

Violence and Redemption

Gilda Frantz

There is so much violence in our times that we often forget how violent humankind has been in centuries past. We have records from the 1500s through the 1800s detailing the horrific iron headgear used on women who had disobeyed the presiding conventions or dared to disagree with man or church. These instruments of punishment were so ghastly, it is easy to forget about contemporary instruments of torture used this very year in Afghanistan and in other countries. War seems rampant on our planet today, yet barbarism was ever present in ages past.

We certainly can't forget the 1930s and early 1940s, with Hitler's vicious plan to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe, as well as other minority groups, through the use of work camps that people entered and never left, having been murdered in gas chambers, shot, or worked and starved to death. The plan was barbaric, and many of those who carried out Hitler's plan were ordinary people who *became* barbarians.

What this tells me is that there is something inherently murderous in the psyche of humankind. When Jung was a boy in his early teens, some lads jumped on him and tried to pummel him. Being a large and very strong boy, Jung fought them off and then picked up one boy, gripped him under the arms, and swung the boy's body around so that he knocked down all the other boys and hurt them. Jung realized at that moment that he had a killer in him and thereafter was ever watchful of his temper. Jung still had a well-known temper, but he used only words to express his wrath after this boyhood experience.

I came in touch with my own killer within, my own violence, when a dear relative died unexpectedly and the police examining the case were seeking a possible murderer. When I learned of this possibility, a feeling arose within my chest of such rage, such a desire to murder, that I was totally shocked at the intensity of the emotion. Thank God the investigation showed that the death was by natural causes and not murder. I will never

again forget what I saw inside my own heart. I was particularly shocked as I had always thought of myself as being against killing of any kind, against the execution of criminals, against corporal punishment, and I would go out of my way not to kill a fly or an ant (I still do). Many of my former beliefs have stayed with me, but now I have to admit that I, too, am capable, at least inwardly, of committing a blood crime.

In wanting to kill the person I thought was the perpetrator of a murder, I was seeking revenge for something I felt needed my hand in it. I was going to right this wrong by my own hand. I was going to correct the wrong by killing the person who had done the wrong. It was definitely an eye-for-an-eye moment—a moment I am not proud of, in any way. Rather I am scared by it.

Each of us lives with these opposites within us, hopefully not being forced to go one way or the other, but finding a way to reconcile them. Redemption can come in many ways, sometimes taking generations to be experienced, such as in those stories we read about in Greek myths and have observed in the Shakespearian theatre. Sins of violence have to find redemption—the topic of this issue.

In this issue Naomi Ruth Lowinsky, a San Francisco Jungian analyst and poet, gives us "History Is a Ghost Story: Reflections on South Africa, Collective Trauma, and the Uses of Poetry." Dr. Lowinsky uses her powerful and expressive voice to tell the story of her ancestors, and through her poetry and compassion, she expresses the "trauma of my people, the Shoah"—and finds "despite it, within it, because of it, a relationship to the divine." In this article, she also addresses the painful and poignant issues of violence and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Pamela J. Power, also a Jungian analyst, writes about the complex phenomenon of violence as it manifests in the collective and in the psychology of the individual. Drawing upon both personal and scholarly sources, in "Violence and the Religious Instinct" she demonstrates how violence is an essential component of the religious instinct.

You will also have the delight of reading Part III of Winifred J. Sharp's "The Story of Two Toes." In this installment, Two Toes returns to his own people in a transition time that is full of danger and tests, but in the end yields a blending of animal, soul, and spirit.

In "Four: A Reflection on the Wholeness of Nature, Part II," physicist and Executive Director of the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles Christophe Le Mouél continues his reflection on the symbolism, of the number four in relation to a series of dreams he had after completing his Ph.D. in quantum physics. He shows how the stepchild of science, subjectivity, gradually returned to the scene, reinvested with validity, by considering recent advances in the understanding of quantum mechanics.

Our poetry editor, Naomi Lowinsky, presents the work of Dennis Saleh as our featured poet. His poems transport the reader to mysterious sights, sounds, and textures, opening magical doors into unexpected worlds. Our book review editor, Ann Walker, brings us an insightful review by V. Walter Odajnyk, and the compelling images of our featured artist, Yoshitoshi, can be found throughout the issue.

Yoshitoshi

Yoshitoshi's creative imagination gained expression in 19th-century Japan in a time of civil and political disturbances between the remnants of the old Shogun government and pro-imperial sympathizers. The effects of a deeply recessed economy were pervasive throughout the country, leaving the people's work for instilling a sense of a profound family upbringing against this national backdrop. Yoshitoshi sought out painting as a refuge to note the hostility and horror he witnessed around him. After being under the tutelage of Kunisada, one of the great masters of the Ukiyo-e tradition (noted for depicting the impermanence of life, beauty, and the realm of entertainment), the young artist created his first work in 1853 at the age of 14. At that moment was becoming modernized within Japan due to the introduction of photography and lithography for mass reproduction of images, yet Yoshitoshi continued in this style involving the woodblock over the years, pushing the medium to a new level. His work depicted the graphic violence, blood, and death of his surroundings, incorporating a dark element into the culture. Samurai battles, crimes, monsters, and ghosts began infiltrating his imagery, acting in contrast to the sensual beauty of maidens and landscapes often associated with this genre of "pictures of the floating world."

The artist produced his prints in affordable series for the public. In addition to triptychs that centered on the life within the Kabuki Theater, his most renowned works were *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon* (1888-1892) and *New Forms of Thirty-Six Ghosts* (1889-1892). The later pictures were based upon a game where lewd stories are told by candlelight—one light being extinguished after each story was told. (A. Chispa and J. Levine. Available online at <http://www.yoshitoshinet.net/series/300ghosts.html>.)

Although his inner world of fantasy proved rich, Yoshitoshi was plagued with mental problems throughout his life and eventually died at 33. His death poem read: