

Response to Commentary

Response to the Commentary of Frederick D. Abraham

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I thank Abraham (2010) for his schooling me on Heidegger and Derridean deconstruction. Especially important, I think, is the notion that any creation, perhaps especially linguistic, cannot help but obscure as much as it reveals. Choices must be made and directions chosen. This very insight reveals how symbolization and mythmaking are always in some way a disguise. My essay, "Hollows of Experience," which Mr. Abraham is critiquing, cannot help but be so, too, but I have striven to call forth the labyrinth of our confusion (as in my frontispiece from Klossowski) so my non-referential concepts (like hollows of experience) may open a doorway that indicates a possible way out.

Derrida does indeed indicate that the *metaphysics of presence* is an illusion. I take this to mean that one effect of living within the symbolic is that we live in a time-delayed reality. When we discovered speech, we expanded the space or, rather, the time, between the stimulus and the response, but it also *takes time* to process incoming information through memory, to recognize it according to our memory structures, and to choose a response from remembered responses or none at all. In this way, our very perceptions are of events that have already happened. Our self is the "bag of memories," as Ken Wilber once put it, through which we consciously experience, and nothing is but what is not. Thus my suggestion, from Merleau-Ponty, that the way out of labyrinth of self may be found in direct, unmediated contact with what we once were in the hollows of memory, and from which we can move forward or outward only when we recognize our new identities in each other and our world.

For me, however, such liberation is far from the social or political sense. I hint at a highly personal transcendence (of the ego-structures that keep us conscious only through selfhood) that is yet transpersonal. It is the death of the self, feared by all selves, but yearned for with increasing desperation by the unconscious soul of us all. As Theodore Roethke expressed it in "In a Dark Time":

*Death of the self in a long, tearless night,
All natural shapes blazing unnatural light.*

References

Abraham, F. D. (2010) Brief comment on Gregory Nixon's Hollows of experience: Derrida. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 338-341.

Nixon, G. M. (2010) Hollow of experience. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 234-288.

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