of the government in Myanmar and the country's constitution – which was drafted by the military and requires the support of the military to amend – contains a clause that renders Suu Kyi ineligible for the presidency). After much deliberation, I opted to keep Aung San Suu Kyi in this section because of the role she has played in advancing Engaged Buddhism and because her recent comportment seems inconclusive. For an overview of the issue, see H. Beech, "Letter from Myanmar: Fallen Idol," 2017.

their families, issued special ministers to investigate judicial corruption, and,

contrary to the caste system that governed the day, endeavored to treat all

individuals as equals (Thurman, 1988, p.116).

By Queen's rubric, the Sarvodaya movement that began in 1958 would be a

much closer analogue to Engaged Buddhism, as it was founded by a Sri Lankan

Buddhist high school teacher who started voluntary work camps with his students

in some of the most abject villages in his country (Macy, 1988, p.174). The name of

the movement translates to "everybody waking up by working together" and has

since become the largest NGO in Sri Lanka (Ibid, p.174-175). Unlike Asian

communist regimes that might employ a similar mantra under the mantle of

Buddhism, however, the aim of the Sarvodaya movement is to exert influence over

state power, not assume that power for themselves. For Queen, this is a critical

distinction, as the pursuit of excessive wealth and power is antithetical to Buddhism

(1996, p.19).

While scholars acknowledge that Buddhist history is sprinkled with

chronicles of practitioners engaging in social activism, many regard such individuals

as the exception rather than the norm and maintain that Buddhism's aim has

historically been personal transformation, not social reform (Queen, 1996, p.17-18).

Others contend that Buddhist practitioners' attention to social good is not new, what

is new are the methods being used to carry this out (i.e. they are more international

in scope, more democratic and gender inclusive, more technologically driven, and

more concerned with institutional reform).[47] Many outspoken Engaged Buddhists

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[47] Chappell, 1999, p.76

agree that "traditional" focus on individual liberation must be expanded to include liberation from structural oppression and exploitation (Puri, 2006, p.4-5). In this vein, Christopher Queen and Sallie King believe Engaged Buddhism constitutes "the most important development in contemporary Asian Buddhism" (1996, p.x).

Reception

The movement of Engaged Buddhism can be understood as a sort of corrective for significant ways in which Buddhism has been misinterpreted, by both its followers and its critics, over the years. It is arguably a truer expression of Buddhist ideals than strict monastic life, which has widely been regarded as the most devout expression of Buddhism since its inception, as Engaged Buddhism is more congruent with the "Middle Way" (Puri, 2006, p.1). After his enlightenment under the bodhi tree, the Buddha taught his acolytes to reject both asceticism and hedonism. Whereas monastic life tends toward the former, secular life tends toward the latter. Engaged Buddhism – which seeks to unite the active and the contemplative – balances the scales.

In the Four Noble Truths,[48] the Buddha summarized the human condition as such: the nature of existence is suffering, the root of suffering is narcissistic craving, it is possible to transcend this ignorant grasping and clinging, and the way out of suffering is through meditation, wisdom, and right action (Epstein, 1995, p.43-102). Because meditation plays such a crucial role in Buddhist practice, Buddhism has often been characterized as a passive, escapist, otherworldly school of thought with little to no interest in social action (Kraft, 1988, p.xii). Engaged Buddhists, however,

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[48] The first teaching the Buddha gave after he achieved enlightenment.

decry those who witness injustice and, under the mantle of "non-attachment," do nothing to intervene (Feldman, 1988, p.21).

In an effort to reconcile the question of responsibility with the concept of non-attachment, renowned American Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield draws on the idea of "near-enemies" to elucidate the nature of compassion in action. A near-enemy is a state of mind that closely resembles yet entirely distorts a quality's meaning. For instance, Kornfield calls indifference the near-enemy of equanimity (1988, p.24). His differentiation is worth quoting in full:

> It feels very equanimous to say, 'I don't give a damn, I don't care, I'm not really attached to it,' and in a way it is a very peaceful feeling, a great relief. Why is that? Because it is a withdrawal. It is a removal from world and from life. Can you see the difference? Equanimity, like love and compassion, is not a removal. It is being in the middle of the world and opening to it with balance, seeing the unity in things… The 'near-enemies' – attachment, pity, and indifference – all are ways of backing away or removing ourselves from the things which cause fear. Meditation does not lead to a departure from the world. It leads to a deeper vision of it, one which is not self-centered, which moves from a dualistic way of viewing ('I and other') to a more spontaneous, whole, unified way (1988, p.24-25).

Indifference is not a Buddhist ideal, it is a denial of our fundamental interdependence, an ignoble withdrawal from the world that is born out of fear – fear of the other, of emotional overwhelm, of powerlessness, etc. The Dharma teaches detachment from the ego,[49] not from the world (Macy, 1988, p.171).

This precept has long been misunderstood. Based on his improper interpretation of karma, well-known German sociologist Max Weber famously faulted Buddhism for promoting a fatalistic ethic (1958). Contrary to the idea that one's circumstances are fully determined by their moral conduct in a previous life

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[49] Here, "ego" refers to narcissistic craving, self-aggrandizement, and the fixation on "me" and "mine" (Keefe, 1997, p.70), not to the Freudian conception of ego as the organizing function of the psyche.

and thus should not be questioned, the Dalai Lama has sought to reform corrupt institutions that diminish a people's quality of life, has stressed the importance of reconnecting humanity with its inherent dignity, and has taught that the truth of interdependence should encourage each person to live for the betterment of all (Puri, 2006, p.9). Further, Ken Jones explains that there are different sources of suffering in Buddhist ideology, and one should never neglect the suffering of a fellow creature based on the assumption of karmic debt (1988, p.67-68). In fact, *bodhisattvas* – esteemed paragons of compassion in Buddhism – are individuals who could otherwise attain nirvana but have vowed to remain in the cycle of death and rebirth until all sentient beings are liberated from suffering. This model of compassionate action clearly does not cohere with Weber's critique.

Interestingly, certain critics consider Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings to be "too engaged" while others deem them "not engaged enough" (Queen, 2008, p.8). Even among Engaged Buddhists, there is not a consensus on what the term can justifiably include or exclude. For instance, some hold that mindfulness meditation does directly alleviate the symptoms of social suffering, the fabric of which can be traced back to hatred, greed, and delusion (Ibid, p.9), and some assert that only practicing mindfulness meditation and focusing on personal responsibility is not enough (Ibid, p.8). Others maintain that you do not have to be Buddhist at all to practice Engaged Buddhism because these ideas and practices belong to all of us (Macy, 1988a, p.204). Still others find the term redundant, such as the Venerable Khemadhammo, who could aptly be called an Engaged Buddhist based on his way of life but who states:

When people ask me, as they quite often do, What is an engaged Buddhist? I am embarrassed. The phrase seems to imply that there are, can be, disengaged Buddhists. That is not something I feel it is polite, or politic, to admit. This becomes clearer if we use the Dalai Lama's alternative expression, "universal responsibility." Would it sound okay to say, "We are the responsible Buddhists, they are the irresponsible ones?" (as quoted in Queen, 2000, p.8).

As is true with most phenomena, notions of what comprises "Engaged Buddhism" exist on a spectrum. Engaged Buddhists may agree that the goal is mutual liberation of self and others (Chappell, 1999, p.84), but there exists a plurality of ideas on how to best achieve that. From an interdependent perspective, however, this dissent need not pose a problem – if everything is interrelated, each instantiation of social action "pulls a prop out from under the house of suffering" (Macy, 1988, p.179).

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud asserts that humans possess an

unmistakable drive to exploit, violate, humiliate, torture, and kill one another,

leading him to pronounce, "Man is a wolf to man" (2016, p.40). After my first-year

internship, where I daily bore witness to the vile brutality and unthinkable trauma

my patients had suffered, it is difficult to disagree with Freud's assessment. How,

then, does one do the work of a psychotherapist – work that entails holding

immense pain and sorrow – without falling into utter despair and crumbling under

the weight of vicarious traumatization? In this final chapter, I seek to put Jungian

thought and Engaged Buddhism in conversation with one another to explore what

these two theories have to offer clinical therapists in this position.

Recap

Vicarious Traumatization (VT) refers to the pervasive, cumulative, and

lasting changes engendered in a therapist's worldview, psychological needs, and

sense of identity as derived from repeated clinical engagement with traumatic

material. Symptoms manifest in all realms of a practitioner's life – cognitive,

emotional, behavioral, spiritual, interpersonal, somatic, and professional. With

regard to the latter, by-products include a loss of empathy and diminished capacity

to efficaciously treat patients. While the implementation of standard self-care

techniques can be helpful to differing degrees in the face of VT, studies indicate that

as stand-alone measures, they constitute an insufficient response to the deep-seated

effects of VT. As Sandra Bloom, psychiatrist and former president of the

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, shrewdly articulates:

> And therein lies the dilemma for many of us. We can take time off, be good to
> ourselves, get our own therapy when we need it, obtain routine consultation
> to help work through countertransference issues, and follow all the other
> excellent guidelines for self-care. But what are we going to do about the
> moral burden of knowing what we now know? (1995, p.267)

Trauma experts recognize that it is a fundamental human need to find

meaning in our experiences (McCann & Pearlman, 1990, p.141). Research shows

that it is not just the process that matters in this respect, but the product; trauma

survivors who attempt to make meaning out of their experiences but fail to derive

some sense of understanding, acceptance, or value report higher levels of distress

and poorer signs of adjustment (Park, 2010, p.261). It is only when individuals are

able to integrate the experience in such a way that it coheres with or broadens their

personal narrative, Weltanschauung, or sense of purpose that restoration appears to

truly occur (Ibid).

Jung maintained that the quest for meaning is what fuels the innate drive

toward individuation (Moacanin, 2003, p.110-111). In the following section, I

return to the themes of antinomy, coming to consciousness, and the role of Sophia in

Jung's *Answer to Job* to consider how the implications of these concepts support the

task of individuation – regarded by Jungians as the *telos* of psychoanalysis, the aim

of life, and the path toward finding the divine within (Spiegelman, 2006, p.12).

Accepting Jung's premise that the unconscious speaks in the language of symbols

and, consequently, deep transformation occurs on the symbolic register (Moacanin,

2003, p.34 and p.89), we return to the allegory of Job as "a model for how one begins

to work toward integration and wholeness by living through the reality of trauma"
(Houck-Loomis, 2015, p.195).

Analysis

The Book of Job forces the reader to confront God's antinomy, or totality of inner opposites, and consequently, incites a change in the contemporary reader's God-image. As Hebrew Bible scholar and Jungian analyst Tiffany Houck-Loomis points out, the narrative that unfolds in the Book of Job constitutes a dramatic departure from the Deuteronomistic theology – i.e. the promise of reward for obedience to God's commands and punishment for disobedience – in which the Old Testament was rooted (2015, p.195). Whereupon God praises Job for being an upright and blameless man, the expectation of justice according to the covenant that God himself had established would entail God's continued favor on Job. And yet, God still allows Satan to rain destruction down upon his faithful servant. Why?

In God's exchange with Satan in chapter 2, verse 3, God admits that he agrees to let Satan harm Job *hinnam*, which translates to "without cause" or "for no reason" (Cooper, 1990, p.73). This amoral position is re-inscribed when Job cries out in torment and there is no mention in the text that Job's despair stirs any emotion whatsoever in God. The first characteristic enumerated by the checklists and inventories most commonly used to assess psychopathy is a callous, amoral unconcern for the feelings of others (Hirstein, 2013). God's blatant lack of empathy for Job's pain, accompanied by an utter lack of remorse for his own hand in Job's suffering and the sense of grandiosity he later displays in his pompous appearance to Job out of the whirlwind, are all diagnostic markers of psychopathy (Ibid).

While I am generally disinterested in the project of determining what label best captures God's behavior in the Book of Job and unattached to the notion of psychopathy in particular, I present this formulation in order to highlight what Job would have taken to be an egregious ethical breach in his covenant with God and the enormous upset that this would have produced in Job's worldview. The text demands that Job – and by extension, the reader – revise their image of the divine to make space for God's shadow side.

Jung regarded the shadow as both a personal and collective archetype[50] (1959, Vol.9ii, para.13). He defines the shadow most clearly in *Aion*, wherein he writes that the personal shadow consists of the dark aspects of the personality that the individual's ego struggles to repress (Ibid, para.14). Constituted by our inferior functions, the shadow is marked by a primitive or uncontrollable affect that renders the individual "incapable of moral judgment" (Ibid, para.15). Though Jung does not explicitly name God's shadow in *Answer to Job*, he does state elsewhere that the Creator is comprised of both light and shadow and faults the Christian Church for displacing the darker aspects of the divine onto Satan (1991, p.171-172). I believe the presence of God's shadow – as seen in his amoral decision to let Satan harm Job, his callous reaction to Job's suffering, and his bombastic response to Job's questioning – is precisely what Jung unveiled in *Answer to Job*.

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[50] Whereas Freud believed that the unconscious is of an exclusively personal nature, Jung held a topographical view of the unconscious: "A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the *personal unconscious*. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience, is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the *collective unconscious.* I have chosen the term 'collective' because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals" (1969, Vol.9i, para.3).

Jung believed that a good working relationship between one's conscious and unconscious was essential to psychic health and the project of individuation (Hopcke, 1999, p.63). He described the drive toward individuation as the "almost irresistible compulsion and urge to *become what one is*" and repeatedly stressed that the aim of individuation is wholeness, not perfection (1969, Vol.9i, para.634). Thus, individuation entails a union of opposites (Ibid).

According to Jung, Job's recognition of God's antinomy prompted God's own coming to consciousness about his dual nature, the manifestation of which culminated in the Incarnation (1969a, Vol.11, para.617). There, God's divinity and humanity are forever joined in the person of Christ, the glory of God the Father is offset by the weakness displayed in God the Son,[51] and the masculine *Imago Dei* that dominated the Old Testament is brought into balance with the Virgin Mary, who assumes her role as Queen of Heaven, Co-Redemptrix, and Mediatrix. What allows for this harmonization of opposites, Jung posits, is the remembrance of Sophia, the Wisdom of God made flesh in Christ (Ibid, paras.640 and 611).

Strangely, Jung's own exegesis of the Book of Job seems to miss Sophia's actual invocation in the text, but she is right there in chapter 38 – when God chronicles his acts of creation in this passage, he is literally conjuring Sophia's role in creation as described in Proverbs 8. After this monologue, God directs his anger to Job's friends, twice addressing them with the rebuke: "you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has" (42:7-8). We can surmise that the "truth" that Job spoke was God's wholeness, later expressed in Isaiah 45:6-7 when God says:

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[51] Recall Jung's position that the experience of weakness is a necessary condition for coming to consciousness (Edinger, 1992, p.45).

"I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these thing." Hence, we can plausibly situate the anamnesis Jung advances *here*, at this moment in the narrative. Further confirmation of this may be found in comparing the epilogue to the prologue – whereas none of the female characters are treated with any specificity in chapter 1, when God restores Job's family in chapter 42, Job's three daughters are given names and inheritances, signifying the elevation and integration of the feminine (Woolfson, 1998, p.44). In contrast, Job's sons remain anonymous. Mitchell takes this to signify that the yin side of humanity – characterized as receptive, chaotic, and historically coded as female – has finally been acknowledged and honored (1992, p.xxx).

Stemming in part from his study of alchemy, Jung was very interested in dualities that offset one another to express a whole. Chief among them is the principle of masculine and feminine, as evident in his writings on Eros and Logos, *anima* and *animus*, and the *mysterium coniunctionis* (see Hopcke, 1999, for an overview of each set within the Jungian corpus). Jung theorized that Western consciousness had abandoned the dark side of God (i.e. the feminine) in a strict separation of good and evil and a rigid rejection of the latter (Spiegelman, 2006, p.10). In *Answer to Job*, he argues that God had "lost sight of his pleromatic coexistence with Sophia since the days of the Creation," and that Job's encounter with God re-installed Sophia in her rightful place and rendered visible their perpetual *hieros gamos*[52] (Jung, 1969a, para.620; Edinger, 1992, p.64). Such a fusion

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[52] Sacred marriage.

of masculine and feminine energy generates profound creative power, and it is this divine union from which worlds are begotten (Jung, 1969a, para.624).

Answer to Job calls the reader to elevate feminine consciousness to equal standing with that of the masculine, as, from a Jungian lens, suffering stems from the fragmentation of the self. This integration is vital to the work of individuation, which might be described as "a process of making whole, of repossessing that from which we have become estranged, of accepting that which we would rather deny" (Epstein, 1995, p.204). Similarly, from an Engaged Buddhist perspective, suffering emanates from the illusion that we are separated – both from ourselves and from others. Let us now turn to the Eastern counterpart of Jung's psychology to consider Engaged Buddhism's bearing on Vicarious Traumatization. Since I will discuss mindfulness at length later in this chapter, the present analysis will focus on interdependence and compassion.

In the Four Noble Truths – the first teaching the Buddha gave after attaining enlightenment – he averred that 1) there is trauma at the heart of existence, 2) that the cause of psychological suffering is the delusion that we are solid, self-contained entities, 3) that we seek comfort in our perceived separation by clinging to relationships, objects, and experiences that are ultimately ephemeral, and 4) that we can end our suffering through a program of re-education and mindfulness training (Epstein, 1995, p.xviii; Queen, 2000, p.2).

A crucial component of this training concerns instruction on interdependence, which King regards as the most potent concept that Engaged Buddhists deploy to justify their position (1996, p.406). Through understanding

that the desiring self and its desired objects are all ultimately void of any autonomous, intrinsic, enduring existence, the contemplation of interdependence is intended to elucidate the folly behind our relentless drive to possess, and eventually, to deliver the suffering self from its rapacious appetite (Keefe, 1997, p.63). Herein lies a key distinction between Jungian thought and Engaged Buddhism: whereas the latter holds that release from suffering is possible, the former does not. While both schools of thought contend that there are different forms of suffering and suffering itself can be instructive or demoralizing, Jung believed that suffering was the requisite counterpoint to happiness and could only be endured and metabolized, not transcended (Moacanin, 2003, p.86-87).

Where they do overlap, however, is in their assessment that over-identification with the ego leads to suffering. By "ego," I do not mean the organizing principle of the psyche, which I contend most Jungians and Engaged Buddhists would agree is essential for daily functioning (Moacanin, 2003, p.84-85). I use "ego" here instead to refer to one's "me-ness," one's attachment to the idea of a concrete, enclosed self, and one's instinctual commitment to serve and preserve that self at the expense of all else.

In Jungian theory, one must relinquish the distortions and projections of one's egoic personal self in gestation of one's individuated transpersonal Self. The Self that then emerges is the composite of one's unique actualized personality and one's timeless archetypal nature (Moacanin, 2003, p.32-33). In other words, the Self

is the totality of the psyche.[53] Engaged Buddhists call this one's "buddha nature",

the ground of one's being that holds the seeds of real wisdom and infinite love, our

true nature free of illusion (Gethin, 1998, p.250-252).

These teachings imply that personal and social transformation are always

interwoven (Keefe, 1997, p.63; Moacanin, 2003, p.47). In name, individuation may

sound like a move toward self-centered naval-gazing, but Jung was adamant that

this process not amount to extreme individualism or the renunciation of

responsibility to the collective. In *The Practice of Psychotherapy* he wrote:

> [T]he natural process of individuation brings to birth a consciousness of
> human community precisely because it makes us aware of the unconscious,
> which unites and is common to all mankind. Individuation is an at-one-ment
> with oneself and at the same time with humanity, since oneself is a part of
> humanity (1954, para.227).

Similarly, in Engaged Buddhism, internalizing the concept of interdependence yields

organic compassion because it enables us to see the buddha nature in everyone. As

David Brandon shrewdly observes, this means "perceiving the superficiality of

positions of moral authority. The other person is as good as you. However untidy,

unhygienic, poor, illiterate and blood-minded he may seem, he is worthy of your

respect" (1976, p.59). This perspective highlights the important distinction

between social action that arises out of compassion and social action that is

motivated by pity, compassion's near-enemy. Whereas compassion is marked by a

sense of solidarity – the word literally means "to suffer with" – pity is marked by a

sense of separation, a feeling of being "better than" the object of one's charity

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[53] It is not that the ego is destroyed through individuation, but rather that it assumes its proper place
in subordination to the Self (Moacanin, 2003, p.84).

(Kornfield, 1988, p.24). Whereas pity fosters hierarchy and division, compassion fosters equity and fellowship.

For the Buddha, compassion was the quintessential virtue that encompasses all the others (Dalai Lama & Tutu, 2016, p.251-252).[54] The Dalai Lama maintains that compassion is the core of Buddhism, and teaches his followers that one cannot generate genuine compassion apart from interacting with people in all their mess (Puri, 2006, p.6). On the other hand, activism without mindfulness tends to become rote and often leads to frustration, anger, and hatred (Puri, 2006, p.125). What is needed is a balance between the active and the contemplative, the intellectual and the experiential, a balance that Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism support.

Synthesis

Proponents of both schools of thought concur that an academic understanding alone is insufficient for producing true psychic change (Moacanin, 2003, p.49). As Engaged Buddhist Sulak Sivaraksa writes, "It is not enough merely to attain an intellectual understanding of these propositions. We have to make them part of our life. Like medicine, they must be taken. It does no good to have aspirins in the bottle; they must be internalized" (1988, p.10). A meditation practice is one viable path to accomplishing this.

Mindful awareness of one's breath, for instance, offers a compelling lesson in impermanence (Pandita, 1992, p.289). Buddhism teaches that much of our suffering stems from the attempt to control what is ultimately impermanent and beyond our

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[54] Correspondingly, for Jung, the Self is the quintessential archetype that encompasses all the others (Moacanin, 2003, p 32).

agency (Dalai Lama and Tutu, 2016, p.87). Watching one's breath in meditation

provides an apt illustration of this concept because the breath is always moving, you

can never grab hold of it. It is in the moment when the inhale cascades into the

exhale and vice versa that we intuitively understand the ephemeral nature of

existence.[55]

Please Call Me By My True Names opens with an acknowledgment of this

principle, as Nhat Hanh writes: "every second I am arriving." Each moment we are

passing into and out of different physical and emotional states. When the poet says

in the stanza, "The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive," he is

reminding us that everything that arises will also dissolve and pass away. This

change may occur very quickly or very slowly but it will inevitably occur, as life

itself is an amalgam of shifting unstable conditions (Gethin, 1998, p.61).

Job also acknowledges the fundamental transience of existence in chapter 1,

verse 21 when, in response to the loss of his children, servants, and livestock, he

cries out: "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the

Lord." This line suggests that when we do not expect good things to last forever, we

suffer less when they invariably do not (Pandita, 1992, p.228). Although Job's family

and possessions were restored to him at the end of the book, nothing was

immortalized – at some point, he was going to lose them all again. When we accept

that all objects, relationships, and experiences are ultimately impermanent, we

realize that we cannot make any of these things the basis for our lasting happiness.

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[55] This insight is not limited to the breath, but can be accessed through direct observation of any
sensory experience (Pandita, 1992, p.291).

Correspondingly, we realize that however terrible an experience may be, it will not last indefinitely.

Trauma impacts the brain in such a way that it can lock one into a sense of timelessness where the trauma is always happening or may break in at any moment. I felt so identified with the patients I was treating in my first-year field placement that I too came to experience their trauma as unending. I believe the above meditation practice would have been an invaluable tool for me to utilize in those moments to viscerally remind myself that we would both experience joy again.

Numerous studies indicate that the benefits of meditation include enhanced immunity (physically, mentally, and emotionally), increased productivity, improved social skills, and a deeper sense of psychological well-being – all of which, incidentally, counterbalance the documented effects of STS and VT (Bache, 2008, p.83; Dalai Lama & Tutu, 2016, p.83). Moreover, Epstein argues that a meditation practice offers an indispensable method of analytic inquiry into the ego's incessant craving for certainty and completion (1995, p.6). As Judson Brewer, psychiatrist and Director of Research at the UMass Center for Mindfulness, reports, our brains hate uncertainty so much that they will do anything they can to avoid that state, even if it means locking onto something that is completely false (Gross, 2018). This craving for certainty often propels the ego toward extremes – either grandiosity or devaluation in the judgment of self and other (Epstein, 1995, p.6). This two-dimensional thinking is especially germane after a trauma, as the desperate need to re-establish stasis and order in one's world can render survivors particularly vulnerable to establishing fixed identities. As Pearlman and Saakvitne explain,

ambivalence often feels intolerable to trauma survivors and the desire to avoid that state can result in very black-and-white functioning (1995, p.122).

It is worth considering the ways in which the formulation of VT may perpetuate this kind of reductionist model. Throughout the literature on VT, trauma survivors are most frequently referred to as "victims" and the individuals who harmed them are essentially erased, as there is little to no discussion of their personhood. In the void of distinguishing characteristics, they are calcified as "abusers." Then, when trauma survivors seek treatment, it is not uncommon for therapists to find themselves oscillating between the position of rescuer, persecutor, and victim a la the drama triangle (Hawker, 2000). Moved by the tragedies that have beset our patients, we might see ourselves as the long-awaited rescuer in the saga of our patients' lives. Or we might find ourselves drafted into the role of persecutor, through enactments or through the perception that we are "making" our clients relive their trauma by verbalizing it. Or we may feel assaulted by the horrors our own consciousness is exposed to through a client's telling and retelling of their trauma. Regardless of the role we might be conscripted into at any given moment, entering the drama triangle in any way re-inscribes a narrative of victimization and quickly reduces the parties involved to either "good" or "bad" objects.

While this dynamic may be unavoidable at times and even constitute an important process in the working through of trauma, becoming entrenched in these roles occludes the various other parts that each member of the triad might also play. Developing a meditation practice that supports mindfulness assists in reconnecting us with our multiple self-states, as meditation has been shown to integrate and

harmonize the brain, diminishing one's sense of psychic fragmentation (Dalai Lama and Tutu, 2016, p.310). Cultivating an awareness of our interdependence enables us to consider the aspects of our selves that might identify with the persecutor, but without a meditation practice to support this, we may grasp it on an intellectual level but continue to fight it on an experiential level (Chödrön, 2001, p.18).

My own experience in the aftermath of treating abused women attests to this. During my first-year placement, I felt so protective of the women who came into my office and so incensed at the men who had harmed them that their abusers felt completely alien to me. I regarded them as abject monsters, and I fantasized not about their rehabilitation but about their utter demise. As my Weltanschauung began to crumble, those men became a placeholder for all that I could not yet reconcile about my own shifting worldview. Writing this thesis and contemplating the concept of interdependence, however, has asked me to "deconstruct the fortifications of self-righteousness and blame that protect one from acknowledging our interbeing with the one we call enemy" and consider that there is something of those men in me (Keefe, 1997, p.65). Initially, I found this appalling – I did not want to be identified with the persecutor in any way – but by repeatedly steeping myself in this idea through study and meditation, I came to discover some degree of compassion for the pain they must have been in to inflict such torment. I also came to see that my murderous fantasies toward these men represented my wish to exorcise my own shadow.

If we understand the shadow as that which we despise in others and that which we believe does not belong to us, one read of the God of the Old Testament is

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as a figure who preserved his own sense of goodness by depositing his badness into

the figure of Satan via projective identification, and then established a norm

whereby he never had to confront that darker aspect of himself (there is no other

meeting of God and Satan recorded in the Old Testament aside from in the Book of

Job). It is through God's encounter with Job – who is somehow able to hold God's

antinomy and to "suffer God as God is unable to suffer himself" – that God begins to

come to consciousness of the effects of his own shadow side (Kalsched, 1996, p.98

and 97).

As the archetype of the Self in Jung's system of thought, the God-image and

its evolution in the Job narrative presents the reader with a prototype of

individuation. Using this frame, I can better understand my own journey. Like the

God of the Old Testament, I was overly attached to my sense of my own goodness

and was displacing my badness onto the abusive men who had traumatized the

women I was treating. My hatred for those men kept me alienated from the truth of

my own darkness, and it was only through repeated, meditative exposure to my own

shadow side that I have been able to begin to integrate those figures into my own

psyche and enter into dialogue with the self-states in me that they represent. Nhat

Hanh writes, "I have many names, and when you call me by any of them, I have to

say, 'Yes'" (1988, p.31). Now I see that, in certain ways, I am the bruised and broken

woman before me *and* the troubled man who brutalized her.

During my first-year field placement, I prided myself on how deeply I cared

for my patients. I do follow Jung in the belief that the most efficacious therapeutic

encounters are those in which both parties are genuinely changed (Moacanin, 2003,

p.47), but I was operating out of a profound imbalance. Jones asserts that we need

to practice compassion *and* wisdom in the face of suffering (1988, p.70). To

remember Sophia is to remember the ways in which feminist theology seeks to

deconstruct the dualism of traditional Western notions of reality – body *and* soul,

emotion *and* reason, connection *and* autonomy – weaving together those

dimensions of the human experience that have been partitioned off by the

patriarchy (Keefe, 1997, p.66). Keefe writes that in a feminist theology of relation,

"the divine is dethroned from 'his' transcendent impassibility, into the immamental

web of life, and the sacred is reimagined as the very thread of interconnection that

binds together all things" (Ibid). In the Book of Job, Sophia/Wisdom illuminates the

dismal state of affairs when the conscious and the unconscious remain cleft. As

Houck-Loomis eloquently states, those repressed, unseemly aspects of the self "will

continue to pound at the door of consciousness until they are brought into its fold,

related to, reckoned with and integrated"; as long as they are ignored and denied

entry, the dissociated material will unconsciously be acted out in a bid for

recognition (forthcoming). While psychotherapy ideally provides a secure container

in which that can safely occur, acting out unconscious material outside such a

container can have devastating consequences (Epstein, 1995, p.187).

Applications to Social Work

As previously noted, it is common for trauma survivors to dissociate as a

defense against experiences that overwhelm the ego and seem too terrible to

integrate into the psyche (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.121). When traumatic

events are not situated within one's overarching narrative, the dislocated material

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becomes a force that can unexpectedly break into the moment and seize the survivor. While dissociation may initially be an adaptive means of survival, it inevitably becomes maladaptive as splintered aspects of the psyche either forcibly intrude upon the ego or remain inaccessible and therefore unavailable for metabolization. A task of both psychotherapy and meditative practice is to return the split-off aspects of the self to the self (Epstein, 1995, p.206). The application of mindful attention after a trauma can 1) aid in discerning whether the content of heightened affective states refers to past or present experience (Nhat Hanh, 2014, p.49), and 2) offer a way out of psychic blocks, as "anything embraced by the energy of mindfulness will undergo a transformation" (Nhat Hanh, 2001, p.28).

The therapeutic relationship in and of itself may also heighten the risk of dissociation for trauma survivors, as the invitation to trust the clinician may activate a powerful transference from past trauma (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.123). Torn between the need for connection and the fear of betrayal, patients may dissociate as an unconscious defense against too much emotional exposure. While this maneuver may function to protect the self and the therapeutic alliance, it prevents the patient from being able to make use of the transference and work through the conflict, rupture, and repair (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p.124). In this way it stunts the growth of the individual and the relationship, as it inhibits the patient's ability to utilize new experiences in the process of renegotiating intimacy and keeps him/her locked into old, unconscious patterns of relating (Ibid). The unconscious longs to be seen, and according to Edinger, as it is seen, it is appeased (1992, p.42). In this, it is also transformed:

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The analyst observes the violent power aspect of the patient's unconscious in the same way as Job observed it with Yahweh. That very observation promotes a transformation – subtly but nonetheless in a very real way. Once the unconscious has been seen and recognized by someone for what it is, that event constellates a need for it to change (Edinger, 1992, p.63-64).

Buddhist psychotherapist Mark Epstein contends that a serious limitation of contemporary psychotherapy is that it does not train practitioners to attend to their clients with this kind of bare attention: "the therapist's state of mind… has proved to be a tremendous stumbling block for psychotherapists. Most simply cannot command the kind of attentional presence that Freud found necessary for this work" (Epstein, 1995, p.184). Buddhism teaches us to start by simply experiencing the discomfort we often feel in any given moment, and assures us that "the ability to respond creatively and skillfully will arise out of this openness" (Macy, 1988, p.177).

This openness, or emptiness, is essential to the work of psychotherapy. The original meaning of the Buddhist word for emptiness, *sunyata*, is "a pregnant void, the hollow of a pregnant womb" (Epstein, 1995, p.190). In this way, Epstein affirms Jung's stance that the personal integration of masculine and feminine aspects is vital to the functionality of the analyst, as he purports that those psychotherapists who fear their own feminine side will shy away from holding this kind of emptiness or generative silence (Ibid). When an analyst fosters this atmosphere and can sit comfortably in the unknown with clients, a patient's psyche can gently open to its unfinished work (Ibid).

Creating this kind of environment is both a meditation practice in and of itself and is supported by the personal meditation practices of the therapist and the patient. Since the focus of this project is the psychic health of the therapist though, I

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will focus on the clinician's capacity to foster this capacious quality. Evoking British

analyst Wilfred Bion's famous dictum that therapists should enter each session

"without memory or desire" so as not to pre-select material and distort the analytic

process, Epstein explains that "The therapist's expectations and desires, however

subtle, create a pressure against which the patient is compelled to react or with

which the patient is compelled to comply" (1995, p.190). If a therapist's presence in

session is marked by a sense of dread of what they may hear – a symptom of VT –

the patient will consciously or unconsciously detect it. It is beyond the scope of this

thesis to delve into the neuroscience that supports this claim, but research on

mirror neurons and spindle cells indicates that the human brain is wired to pick up

on the ostensibly imperceptible shifts of others' emotional states (Goleman, 2006,

p.4). I contend that some type of personal meditation practice on the part of the

analyst is absolutely essential in this regard, as a steadfast meditation practice

trains the psyche to stay present and open whatever the circumstances (Chödrön,

2001, p.25).[56]

This kind of presence amplifies the analyst's ability to attune to the patient's

conscious and unconscious world. Thousands of people affirm that the space

around the Dalai Lama feels preternaturally alive and receptive, qualities that have

been attributed to the countless hours His Holiness spends in meditation

(McDermott, 2008, p.xiii). This ability to "hold a living space" between oneself and

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[56] Epstein writes, "When a therapist can sit with a patient without an agenda, without trying to force an experience, without thinking that she knows what is going to happen or who this person is, then the therapist is infusing the therapy with the lessons of meditation" (1995, p.187).

another is fertile ground for the possibility of exploring more intuitive modes of connection and communication (Ibid, p.xiii-xiv).

In a clinical setting where there are usually a number of justifiable or technically sound ways in which a therapist might proceed, cultivating this kind of mindful presence can help a clinician hone in on the most befitting intervention and open a space for spontaneous and authentic therapeutic work (Bache, 2008, p.18; Epstein, 1995, p.187). In my first-year field placement, I regularly felt like I was failing my patients in my inability to offer more resonant explanations or insightful interpretations to ease their pain. I did not understand that, oftentimes, "intellectual activity in the therapist is a defense against experiencing the patient's silence, a refusal to enter the jointly experienced not-knowing", which can be a terrifying space to occupy but is also the space that makes discovery a real possibility (Epstein, 1995, p.192). Now I see that I did not need to go searching for answers in some academic paper, what I needed was to let go of my need for answers at all. As Epstein and Yalom share from their vast experience as practitioners, the quality of a therapist's presence may have just as much – if not more – impact on a patient as a brilliant interpretation (Epstein, 1995, p.187; Yalom, 2009, p.20-21). As clinicians, we must learn to use our very presence as a therapeutic tool, to manifest a relaxed attentiveness to anything that emerges and to model what it looks like to approach all aspects of the psyche with curiosity and compassion.

Methodological Strengths and Limitations

Unconventional as it may be in the field of social work, I consider a textual analysis of a myth and a poem to be a tremendous methodological asset. Mythology

deals in the realm of symbols, and as Houck-Loomis states, "Having the capacity to symbolize, to find a bridge between internal and external, indeed allows one to transition and experience something beyond or outside of one's self that connects to an inner and an outer reality" (2016, p.130). Correspondingly, poetry dwells in the realm of affect, and as Jung states, "It is through the 'affect' that the subject becomes involved and so comes to feel the whole weight of reality" (1959, para.61). In omitting these art forms from our typical areas of focus in strict favor of "evidence-based" quantitative and qualitative measures, social workers – who are called upon to bear witness to and deeply empathize with the human condition – risk growing sterile and desensitized in the face of existential questions and the profound emotions they evoke.[57]

The main limitation of this study is that I was not seeing patients while I was working on this project; hence, my ability to "test" these theories in real time was significantly diminished. In the *Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers*, Jan I. Richardson recommends that mental health professionals who work with trauma victims should complete some type of self-assessment upon starting trauma work and every six months thereafter to ascertain a baseline sensitivity to the work and to monitor subsequent indicators of

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[57] Iraq War veteran and writer Tyler Boudreau speaks to the deadening effect of sitting across from this kind of therapist: "As a veteran, I really can't imagine a more disheartening scenario than being stuck in a room with a person listening with stony detachment as I grapple exasperatedly with the moral implications of my actions in the war. I'd rather say nothing at all. And the consensus I've gathered from the clinicians I've met (and I've met quite a few) is that they'd rather stick with therapy and leave the larger moral questions to someone else. But who?" (2012, p.750).

VT (2001, p.90). If I had been aware of these assessment tools during my first-year

field placement, I certainly would have followed this procedure.[58]

The lack of empirical studies on this topic might also be considered a

limitation. In her comprehensive review of the literature on meaning making, Park

asserts that empirical studies have failed to keep up with theoretical developments

in this area (2010). Consequently, there are little to no models for how to even

conduct an empirical study on significant changes in one's worldview over time. I

have offered some reflections from my own meaning-making process in the wake of

Vicarious Traumatization as a heuristic measure that I hope will inspire others to do

the same.

Conclusions

Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism both recognize that a vast range of

psychological dimension exists in all of us. As Nhat Hanh writes, "In us are infinite

varieties of seeds – seeds of samsara, nirvana, delusion, and enlightenment" and all

are "manifestations of our own consciousness" (2006, p.26). Coming to accept this

tenet, which immediately resonated with me on an intellectual level but repulsed

me on an emotional level, has entailed colossal psychic work and has required me to

take responsibility for myself in a way that I previously never had. In that vein, I

have made the conscious choice to write more about my own experience in this

chapter than I imagine was standard practice for most of my peers who wrote

theoretical theses. I have followed Jung and the historical Buddha in this approach,

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[58] For an overview of assessment tools that screen for STS/VT, see Bride, Radey, & Figley, 2007.

embracing the notion that simply reading about these principles is insufficient; true change and understanding is grounded in experience (Pandita, 1992, p.290).

The two theories at the center of this project both endorse bringing the whole self under the microscope and taking responsibility for what one finds there. I believe this constitutes an important counterbalance to the reductionist characterization of individuals as "victims" or "perpetrators" that is trending in much of the current scholarship on Vicarious Traumatization. The courage to hold multiple discourses in mind is a crucial skill in mental health. It is regarded as a hallmark of ego strength and the crux of popular treatment modalities such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. The study of myths like that of Job, wherein the symbolic perspectives on offer are virtually inexhaustible (Kradin, 2014, p.358), supports the development of this kind of psychic pliability – an invaluable resource in coping with the effects of Vicarious Traumatization. In the wake of trauma, one is commonly left with violently shattered paradigms around trust, safety, power, independence, esteem, and intimacy, and the flexibility to re-configure these damaged schemas or construct new ones through some sort of re-education process is vital to healing (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Park, 2010, p.261).

If we are unable to revise our worldview to accommodate new experiences, we will stagnate the way Job's friends did. As bystanders who repeatedly look to Job's failings to explain his situation, Job's friends suffer in their own way due to their unwillingness to deconstruct their deeply entrenched image of God (Houck-Loomis, forthcoming, p.12). In each round of dialogue, they insist that the tragedy that has befallen Job must be the result of some unrepentant sin (Job 4:7-9; 8:1-6;

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11:1-6) – an ideology rooted in the ruling principle of the Old Testament wherein obedience merited reward and disobedience garnered punishment (Houck-Loomis, forthcoming, p.9). But in Job we encounter a figure whose adherence to God's law is met with affliction, introducing the possibility of a fissure in the friends' long-held paradigms. Mitchell explains that, "They *can't* understand, because they won't risk giving up their moral certainties" (p.xiii).

The Book of Job, in essence, may be interpreted as a text that depicts a major change in one's dominant God-image – from a theology of punishment and reward to one in which God acts "without cause" (chapter 2, verse 3). In order to approach the reality behind our image of God or our "theories of the ultimate," Job, his friends, and we as readers must sacrifice what we thought we understood of the divine on the altar of an evolving reality (Houck-Loomis, forthcoming, p.6 footnote 10). This requires a symbolic death in which we relinquish that which we had upheld as "the only way, the ruling principle, which ha[d] in a sense become a god in and of itself" (Ulanov, 2007, p.216; Houck-Loomis, forthcoming, p.8). The disintegration of the belief systems that we had relied upon and even held dear can feel dizzying and unbearable, but as Bache writes, sometimes "compassion expresses itself in ruthlessly tearing away old structures in order to make room for new growth" (2008, p.110). Jungian thought and Engaged Buddhism tell us that if we can stay with our experience, consciousness *will* emerge.

As Pearlman and Saakvitne explain, "Trauma therapy assaults our self-protective beliefs about safety, control, predictability, and attachment" (1995, p.32). The sense of loss and disillusionment I experienced when my belief in the criminal

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justice system broke down during my first-year field placement felt excruciating.

The pain of this collapse could have been mitigated by the perspective, which I now

take, that all of our guiding principles and mental schemas are just working models,

provisional systems of thought to be held with an open hand and a willingness to

revise as needed. Each round of revision reminds us that the beliefs that buttressed

us, the beliefs that the ego wishes to cling to with the absolute certainty of Truth, are

at best approximations of truth (Ulanov, 2013, p.20). If we over-identify with these

constructions, we will suffer severe destabilization when we invariably outgrow

them. Jungian theory and Engaged Buddhism promote "a state of fluidity in which

[we can] experience change and growth without being attached to any fixed

condition" (Moacanin, 2003, p.46). I have come to believe that, ultimately, this

psychic flexibility is a key antidote to the pain of Vicarious Traumatization.

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Traumatic Symptoms of Primary and Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms

(Primary) PTSD Stressors	(Secondary) Compassion Fatigue Stressors
A. Experienced an event outside the range of usual human experiences that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone, an event such as a rape, the September 11 terrorist attack, family violence, combat, and other terrifying experiences.	Experienced indirectly the primary traumatic stressors through helping those who had experienced these traumas: helping in such roles as a nurse, social worker, rape counselor, or other roles and activities.
B. Traumatic event is persistently reexperienced in one (or more) of the following ways:	
(1) Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions	Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the **client**/event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions
(2) Recurrent distressing dreams of the event	Recurrent distressing dreams of the **client**/event
(3) Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated)	Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving contact with the client and the client's story in order to solve the puzzle and help the client)
(4) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event	Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble the aspect of *the work of helping others*
(5) Physiological reactivity on exposure to trauma cues	Physiological reactivity on exposure to *trauma cues that are associated with the role of helper*
C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three or more of the following:	
(1) Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma	Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with *the client's trauma*
(2) Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma	Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of *the client's traumas*
(3) Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma	*Errors in judgment about conceptualizing and treating the trauma case*
(4) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities	Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities
(5) Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others	Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
(6) Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings)	Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to know the client personally or savior-oriented)
(7) Sense of foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span)	Sense of foreshortened future (e.g., *does not expect or want to have a long career*)

(Primary) PTSD Stressors	(Secondary) Compassion Fatigue Stressors
D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two or more of the following:	
(1) Difficulty falling or staying asleep	Difficulty falling or staying asleep
(2) Irritability or outbursts of anger	Irritability or outbursts of anger
(3) Difficulty concentrating	Difficulty concentrating
(4) Hypervigilance	Hypervigilance
(5) Exaggerated startle response	Exaggerated startle response
E. 30 days' duration	30 days' duration
F. *Disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning:* Evidenced by increase family conflict, sexual dysfunction, poor interpersonal communication, less loving, more dependent, reduced social support, poor stress-coping methods.	*Disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning:* Evidenced by increased work conflict, missed work, insensitivity to clients, lingering distress caused by trauma material, reduced social support, poor stress-coping methods.

Table 1
Comparison of PTSD and STS Symptoms
(courtesy of Figley, 1995, p.12)

Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral	Spiritual	Personal Relations	Somatic	Work Performance
Lowered concentration	Powerlessness	Inpatient	Questioning the meaning of life	Withdrawal	Shock	Low morale
Decreased self-esteem	Anxiety	Irritable	Loss of purpose	Decreased interest in intimacy or sex	Sweating	Low motivation
Apathy	Guilt	Withdrawn	Lack of self-satisfaction	Mistrust	Rapid heartbeat	Avoiding tasks
Rigidity	Anger/rage	Moody	Pervasive hopelessness	Isolation from others	Breathing difficulties	Obsession about details
Disorientation	Survivor guilt	Regression	Anger at God	Overprotection as a parent	Aches and pains	Apathy
Perfectionism	Shutdown	Sleep disturbance	Questioning of prior religious beliefs	Projection of anger or blame	Dizziness	Negativity
Minimization	Numbness	Nightmares	Loss of faith in a higher power	Intolerance	Increased number and intensity of medical maladies	Lack of appreciation
Preoccupation with trauma	Fear	Appetite changes	Greater skepticism about religion	Loneliness	Other somatic complaints	Detachment
Thoughts of self-harm or harm to others	Helplessness	Hypervigilance		Increased interpersonal conflicts	Impaired immune system	Poor work commitments
	Sadness	Elevated startle response				Staff conflicts
	Depression	Accident proneness				Absenteeism
	Emotional roller coaster	Losing things				Exhaustion
	Depleted					Irritability
	Overly sensitive					Withdrawal from colleagues

Table 2
Symptoms of STS and VT
(courtesty of Figley, 2002, p.7)