

A SPACE FOR INTRODUCTION

The Universal Significance of the Singularity of Self

At the birth of our universe, over 13.8 billion years ago, there existed an infinitesimal singularity that within a smidgeon of a fraction of a second expanded exponentially into the beginnings of our universe – a singularity that, but for its now universal size, remains whole, with all of its elements still entangled in a magnificent living web of galaxies, stars, planets, our home, and each and every one of us.

As I stand between Polaris and Orion on this crisp winter night in Athabasca, I look for Andromeda, a faint glow under the guard of Queen Cassiopeia. I ponder the thought that its racing light took a mere two and a half million years to reach my eyes. A light that was born before any human roamed this earth. And as the light of Andromeda and Orion and Polaris rouse the core of my soul, I suddenly know that I am connected to this infinite and eternal miracle. I am part of it, and it is part of me. And it is all so very large.

Albert Einstein said: “The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science” (1931, p. 6). The mysteries of life drove Einstein to ask some very large questions. And it is the mysteries of life that also drive me. When John Freeman asked Psychiatrist Carl Jung during a BBC television interview if he believed in God, Jung responded, “I know. I don’t need to believe.” (Nagy, 1991, p. 2). I cannot express how much I envy such certainty. I have spent virtually my entire life searching for God. It has become an endless research project with many unexpected, sometimes remarkable, and sometimes frustrating twists and turns. Although the answers and questions have altered or evolved quite drastically over the years, I have always believed or had faith in the existence of some sort of creative universal phenomenon. Although all of our religions and sciences have yet to put a finger on it, I am certain it exists – but it is always an ephemeral certainty that evanesces from my mind when I try to seize it – much like my nightly dreams.

It is the awes of being that give me this certainty. When I stand in awe of the universe, the Rocky Mountains, a grand river, life, a poem, the moon, quantum physics, time, an act of incredible compassion, a mother and her young, selfless-sacrifice, free will, consciousness,

sexual com-union, synchronicity, serendipity, providence, and grace, I know at the core of my soul that I am in the presence of this phenomenon. It is awesome, it is creative, and it is systemically whole-istically synergetic.

Echoing ancient Greek Philosopher Socrates, Lamas Surya Das (2001) wrote: “Just as the unexamined life is a life poorly lived, no life is complete without some effort to connect with the deeper meaning of our existence” (p. 10). In my mind it is only through living life, and a lifetime of personal experience, using all of our senses, including intuition, and all of the information that is available to us (including anecdotal), by paying attention to everything, even that which does not make sense, within us and external to us, that we will discover our own answers – the answers that give us meaning – and for some of us, the answers that give meaning to life.

My search began at a young age. At first it was simple curiosity. My mother would cringe every time I started a sentence with the word ‘why’. She understood me well enough to know that her ‘because why’ answers were never enough, so she encouraged me to find my answers in school. For the bigger questions she pointed me toward Christianity. She was a fundamentalist protestant Christian, but she was never comfortable with a specific church, so she took us on a life-long search for the ‘right’ religion. We started off as Lutheran, became Jehovah’s Witnesses, then Seventh Day Adventists, and eventually we joined the Worldwide Church of God. Although most of my family has remained firmly within the fundamentalist Protestant Christian paradigm, the constant questioning and examination of faith enabled me to step into a fuller paradigm when it became necessary. My search for meaning then expanded to include other forms of religion, spirituality, philosophy and science.

One of the major alterations in the course of my life-long search occurred quite recently. About fifteen years ago I started writing poetry. As a new poet, I was constantly amazed at the words that seemed to ‘magically’ appear on the page in front of me. I have a

passionate interest in trying to identify the source of my inspiration and intuition, and as do many writers, I eventually came to realize that this creative source resides within. Inevitably my search for meaning has led me to the core of self. Like the Mobius strip, however, this inward journey has taken an amazing twist. As I travel deeper and deeper into the core of self, my sense of connection with and awareness of the external world has similarly deepened. Like the singularity that existed at the birth of our universe, for me, the singularity of self has expanded into universal significance.

Another major alteration in my life-long search occurred when I enrolled in the Master of Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies program at Athabasca University. Through this program I learned about paradigms, enlightenment, and the mercurial nature of truth. I learned much about the creation and construction of self and identity, the significant influences on the 'self' creative process, and self-actualization. The primary means of integrating these new ideas, for me, was through a deeply personal form of writing, and through a personal application of this new knowledge to an analysis of my own poetry. I am still dealing with the significant personal repercussions of such an approach. Nevertheless, through this program and the approach I took, I caught a glimpse of something extraordinary at the core of who we are. I was somewhat shaken by the realization that my 'sub' conscious mind had important things to say to me and had, in fact, been trying to get my attention for quite some time. This source of intelligence intrigued me, so I turned my search for meaning directly toward the core of self. It is an incredible journey that has enabled me to further explore the mysteries and the awes of being that intrigue me most.

It was at the core of self where I discovered the source of creativity. I hover around this space throughout this novel and I discuss and/or examine it from several angles. This is an interdisciplinary exploration. However, I believe enlightenment is a personal journey and responsibility. This is my journey, and I expand this exploration to include all forms of knowledge available to me: natural, spiritual, experiential, philosophical, creative, academic and scientific. More importantly, this is a reconciliation and integration of all forms. My most

profound discoveries have resulted from my experience with nature, the connection I have made between nature and spirituality, and the affirmation of this synergetic connection through writing and the study of astronomy, quantum physics, psychology, philosophy, cultural studies, and most importantly, through a life-time of joy, suffering and growth.

In a symposium on interdisciplinarity hosted by the Athabasca University Centre for Integrated Studies (November 7th-9th, 2008), Professor Derek Briton introduced the term 'interstitial space'. He defined this as a space in the middle of, or the space between, disciplines. He explained that interdisciplinarity in one way defines this space. Briton's definition of interdisciplinarity envisions the creation of new knowledge, not simply a combination of old. He further elaborated, or implied, that an examination of this interstitial space can awaken or transform consciousness.

I have come to believe that interstitial spaces are in fact critical to the creative process. As mentioned by Derek Briton, the space invoked through interdisciplinary studies is one of these. Another of the more significant is that nebulous interstitial space that exists between our conscious and 'sub' conscious minds. And yet another is the holding space within our own minds; an 'imaginary' space where we begin the process of self-construction, and where we return to renew, rebuild, re-create or transform the self when necessary. Another is that fearful entropic space against which self is formed, the same space, if we dare to enter, where self seems to expand into universal significance. And perhaps the most significant of all is that very large interstitial space between the singular core of self and our seemingly infinite and eternal universe.

Interstitial spaces create tension that ignites creative energy. Entropic voids create universes, and they consume them. Voids create identity, and they consume it. It is within interstitial spaces that my creativity is ignited, and it is within these gaps that my search for meaning is most fruitful. The interstitial spaces between the masculine and the feminine, the

logical accountant and the philosopher poet, the atheist and the mystic, the gay male and the fundamentalist Christian, the socialist and the conservative, the sacred and God, me and you, and my reverence for life and its brutality, are the spaces where I live. It is in these spaces that I feel most threatened, and it is also where I feel most alive. It is a place of death and rebirth. It is within the darkness of the void where the light of life is most powerful, and it is the fear of the void that drives me toward this light and the source of my creativity. When I emerge myself in these spaces with pen in hand, it is within the gaps between words that I find meaning and bring this meaning into the world. It is within these gaps that I become.

These are the spaces of creation. And their power is tremendous.

This novel is my journey of discovery. It is not yours. The truths within are relative to me. If you choose to read it, however, I hope you will find something of value to integrate into your reality, and perhaps create a space of tension that ignites the core of your being.

The Awes of Being, I hope, will take you on an incredible journey of discovery to a universe where anything and everything is possible – to a universe where you are the Creator.