

Ariadne's Thread

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It has been my heritage to be educated in the West, versed in its science and implicated in its imperialist conquests. However much I may wriggle and squirm, this is still the place from where I start.

It has been my opportunity to arrive at Schumacher College, and work next to the native elder, Brian Goodwin, remembered in this issue. He understood a different vision that came to him whole. Brian and co-editor Stephan Harding founded at the college an MSc in Holistic Science.

Holistic Science can mean many things to many people: an acceptance into somewhere we wished we had started from, an inclusion into a vision that we might go towards. Some see it as prayer, some as a fieldwork, some as an exploration: a kneading back into the earth that cast them. Above all, Holistic Science remains a question that seeks to pre-empt the negation that society specialises in, as only one answer, alongside of which is an equally powerful experiential assertion.

Terry Irwin, now head of Carnegie Mellon University School of Design, told us that one of Brian's titles for a Holistic Science journal would have been *Ariadne's Thread*. Ariadne, according to Greek myth, supplied Theseus with a thread. By unrolling the thread as he entered the labyrinth on his quest to kill the demon at its centre, he could retrace by the thread his way back to life. Going into the roots of science, we emerge from the labyrinth by clasping the two-forked nature of seeing.

Ariadne's is the holistic thread spun in the silk of learned experience that is able to lead the reductive mindset of focussed inquiry to confront its own central nemesis. Perception seeking into the inner eye of its journey finds the way of release. The lateral sight of twofold seeing allows one to go into the labyrinth of one's own deception and yet to be immune to the fear of its illusion; true, one prong of our inquiry will always leave us pointed at by the wasteful eye of the sprawling city, but the other points us towards a world that is still pure.

Any attempt to fix upon one example of a thread is going to disappoint some. In another's language it is difficult to understand the backward pointing complexity as one seeks to spin out of one's known experience, a record that allows Theseus to meet the demon at the centre and find the golden track back to wholeness. For the thread can only be spun out of the materials of who we are; we will recognise in *Ariadne's* thread details of her dreams of love, hopes of a future and snatches of fairy tales all woven together to help Theseus escape.

So the thread of this issue is pieced together with snatches of science, patches of philosophy, catches of curiosity that are taken from the lessons we learned as a child, woven back to remember the way into the maze of wholeness and fragmentation. Maybe you will gasp at the thread so bohemian, when you expected to meet in the journal at last that golden strand that held you to the majesty of your finest self. Yet the point of the thread to wholeness, made from the wasteful pieces thrown from the classroom, is that it is made up from our origins.

For, once, (when? the Big Bang? the garden of Eden?) there was a whole question, whose cutting up is remembered in the fragments that line our material nests. Spinning together the culture's stories, we trace back into the heart to find wholeness. Though numbers and scientists and Pauli and his archetypes - who you might never even have heard of - might seem just rags to the disapproving mind, woven together they lead to where you too are going.

In forthcoming issues we will highlight scientist, potter, forest-gardener, poet, who all in their own unique way have come to weave together the forgotten rags of a culture drunk in its riches and follow the way to the heart. Laugh at a thread made from material different from your own. Wish to add your story-twirl of living-fabric to the ones we present here. Together we will find the junction where the road forks and sign the way out of the labyrinth of fragmentation to a whole future.