

From the Kitchen

3 November 2010



I seem to have come back as two people, or as one person inhabiting two worlds. Having returned from Europe, I slept on and off for almost four days and it was not jet lag.

It wasn't quite sleep – it was more a phasing out or a reality shift. I drifted into a dream-like state with images flashing past from my time in Europe – the recent two weeks and from the three and a half years I was there more than thirty years ago. Something was unreal and I had trouble deciding which it was: the then or the now, the there or the here.

After some reflection (in the here and now) I came to the conclusion that the whirlwind, three-city trip released memories connected with unresolved matters from my time there in the 1970s: previous relationships, friends I had made and had lost contact with and relatives I had not been in touch with for decades. And there is the possibility that I have a largely unacknowledged deep connection with the land over there.

I remember, when I flew over Nederland in 1976 after more than twenty years in Australia, and as we descended into Schiphol airport, I was teary and feeling as if this was a home-coming. It obviously was in a way. I did not experience any of this as I whizzed through London, Amsterdam and Brussels this recent time, but it seems to have caught up with me now that I am home.

Having migrated numerous times from country to country, from city to city, from city environment to rural environment, from mountain forest to bayside, I sometimes wonder whether home can be in more than one place at a time; whether all this moving about has fragmented me. Being healthy means being whole, complete. If I am fragmented by disparate connections, then wholeness could elude me.

What can I do to heal this aspect of me? How do I bring the roots closer together to prevent the trunk splitting?

I have quoted the Jungian psychologist Liz Green before, that “we are fated to the extent that we are unconscious” ([From the Kitchen #65](#)). By this she means that we respond unconsciously to events and circumstances. If we can bring more from the unconscious into awareness (i.e. get to know ourselves better), then we will experience less bewilderment and feel less as if we are being buffeted around by things we don't understand. This is probably where the answer lies to why I feel split between worlds. If I can bring into consciousness those unresolved fragments from my past, I will likely gain the insight I need to lay them to rest. Past experience has taught me that this requires determined work – inner work achievable through meditation, the tools of [Psychosynthesis](#) and the time and place set aside to immerse myself in these.

It is possible that much dis-ease has its origins in people's fragmented, or absent, connection with land in a meaningful way. Owning a piece of land, evidenced by a piece of paper, is not the sort of connection I mean. I am talking about a deep sense of belonging, of oneness with

the land and the life it supports. It can be evidenced by a feeling of inner peace, of feeling whole and even of communing with the land. Many people experience this, not where they live but somewhere on vacation. They may express this as “I could happily spend the rest of my life here”. This experience is not due only to being away from work and day-to-day chores connected with running a household; it comes from truly feeling of being at one with surroundings.

I have written elsewhere about my difficulty when I moved from the Dandenong Ranges to bayside Mount Eliza – my inability to feel a connection with my new surroundings. I have had to work at finding that connection through walking the land, especially the ‘wilder’ places, such as creek reserves and remnant bits of forest, as well as along the miles of beaches and cliff tops. And I have spent many hours sitting quietly in places which I started to feel were speaking to me, breathing in the energy of each place and visualising what each place was like before non-indigenous people came here.

For most of us, the work we do for an income takes us away from what nourishes us. Finding a place to sit quietly, surrounded by trees, birds, insects and animals can give us that nourishment – through the simple act of doing ‘nothing’ and through our becoming part of the place where we are sitting. The magic is in allowing yourself to be owned by the land, rather than the other way around.