

Introduction to Kore Story/Persephone's Dog

Craig San Roque¹

"...we are dreaming creatures..."

Salman Rushdie, BBC radio, 17 September 2012

On the Poetics of Being

Imagine original beings walking the earth, archetypal forms in the making, emerging out of the land. Emerging simultaneously from the human psyche. You might ask – am I discovering these beings walking toward me across the land, or am I creating them?

It is a human thing to dream creatures. Yet perhaps not every original being is invented by human beings. Perhaps the force of nature has a life of its own and comes to meet us in forms that nature chooses, firing our imagination as it does so. A special kind of sung poetry has developed among many peoples of the world that mingles the reality that we see with the reality that we create. There may not be one clear term in the English language that describes this intermingling of that which we imagine and that which is independently there. I prefer the term *onto-poiesis* – or, more simply, *onto-poetic* – suggesting a mingling of the Greek concept *ontos* ("that which is" – "I am" or "being") with *poiesis* (indicating "coming into being" – "creation" or "bringing forth").

Together these words *ontos* and *poiesis* synchronize into a sense of the poetic, creative relationships between beings. This intermingling is an intricate etymological and psychological matter and my sentence here merely hints at the subtlety of *ontopoetics*. Let us say that the term draws our attention to the poetic infrastructure of creation, the beauty and symmetry that may be found in the order of an insect, in the structure of seeds, in the composition of bird song, in the camouflage speckle on the skin of trout or deer ... And then there is the response that a human being makes to these symmetries; for the human is a part of this design.

I seek for words in English that hold the notion of human communicative participation in the breath of nature, in the walking of archetypal forms, moments when human creatures and nature's forces collaborate, comingle. The philosopher Freya Mathews coined this term – *the ontopoetic*, lovingly acknowledging that the world itself is open – "intimately psycho-active and disposed toward communicative engagement with us."²

Martin Heidegger refers to it as a "bringing-forth," using this term in its widest sense. He explained *poiesis* as – *the blooming of the blossom, the coming-out of a butterfly from a cocoon, the plummeting of a waterfall when the snow begins to melt*. "The last two analogies underline Heidegger's example of a threshold occasion: a moment of *ecstasis* when something moves away from its standing as one thing to become another".³

This *Kore Story* is, for me, (subjectively), an instance of ontopoetic collaboration. It was composed at a marvelous ancient site, with no preconceived expectation. I had prepared the ground, as a painter prepares a canvas, but the words began to flow from voices in my inner ear, describing to me the two women traveling in that landscape at Delphi; and I obeyed, writing down the lines as though from dictation.

¹ Craig San Roque, PhD, lives in Alice Springs. Northern Territory. A psychologist and consultant in Central Australia, his attitude and practice has been influenced by long and pragmatic association with indigenous people in the region. He is a member of the ANZ Society of Jungian Analysts, was involved in the University of Western Sydney Social Ecology project, taught Anthropology and Performance studies and, over 10 years, contributed to the innovative UWS Masters in Analytical Psychology. Special interests are in how cultural complexes determine thinking and action, how mythic story and *ijukurrpa* work, conflicts in law, the ethical management of indigenous projects and the enigma of the future of Central Australia. Much of his published writing is on such themes, including a graphic novel, *The Long Weekend in Alice Springs*, winner of the NT Literary Award, 2013. This chapter is an extract from my introduction to the text of *Kore Story/Persephone's Dog* (p47) as it appeared in *Ancient Greece, Modern Psyche, Archetypes Evolving*, edited by Virginia Bean Rutter and Thomas Singer, Routledge, 2015 (with permission of the editors).

² Freya Mathews, "Invitation to ontopoetics," *PAN: Philosophy, Action, Nature, Special Edition on Ontopoetics*, No. 6, 2009. Available at www.panjournal.net/webloc. See also *PAN*, 2011, No. 8.

³ From an unattributed note on Heidegger and *poesis* – Wikipedia, accessed 31 December 2013.