

Foreword To Cam Danielson's Beyond the Horizon: Glimpses into the Lives of Exceptional Leaders & Implications for Leadership and Organization Development

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It was the eminent contemporary moral philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre, who long ago pointed out that our inherited cultural traditions are essentially constituted by a continual, more or less continuous set of arguments over what it means to be a member of that tradition.¹ To be an American, say, or a philosopher, or a Jew, is to be engaged in an ongoing, typically deeply contentious debate over what it *means* to be an American, a philosopher, or a Jew. According to MacIntyre, traditions are not monolithic, timeless, static entities, preserved, as it were, in amber; rather, they are dynamic processes of development, shaped and moved by conflicting themes and ideas. They are, to put it in a single word, dialectical.

Such arguments may contain rival premises that embody and reflect deeply conflicting, even incommensurable, claims to authority, knowledge, and truth; and thus yield quite different interpretations of reality. For this very reason traditions are liable to lapse into chaos and incoherence at any moment, and particularly at decisive junctures of change dubbed by MacIntyre "epistemological crises," in which the growing awareness of the possibility of multiple perspectives, and the inability to adjudicate between them, becomes critical. The tradition may then either unravel altogether, or else rise to the challenge of establishing a new cohesiveness through a revolutionary self-reconstitution. It was just such episodes of crisis in the discipline of physics, punctuated by the work of such creative giants as Isaac Newton and

Albert Einstein, that philosopher Thomas Kuhn called “paradigm shifts” and made the subject of his epochal work, *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

In other words, conflicts over basic questions of identity and meaning are always at the heart of a cultural tradition, and will reach a fever pitch of urgency at key turning points. A single tradition will yield different, even opposing answers to fundamental questions concerning its own significance, value, and purpose; and these answers will change, often radically, over time. The records of these shifts are the various, often mutually incompatible stories told in the present about the past: to wit, our histories. In other words, traditions have—or, to be more precise, *are*—rival histories. Ambiguity and uncertainty thus fertilize the creative roots of our common life just because conflict and change are at once endemic and unavoidable.

As MacIntyre himself would doubtless concur, what is true of traditions as a whole is likewise true of the individuals, as well as the institutions, that comprise them—and perhaps, if philosophers like G.W.F. Hegel and Heraclitus are to be believed, true of the very fabric of nature, the cosmos, and reality as such.

“Who am I? What is my purpose? What should I do?” From this vantage point, the self or “I” is not a single, simple entity, or a pure, unchanging substrate, but rather, a complex process driven and constituted by its inner conflicts and their complicated, ever-evolving dynamic, including a constantly shifting self-awareness and self-understanding. As we should have learned from C.G. Jung, we are all, in a sense, multiple personalities: a diverse, discordant family of selves engaged in an ongoing, more or less conscious, and often cacophonous inner dialogue.²

“Who are we? What is our true purpose? What should we do?” Similarly, any large organization—be it a government, corporation, political party, or academic institution—is not a monolithic entity possessing an unchanging identity with a single, permanent set of values, beliefs, and goals, or even an solitary locus of power. The congress and the president do not speak with one, harmonious voice; the AT&T of 2015 is not your great-grandfather’s AT&T of 1885; the Democratic Party of Andrew and Lyndon Johnson were not the same parties; and a university faculty may clash with its own board of trustees on crucial matters of educational policy.

Heraclitus knew that these psychological, social, and cultural patterns have metaphysical roots. *“Panta rei,”* he declared: “Everything flows; nothing abides.”³ Fire and water, the two great polar opposites in nature, were his favored metaphors for the dynamism of the world-process. “It should be understood,” he averred, “that war is the common condition, that strife is justice, and that all things come to pass through the compulsion of strife.”⁴ To think otherwise is sheer folly: “Homer was wrong in saying, ‘Would that strife might perish from amongst gods and men’. For if that were to occur, then all things would cease to exist.”⁵ Stasis is death.

“As above, so below.” Attributed to the legendary sage Hermes Trismegistus, this is the ancient mystical teaching of correspondences between the macrocosm, the great *cosmos* (order) of the universe, and the microcosm, or the little *cosmos* of the individual. The war of the gods as mirrored in the eye of humanity—or, alternately, the inward struggles of the human soul as projected outward upon the universal panorama—are related in the stories of our religious and spiritual traditions, or what Joseph Campbell dubbed “mythology,” which he said is nothing

more than the flight of the human imagination inspired by our own internal strife. “Myth” he opined, “is a manifestation in symbolic images, metaphorical images, of the energies within us, moved by the organs of the body, in conflict with each other. This organ wants this, that organ wants that: the brain is one of the organs.”⁶

Myths, like the life-stories of traditions, cultures, institutions, and individuals, are thus also subject to conflicting interpretations, and have their own trajectory of development—their own history—punctuated by deep crises of self-questioning; crises that may lead to the revolutionary transformation or radical re-interpretation of a mythology, or even, in some instances, its utter demise. Thus the authors of the *Upanishads* re-visioned the earlier Vedic gods in terms of an inward-turned mystical psychology; in the hands of a Siddhartha, Hinduism and Jainism was transformed into Buddhism; Saint Paul’s blending of Judaism and the Mystery Cults gave us Christianity; and the worship of Zeus-Jupiter is no more.

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The patterns of conflict, crisis and change, both in reality and in the stories we tell about it, are thus universal and ubiquitous. They are the basic leitmotifs sounded at every level of the universal symphony, from the heavenly music of the spheres on down to the different drumbeats by which each true individual marches.

The issue, therefore, is not *whether* we change, but rather, in the words of the author of the present work, Cam Danielson, *how* we confront the ever-present “challenge of change,” especially “when the parameters of meaning that frame our understanding become elusive and ambiguous”—that is to say, during those tricky, destabilizing episodes of epistemological crisis. “Too much change too quickly,” and

we are apt to lose our orientation, he observes, whereas “too much stasis over too long a period of time,” and we are in danger of losing our energy. There must be a balance; and yet, there are also times when we cannot avoid such losses, either.

But this is not another dry, academic book *about* change; it is itself a book of change, the mere reading of which will promote the further creative evolution of the human spirit. That is because the book’s author, while exceedingly conversant with the literatures of philosophy, depth psychology, business, statistics, and the classics (to name but a few areas of his expertise), is no mere armchair philosopher, think-tank futurist, or abstract theoretician. On the contrary, Cam is both a prime catalyst for, and direct experiencer of, the profound transformations of consciousness of which he so eloquently and thoughtfully writes in these pages.

The vineyards in which Cam labors are located in the fertile fields of the social mesocosm; that apparently solid, middle, mediating ground of our human institutions and their collective arrangements, where the microcosmic personal reality and experience of the particular individual meets up with—or, less charitably, bumps up against—the macrocosmic order of the universe at large.

Once upon a time, in the Middle Ages, the celestial hierarchy of the Father’s Heavenly Kingdom was seamlessly incarnated in the earthly hierarchies of state, church, marriage, and guild, with their Absolute Monarchs, Infallible Popes, Kings of the Household, and Master Craftsmen. To establish harmony with the universal order, the individual had only to serve and obey (masculine) Leaders. The situation nowadays is, to put it mildly, a bit more complex for leaders and followers alike, given the ubiquity of democracy as a social model and the fierce leveling force of our

cyber-technology. Even so, our institutions must serve the bridging function of bringing individuals together for common purposes within structures that serve as both mirrors of, and vehicles for, shared principles of order. The social mesocosm is still where the action is, where the rubber of the cosmic wheel meets the road of life.

Cam thus has his work cut out for him. His official, professional role as a director of executive and leadership development, training, and coaching programs has won him a formidable list of clients, including prestigious academic, corporate, and not-for-profit organizations. Unofficially, however, I have come to think of Cam as a contemporary incarnation of Hermes, the guide of souls and god of transitions and boundaries, inhabiting and traversing that fluid, creative borderland space betwixt and between worlds.

Indeed, the very concept of “in-betweenness,” or what Cam refers to in these pages as “liminality” (from the Latin *limen*, or threshold), turns out to be one of the skeleton keys to unlock the mystery of change. “Liminality,” he writes, “is a description of the transitional phase between different existential planes.” Thus, there are liminal periods or phases of our lives, when we are in-between jobs, marriages, or homes; liminal stages of development, when, say, we are not children anymore, but not quite adults yet, either; liminal stages of thinking, when we have abandoned one system of values, beliefs, and purposes, but have not yet adopted another; and even liminal states of consciousness, such as the hypnagogic or hypnopompic areas that border sleeping and waking, and which, with the proper preparation, instruction, and guidance, may become gateways to the kinds of expanded forms of awareness long sought after by yogis and mystics.

What, then, is the proper attitude to take toward liminality? In Cam's view, one should welcome, invite, and even cultivate it. And I concur. A cardinal statement of this view may be found in Joseph Campbell's mythological commentary on *Where the Two Came to Their Father*, the Navaho war ceremonial re-told by Maud Oaks, based on the version given to her by the old medicine man, Jeff King.⁷ In the story, the twin heroes, a warrior and a wizard, were miraculously conceived in a virgin birth when the Sun impregnated their mother, Changing Woman, by making its way across the sky. They are warned by Changing Woman not to venture too far from home, for there are monsters lurking around the house. But it is precisely to obtain weapons from their father, the Sun, in order to come to their mother's aid and slay those monsters that the boys seek to venture forth on their hero's quest.

"Don't go far from the house," Changing Woman instructs the twins. "You may go eastward, southward, and westward, but don't go north." As Campbell wryly observes: "Of course, they go north. How are you going to change the situation unless you break the rules? Her proscription is the call to [the hero's] adventure."⁸

Go North! We must therefore learn to make ourselves at home where there is no home, and courageously seek out the One Forbidden Thing ("Whatever you do, don't eat that fruit!" Yahweh warned Adam and Eve), and the phantom zones of reality. "Not unlike ships upon the sea," Cam writes, "these [courageous] individuals navigate their lives on the basis of a reality that lies beyond the horizon." A boundary, he suggests, should become "an invitation for further inquiry."

To allow oneself to be guided past all the known landmarks and familiar boundaries by an intangible, perhaps ineffable reality that can be intuitively sensed

in a subtle way, yet not perceived by the crude physical senses or catalogued by the rational intellect, is, in Campbell's terms, to answer "the call of the hero."⁹ It means becoming one of Colin Wilson's "Outsiders": individuals open to the experience of wonder—which none other than Plato himself declared to be the original source of all philosophical inquiry—and who, as a result, are driven to question themselves, their own dearest assumptions, and the received wisdom of their culture.¹⁰

Heroes and Outsiders do not love novelty for novelty's sake, change for the sake of change, however. They are not to be confused with aimless thrill-seekers or helter-skelter berserkers, just because the transformations produced by the strife of the cosmic push and pull are not random, chaotic, or meaningless. As Aristotle said, there is a creative intelligence in nature, which, implanted and expressed in each organism, propels it towards its own fullest development, mature completion, or wholeness. This impulse is what he called the *telos* (ancient Greek for "end, aim, purpose"). Or, as Black Elk succinctly explained to John Neihardt, "the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round."¹¹

In human beings, this instinctive, spontaneous drive to become well rounded or to cooperate with, what, following psychologist Karen Horney, Cam terms "the forces of spontaneous growth," is essentially the same process that Jung termed "individuation."¹² It is what Hermann Hesse called "self-realization;"¹³ what Friedrich Nietzsche dubbed the "metamorphoses of the spirit;"¹⁴ what William James identified as the *nisus* toward becoming "the More" that, in some important sense, we already are;¹⁵ and what my friend and fellow philosopher, Michael Grosso, following the poet John Keats, has described as the project of "soulmaking."¹⁶

Simply put, the *telos* of strife is evolution—the evolution of consciousness. Everything tries to be round, as Black Elk said; and there is no final end to this effort: it is unceasing. To become fully aware of our own inner contradictions is to achieve or realize a level of consciousness that at once contains yet transcends our self-division and its tensions, thereby opening greater possibilities for choice, creativity, and freedom. As Cam declares, “Mindfulness is to view our lives as experiments in fulfilling our potential. We do strive for self-realization, and in that striving all data are friendly.” This experimental ideal echoes Nietzsche, who urged us to find the courage to “become our own guinea pigs,”¹⁷ as well as Hesse, who held each individual to be “a valuable, unique experiment on the part of nature.”¹⁸ To accept our own unique value and the project of living our lives as an open-ended experiment is the challenge of venturing “beyond the horizon.”

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I first encountered Cam’s work several years ago, during my own border crossing adventure. I had decided to descend from my lofty theoretical perch, and the relative safety and comfort of my philosophical armchair, in order to undertake empirical fieldwork as a principal investigator in a research project. The aim of the project was to study the experiences of individuals who had attended programs at The Monroe Institute (TMI), in Faber, Virginia; programs that are designed to facilitate the individual’s experience of various liminal states of consciousness.

What I discovered in the course of my own research was that Cam had paved the way for me with his own previous, extremely insightful study of TMI program participants. This study is at the core of the present work and is one of its highlights.

Subsequently I had the privilege and delight of meeting Cam in person, as well as the opportunity to occupy a spot on the same seminar program at the 2012 meeting of the Monroe Institute's Professional Division. I can therefore attest to the fact that the range, depth, intensity, and authenticity that is at once expressed and suggested in his writing is greatly amplified by his actual presence and presentation. Through our further conversations I have also come to appreciate his formidable skills as a listener, which is an especially important ability to those of us who may have forgotten how to listen to the voices of our own inner selves.

Another highlight of this book are the tidbits of Cam's own personal journey that are judiciously sprinkled throughout the discussion, as illustrations of his points and as guideposts for the reader. They are not merely interesting sidebars and welcome additions, however; on the contrary, they are the necessary accompaniments to his basic argument. For one of Cam's key insights is the extent to which the rigid, artificial division of the subjective and objective aspects of reality, knowledge, and self that is part and parcel of our modern scientific culture and its epistemology, has harmed us and hampered our efforts at seeking wholeness.

The knower ultimately cannot be separated from the known. This is implied in the Latin *experientia* ("to try and test for oneself"), which is the common source of both of our English words, "experience" and "experiment". Within the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm, the meanings of these two terms diverged. But as Cam well understands, to accept the call of the new experimental life is to commit to bridging the gap between the "subjective" feelings of direct experience and the "objective"

rational examination of data, between investigators and their subject matter, between observers and participants. This will be one of our greatest challenges.

[Check out “Beyond the Horizon” on Amazon](#)

NOTES

¹Alasdair MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,” *The Monist*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (October, 1977), pp. 453-472. MacIntyre was my first and best teacher of philosophy. He served as my mentor, both as an undergraduate and later as a graduate student, when he stepped in to direct my dissertation while I was at The University of Chicago. In 1976, at Boston University, I took a seminar with him in which he was setting out the ideas that became the substance of his 1977 *Monist* essay. My discovery of philosophy triggered my own epistemological crisis, which in some sense is still unresolved.

²For an experiential exploration of Jung’s ideas about multiplicity, see W. Brugh Joy, *Avalanche: Heretical Reflections on the Dark and the Light* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

³Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*, in Jacob Needleman and David Appelbaum, eds. *Real Philosophy: An Anthology of the Universal Search for Meaning* (New York: Penguin/Arkana 1990), p. 173.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth*, PBS Video Series, Part 3: “The Message of the Myth,” accessed at <http://billmoyers.com/1988/05/30/joseph-campbell-power-myth-bill-moyers/> on 7/31/15.

⁷Jeff King and Maud Oakes, with commentary by Joseph Campbell, *Where the Two Came to Their Father: A Navaho War Ceremonial*, 3rd Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). (Original work published 1943).

⁸Joseph Campbell, *Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation*, ed. David Kudler (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2004), p. 127.

⁹Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 2nd Ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968). (Original work published 1949)

¹⁰Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1956).

¹¹John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008), p. 155.

¹²C. G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality* (Oxford, England: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939).

¹³Hermann Hesse, *Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth*, trans. M. Roloff and M. Lebeck (New York: Bantam, 1970).

¹⁴Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit," from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part I*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1954), pp. 137-140. (Original work published 1883)

¹⁵William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Modern Library, 1938). (Original work published 1902)

¹⁶Michael Grosso, *Soulmaking: Uncommon Paths to Self-Understanding*, 2nd Ed. (Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing Co., 1997).

¹⁷Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), p. 253. (Original work published 1882)

¹⁸Hesse, p. 4.