

F T E

A Newsletter For Women (and Interested Others)

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Interpretation

Some of us were discussing our relationships with men, in a Spiritual context. One woman had recently been rejected by a man whom she adored, and although feeling lots of pain about it, looked long and hard at the Spiritual reality of the whole event (from beginning to end). She admitted that she had projected her God onto him, and saw him as something far more grand (an ideal) than he really was. Of course, he didn't live up to her version of God, and it hurt.

She was talking about the different aspects of the relationship, and the emotions, sensations and feelings she has experienced (and still is). And suddenly she said, "It was all illusion, all of it."

This is not accurate. The sensations felt were an event that did occur in her body. The longing that we all feel at one time or another (or all the time) is real, and inherent in this world, because we are in it but not of it (we long for union with the world of which we *are*, and imagine it to be far away). The feelings of love were real; the emotions of fear (all along she suspected she would eventually be alone and thus incomplete) and greed and all the rest were misinterpretations of reality.

But most of all, he is real and she is real; and they really experienced an event, relationship and union. The illusions were all in the interpretation of these things, not these things themselves; the experience was real.

Now certainly some people say the whole world is illusion, everything is an illusion, we are but a dream of God and so forth. Or that all creation is error. You have heard these things and maybe even were reared to believe them.

The Teaching says the experience of feeling is real, and we all do feel, don't we. (With apologies to Rene Descartes, I feel, therefore I am.) What we are Working toward is *conscious* feeling, being Free To Experience Life. So to be conscious we want to avoid illusion, not avoid feeling. (We can't really avoid it, we can just pretend it's not there, another illusion). And the illusion is always in the interpretation, not in the experience.

The longing my friend felt before meeting her lover was a real experience. A real man appeared and appealed to her. This attraction was real. One illusion that emerges at this point with most of us is this: This union will make me complete. This union will make me happy and my survival depends upon happiness. These illusions take hold because we are unconscious, because we are listening to and believing the conditioning that says a man will complete or improve me or fulfill a *need*. We misinterpret real experiences of longing and attraction by not seeing them for what they are, by adding a bunch of "therefores" that are false.

That we *need* another is an illusion. That we can enjoy and appreciate another is not.

When we mistake the symbol for the real, we are living illusion. The union of male and female symbolizes the union of Life and Matter, of Spirit and Awareness. He *represents* Spirit, Life, that descends into the realm of matter to lift it up, enoble it; she *represents* matter enlivened, raised up, enobled, *made conscious*. This is a creation, a new being. Our relationships with men are symbols of this Truth, this reality. But if we contaminate the relationship with illusion, we are deluded and inevitably disappointed.

Spirit just floating around hovering above matter is not doing much with Its attributes. Matter just lying there not being used is not of much value, either. When they get together and something new is created (conscious Awareness), this is bliss. We act out this holy union with our companions, and the experience is real and feelings are real insofar as they communicate and represent Creation, God's work, if you will. When we steal it from God by imposing our own desires for pleasure and control, we have rejected Life, really, in favor of illusion.

So we can enjoy our men and be part of holy things, and *experience* all the bliss and all the pain of these relationships and still live reality; it is only illusion when we *misinterpret* what is going on, and "love" (really "like") unconsciously, for ourselves, in illusion. ⊗

Sensation

Most of us are sophisticated and would say that we are not slaves to sensation. Touching, being touched, pleasant smelling and tasting, hearing pleasant tones, visual stimulation, are all events we recognize as sensory, common to all mammals, and few of us would say that experiencing these events is our purpose of living (although a dear friend who is more honest than most freely admits this is his prime mover).

The sensory world is vast and being alive exposes one to it. But there are more variations of sensation than just the five primary senses we (unfortunately) take for granted. And one in particular is seldom seen as a sensory experience, though it is nothing more. That is the sensation of pleasure and satisfaction attained by exercising brain cells with logic and reason.

Logic is essential to getting along here, obviously. Our great mechanical world is based on it, and understanding these mechanics is fun, satisfying. But when logic is used to play with ideas of the Spiritual world, it fails. All this is, is play, unproductive except for the sensation it produces.

Certainly there is nothing wrong with play, except that to call something insight when it is not, to pretend to analyze the undissectible, to debate Spiritual concepts as if they could be good or bad (liking them or not), is foolishness. We can debate politics endlessly; we can debate what constitutes worldly standards of health (you notice they change with each new issue of a medical journal) and on and on. All these things of the world are debatable. The Teaching is not debatable; it is heard, it is checked out by acting upon the hypothesis (the Teaching is all hypotheses until the individual has checked out every bit of it) and it is accepted and made one's own, or rejected. There is no debate about what is healthy *for you* – just listen to Life, its signals in the body will tell you all you need to know. And there is no debate about what is Spiritual *for you* – just listen and check it out by action.

The sensations derived from debate can be deceiving because they are so satisfying. It is satisfying to understand the mechanical world. But when a mechanism is seen as complete, and satisfaction ensues, this is the end of it, we go on and do something else. One reason there is such endless debate about Spiritual matters is because “Spiritual debate” (an oxymoron) does not lead to Truth but perhaps to a conclusion, so that satisfaction is just always around the bend, like a carrot to a donkey. Unless the other person gives up and one feels she has won the debate, then she gets the carrot (and she gets to be donkey.)

So, despite the fact that science as understood by the world is the God of the moment, don't be deluded into thinking that imposing the scientific mechanism of debate to Spirituality is in any way profitable, it isn't. Those who do are just playing, just seeking sensation, indulging in little mental thrills for the fun of it, to consume sensation. ⊗

Column For Men (And Interested Others)

I happened to be in a motel room recently that had a widget on top of the TV with a switch and an A and a B, which I presumed correctly to be cable. It was on B, I turned on channel 3, and enjoyed the movie *Batman* (and had sensations of pleasure and amusement, and feelings of vital interest, and admiration, especially when noticing all the very clever anachronisms and so forth.) When it was over I switched to A. Well – llllll!!! I had no idea! Although not for lack of invitations, I had never, even though fortysomething, seen this kind of *most* explicit porno before. I had sensations of shock and then curiosity, and a feeling of sadness.

I honestly did not know such graphic stuff is the state of the art, smut-wise. It was *not* simulated (and it was not Real). And I watched for a while and saw a parallel between porn and the way some people live their whole lives, a parallel between porn and the common purpose of living.

There was no love whatsoever, not even any attempt to depict a little affection. Each participant was alone, despite the obvious partnerships, their faces showing quite clearly that each was in his and her (and her) own world of sensation, quite singularly.

The common purpose of living, to gain pleasure, attention, approval, importance and to avoid pain, rejection and being ignored and a sense of worthlessness, is strictly solitary, self-centered, exclusive of Life. Even the B-side which goes around “helping” and pleasing is the epitome of selfishness, as it is always done with a motive of gain or escape.

To live a life of self-centered greed for gain and escape is to live a pornographic life. One is tempted to compare this to animal behavior, but let's not slander the animals; undomesticated (not man-handled) animals do not pervert Spiritual ideas, while mankind in its great potential for consciousness and therefore with its ability to think, lives not only to gain and escape like animals, but to gain and escape by stealing and perverting ideas from the Real World.

And while real Love is not a feeling we can browbeat ourselves (or others) into experiencing (loving is something one becomes, not something one tries to do, it comes with understanding and a new purpose), certainly we can put our attention on others rather than on self, we can Work to remember to see them for what they are (expressions of Spirit), and probably all of us can demonstrate a little more affection than we do. (When is the last time you looked a busboy or a grocery bagger in the eye and said Thank you?)

Although I certainly see it as degrading to both actor and viewer and society as a whole, I am not opposed to pornography to the point of getting on any bandwagons. I think perhaps it might serve a useful function... surely if one were to watch enough of it, one would *have* to think What's *really* going on here? ⊗

We Get Questions

You sometimes mention making experiments for oneself. Would you please give us some sample experiments to do? I keep forgetting my New Purpose. I decide to act differently and then find that I don't — if you can give me some experiments to do, maybe I can remember.

There are at least two parts to this question, plus the question itself contains misunderstanding, which we will attempt to clarify.

First, if you have truly seen the old purpose, clearly seen what you live by and for, and sincerely make a new purpose, you will not forget the new purpose. (Did we forget the old purpose? Did we ever have to stop and remind ourselves to seek pleasure and avoid pain?)

If one is continually forgetting, one has not established a new purpose of living, one is most likely on a self-improvement binge. If I tell myself, _____ is bad, I want to be good, I make a resolution to improve, not to _____ anymore. This is not making a new Purpose of Living. This is trying to gain approval (from self or others), in some way live up to an ideal.

A new purpose of living cannot be made until the old one is really seen.

Now we hear all the time people saying, Well, of course I want pleasure and don't want pain, what else is new? They are referring to the fact that they hate traffic jams, they love ice cream, they don't like headaches, they like people who are nice to them, and so on. Yes, this is easy to see, but superficial (and all these things might remain even with a new purpose! but they will be seen as preferences, tastes, nothing important)

To really see our purpose of living, we must look in the cellar, in the dark places, we must look where we don't want to look. It is not looking at the obvious things that is The Work, that's too easy. We want to see the subtleness of our purpose of living; we want to see that we act as if our survival depends on having our way.

For instance, one of the hardest things for people to admit is that they try to control everyone and everything. That they interfere (sometimes subtly) with everyone's life if they possibly can. That they know what's best for everyone else. A person with this trait as the primary method of gaining pleasure and escaping pain would probably never see this without deep soul-searching, going deep down in the creepy places, because the false self has hidden the reality of this behavior from her.

She might one day see superficially that she seeks to gain pleasure and escape pain, but did not go deep within to see the false self for what it is, her prime mover. Perhaps she then says, I make a new purpose... to make a contribution.

She will make her life one big contribution of "helping"

people, whether they have asked for help or not. She will butt in and interfere, maybe tell them to do this or that for their benefit, all the time thinking she is living her new purpose. What she has done is given her old purpose, to control, a new name, to help. Nothing at all has changed.

We cannot talk about a new purpose of living until we truly face the old one, look in the mirror and see clearly what is there.

This is the essential Step One. So we really might wish to stop talking about a new one until the old one is recognized as *the motivation for every action I take*.

This is done by observing without condemnation or justification everything I do. Watch, watch, watch. (*I watch, not the #5 Not-I spies on me. This we ignore.*)

Now we may want to do little exercises to remember to watch. One told to me which works (for a little while; like anything else done repeatedly it can become an unconscious habit) is to wear your watch upside down. When you get accustomed to that, put it on the other arm. Sleep on the other side of the bed, etc. etc. You can provide yourself with countless little reminders to *wake up!*

So when we have changed direction, because we saw it was to our advantage to do so, not for any other reason, i.e., to be a good student, to be a good person, to avoid disapproval, to be more comfortable — then we may wish to start doing experiments.

An experiment is done to check something out, to find out the truth of it, to act upon a hypothesis in order to evaluate it.

For instance, back to Ms. Controller. Perhaps, like I was convinced for many, many years, she thinks controlling is the thing to do because *either control or be controlled*. She is told, "There is another way." She might set up an experiment to check this out (she has only heard there is another way, she has not experienced it). She might make up her mind to stay awake and await an opportunity to control (or one in which she is at peril of being controlled.) Her experiment might take this form: She has waited for the opportunity, and it has presented itself. She will refrain from acting in her usual manner (instinctively) to see what happens.

That's all. It takes (1) making up the mind to do it; (2) patience to wait for the opportunity; (3) consciousness to stay awake to recognize it when it occurs; and (4) being Free To Experience withholding her usual reaction.

This is not done for self-improvement! It is done to check out a hypothesis, in this case the hypothesis that one need not control or be controlled, there is another way.

Someone who is afraid of sweets (because they blame sweets for making them fat), may be told sweets can be eaten, one needn't finish the whole thing,

(Continued next page)

Question (Continued)

one can fully enjoy to complete satisfaction two-thirds of a piece of cheesecake, without guilt (and its atonement, starvation and deprivation), without gaining weight. She may never have experienced this and so for her checking it out will be acting on a hypothesis, an experiment.

Now the woman who ask our original question here (and who asked that this be put in the newsletter, so we are not embarrassing her), flies into terrible rages, usually directed at a particular person. She asked for experiments to make her remember not to get enraged. And she was told all of the above, that the question was not accurate, that the purpose must be seen first. Trying to stop rages, without examining purpose, is to try to self-improve, to try to escape the pain and aftermath of the rage.

I am the first to admit that it is very, very difficult really to see our purpose of living in all its many aspects. It is quite painful to really look in the mirror. That false self starts screaming death!!! death!!! when we get close to seeing. And this is why they call it the Work, capital W, it is hard Work. And like any honest labor, it is its own reward. ⊗

Read This Please

It is time to thin out the mailing list. We have no desire to clutter your mailbox with unwanted stuff, and of course postage is very high (although we are getting a Bulk Mail Permit; bulk mail is not forwarded, however, so if we don't have your current address you won't get FTE). IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FTE PLEASE RETURN THE ENCLOSED POSTCARD. Please do not phone in your request to remain on the list and please don't bury it as a line in a letter — the new list will be made from the returned postcards.

By the way, we had intended to provide you with postage paid Business Reply Cards, and learned the permit for this is \$60, plus the postage of course; it seemed your contributions could be put to better use, so please accept our apologies that you have to stamp the postcard. Please return the card by March 5. Thank you. ⊗

You know he's finally out of your system when you forget (or don't bother) to read his horoscope anymore.

Women's Book Club

If you are interested in participating either in person or by letter in the Woman's Book Club, please call the office for the current title. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 2:00 at the Harmony Workshop office, 2049 PCH, Lomita. ⊗

Worthy Quote

The *Los Angeles Times* Calendar Magazine did a review of some artist's work which most people, surely anyone reading FTE, would consider decadent, to say the least. An interesting response to the review and to the art was published and worthy of quoting, it was produced with some wisdom.

"Bravo to [the author's] astute observation that [the artist's] photos may at best compel us to question the freedoms that emerge out of the artist's 'curdled religious impulse.'

"His images convey a chilling absence of the freedom to create and to genuinely love.

"What kind of freedom does [the artist] leave us with? Self-absorption unto death?

"Unlike those whose art conveys the struggle for heaven while revealing at least a glimpse of its reality, [he] reminds us that the artist who scorns the eternal runs the risk of constricting life, not liberating it."

The author of this letter is not only a good writer but obviously has an appreciation for Life not much seen in today's popular "culture." But what I most liked was his line "...what kind of freedom — self-absorption unto death?"

Attention toward the self, inward, egotistical, is death. Trying to gain for self and escape for self is the path to death. Have you ever noticed that people's level of sanity is directly related, in almost perfect ratio, to their level of self-absorption? The crazier a person is, the more everything she thinks about and talks about is subjective. If you have ever listened to (one can't talk with) a bona fide psychotic, you know that not a phrase is uttered that does not reflect his or her self-interest.

And those we know whom we admire, those we run across occasionally who serve Life, seldom take note of their own wants, they do not give a thought to themselves. They are not self-absorbed, they are Life-absorbed, putting their attention outward in service, not inward in adulation of their own existence.

"Self-absorption unto death" might well be a very good watchword for us all. ⊗

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The Right To Know

A woman calls nearly every day to ask why her grandfather has to suffer. She complains constantly that she doesn't understand it and what a lousy world this is that she can't know these things.

One playing the role of The Grand Inquisitor (and I know several) was here yesterday demanding to know every detail about what I am doing, why I am doing it, and why don't I do it his way instead. (His digging was quite fruitless.)

The waitress at the local coffee shop asks constantly why I did not eat everything on the plate.

A great intellectual asks every time I see him why, if God is Love, Idi Amin exists (and variations on this theme). And on and on it goes.

There are two answers to all these questions, take your pick: I don't know and/or It's none of your business.

* * *

We have all been conditioned to think we have rights. They needn't be enumerated, you know them all by heart. The Teaching says that this idea of worldly rights is erroneous, that all these things we think we have a right to can be taken away, by violence, by suggestion, by seduction, and numerous other ways. Many things we think we have a right to are gifts, i.e., food, companionship, etc.

Although these specific rights are usually taught to us, it seems one in particular is almost inherent, from an early age: The so-called right to know. (Isn't it about three years old when they never stop asking Why???) It is error to think that we have a right to know anything. And it is especially fallacious to think we have a right to know by demanding.

People think that friendship (or almost any kind of relationship) entitles them to satisfy their curiosity about any facet of their friends' lives.

Spouses or others engaged in a physical relationship often think they have a right to possess the other person.

Parents often say to their children, I have a right to know, but they don't. They have a duty to do what's to the child's advantage, knowing what's to the child's advantage is part of duty, not a right.

But in the Work we are more interested in the huge idea that the student has a right to know Truth. Certainly I had felt as long as I can remember that I had had a right to know the Secrets of the Universe. In my greed to know I pursued every avenue available, and felt completely within my rights to ask anything of anyone I thought might know something I didn't know, and expected an answer. I do not have the right to know, I do have the right to learn.

The Greed to Know is a much more accurate phrasing of the occupation of most seekers. We simply were not born with a right to know anything.

BUT we do have a birthright. One could say we have an

entire Bill of Rights hinging on our birthright. They need not be won, they exist already, and no one can take them away. In its usual perversion of Real Ideas, the conditioning (which cannot create anything on its own) has taken the fact that we have a birthright and changed it into the common worldly idea of rights. But one part of the Idea is the same in both the man-made world and in the Spiritual world: We are free to exercise our rights, or not. It is entirely up to us. The Real World allows us to choose whether we wish to apply our birthright or not.

Our Real Bill of Rights:

I have the Right to choose my own purpose of living.

I have the Right to act on my purpose of living.

I have the Right to pay attention.

I have the Right to evaluate objectively.

I have the Right to learn by action.

I have the Right to choose my inner state.

I have the Right to choose my duties.

I have the Right to love.

I have the Right to ignore suggestion.

I have the Right to respond to challenge.

I have the Right to do what's to my advantage.

I have the Right to Experience Freely.

This list could go on and on, but an astute observer will see that these are all different versions of the same thing, our Birthright:

I have the Right to be responsible.

To demand information, either mundane or Spiritual, from others in order to feed an insatiable greed for knowing is not a particularly responsible activity.

You will be provided with EVERYTHING you truly need to know by exercising your birthright.

And the ONLY way to know if this bit of information is accurate is TO CHECK IT OUT. ⊗

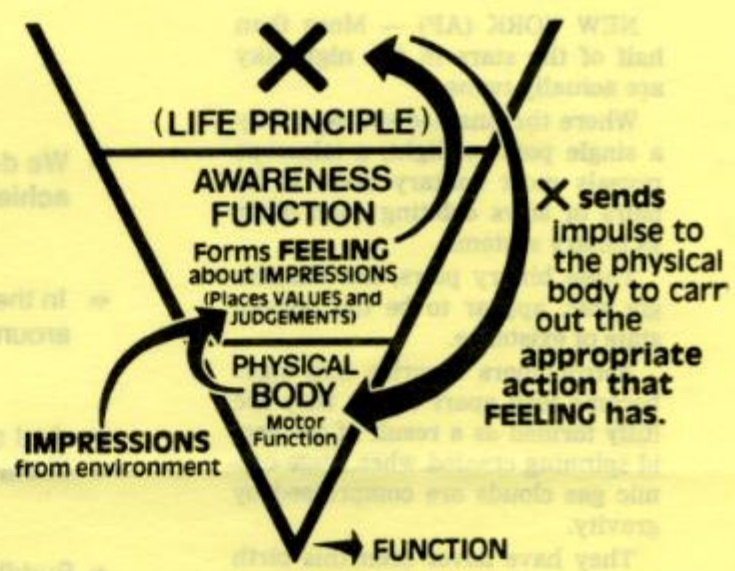
New Book Available

Harmony Workshop has available a new book by Marion Woodman, *The Ravaged Bridegroom, Masculinity in Women*. "Breaks new ground exploring the psychological impact of patriarchy. Continues the author's long-standing concern with the feminine principle, with a focus on the many ways in which a women's perspective on herself may be undermined by her inner man. Ample use of mythology, dreams, case material and poetic images that speak to the heart as well as the head." \$18 plus \$1 for postage (\$2 UPS). California residents please add \$1.22 sales tax.

Words

- BIRTHRIGHT** A valuable inheritance (which I did not earn; a gift) which cannot be taken away but which I can reject. The ability to be responsible.
- GREED** Exercise of the desire to consume. Insatiability. Death.
- LEARN** Evaluate a hypothesis by acting on it.
- RESPONSIBILITY** Doing what's to my/another's advantage.
- RIGHT** Something which cannot be taken away. A *method* of exercising one's Birthright.
- WHY** The ultimately unanswerable question. While a mechanical why question may be answered to satisfaction (Why won't the car run? It's out of gas.) why questions about Life are ultimately unanswerable. If a why question can be *legitimately* re-phrased into "what's going on," it might be answerable. Most, if not all, non-technical why questions are none of our business. ⊗

Picture of Man



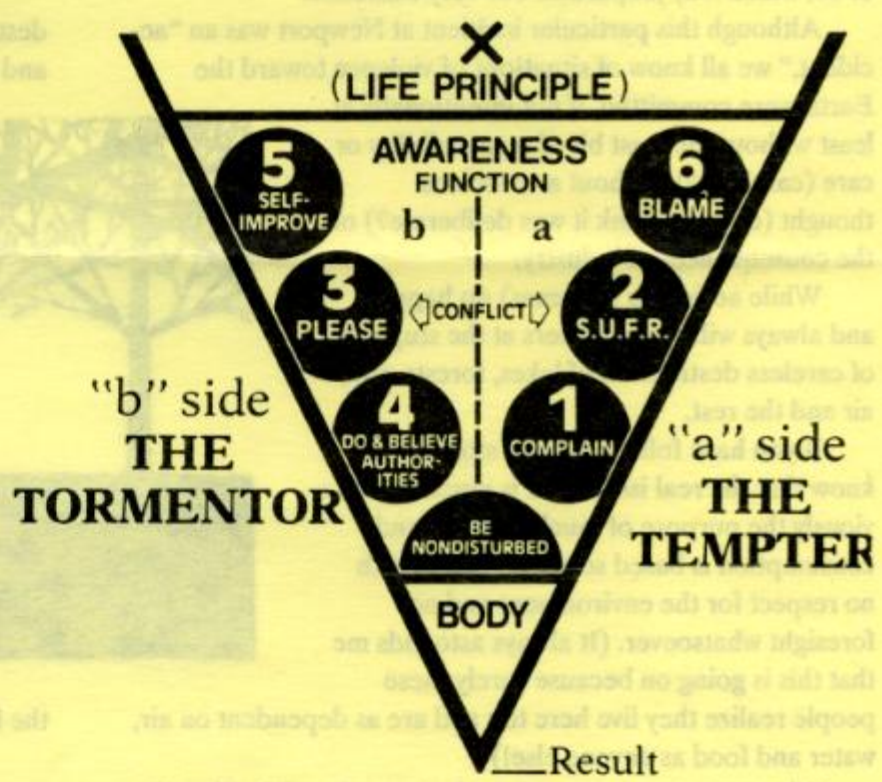
Conditioned Picture of Man

*I reason, earth is short,
And anguish absolute,
And many hurt;
But what of that?*

*I reason, we could die:
The best vitality
Cannot excel decay;
But what of that?*

*I reason that in heaven
Somehow, it will be even,
Some new equation given;
But what of that?*

EMILY DICKINSON



Twin stars more common than ever expected

NEW YORK (AP) — More than half of the stars in the night sky are actually twins.

Where the unaided eye sees only a single point of light, a telescope reveals most solitary stars to be pairs of stars orbiting each other as binary systems.

These binary pairs, not the single star, appear to be the normal state of existence.

Astronomers theorize that stars become torn apart before they are fully formed as a result of the rapid spinning created when huge cosmic gas clouds are compressed by gravity.

They have never seen this birth process, however, since it takes a gas cloud 100,000 years to turn into a binary system.

Symbolism — Parable

By Phyllis Robertson

- ← **We do not always see, know or recognize people who have achieved oneness with Spirit.**
- ← In the Real World — but not around here. We're mostly abnormal around here.
- ← And spend a long time yearning for reunion with lover/Spirit. It comes in that order, I think.
- ← Buddha and Jesus took fourteen or fifteen years, we hear, to get it together. For some of us it may be 100,000 years.

Ecology

You may have heard of the recent oil spill near Newport and Huntington Beaches. You certainly have heard of the terrible rape of the earth that has occurred this last generation or so, which may jeopardize our very existence.

Although this particular incident at Newport was an "accident," we all know of situations of violence toward the Earth were committed, if not intentionally at least without the least bit of responsibility or care (carelessly), without a conscious thought (dare we think it was deliberate?) of the consequences of industry.

While accidents (traumas) do happen and always will, one wonders at the stupidity of careless destruction of lakes, forests, soil, air and the rest.

If you have followed these stories you know that the real issue here is purpose. Obviously the purpose of much industry and consumption is based solely on greed, with no respect for the environment and no foresight whatsoever. (It always astounds me that this is going on because surely these people realize they live here too and are as dependent on air, water and food as anyone else!)

When we see a purpose based on greed, and facilitated

by incredible unconsciousness, we know the inevitable result: pollution, decay, eventual death; whether lake, forest, soil or man.

The only difference between this inevitable pollution and destruction of the Earth when motive is to gain and escape, and the inevitable pollution and destruction of a person

whose motive is to gain and escape, is scale.

While one treads thin ice making comparisons between similar events in different scale, in this case it seems accurate. The process is the same.

I was amused a year or so ago when after some ecological disaster, the president made a very loud and adamant speech to the effect that "We are going to find out who did this and make them clean it up!" Typical Not-I blaming to forestall (really to prevent) responsible action. (Blame rather than prevention.) The Not-I's will do their best to prevent creativity, involvement, responsibility on any scale.

But until the individual sees the greedy purpose of living to gain and escape pollutes, degenerates and ultimately de-roys himself,

the future looks dim for the larger ecology. ⊗

