

Before I Am, We Are

Author: Freeman, Mac

Publication info: Journal of Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology & Health 13. 3/4 (Spring 1999): 263-277.

[ProQuest document link](#)

Abstract: None available.

Full Text: It is only a few years since I, a psychologically trained and educationally active father of four came to realize that a baby in its mother's womb is NOT like a little potato, swelling up in the dark until the time comes to rise to the surface, to be cut off from its vine, washed and pruned, to await, in a few days, the opening of its eyes. I was not a backward father out of touch with "common knowledge"; rather, "common knowledge" was until recently out of touch with the facts of this amazing little creature that we call a human baby. From a single cell smaller than a pencil tip, in some 40 weeks there burgeons a self-launching "rocket ship" increasingly ready to monitor its many internal interlocking systems in preparation for the countdown, which normally the ship itself calls for when its internal communications network is ready to operate effectively during its traumatic transition, which we call its birth. Hardly a blind potato in the dark! "Common knowledge" still insists that a baby is born when it leaves its mother's body. Yet if we had not been raised to equate birth with the delivery and earlier had the facts now available on the development of this human offspring, we might well have delayed a baby's actual birthday until a half year or so after the day of delivery. By that time the infant would be self-propelling, self-feeding, and able to travel with its mother like many other newborn mammals. It is even more recently that another realisation has come into my head full of "common knowledge". A human baby does not start off as an I but as a part of We. I expect that most mothers on hearing me say that would exclaim, "Well, of course! Any mother knows that!" There are cultural subgroups in which persons start off as We and also end up still as We. But in our North American white, male-dominant culture the emphasis has increasingly centered on I, first and last. Not on I and We, but on I and Me (SEE APENDDC). When I was a child, I learned as "common knowledge" that most persons are I-centred by nature. To be generously concerned for others is a morally good attitude to be developed, or instilled by societal pressure. A few years ago, I learned that the renowned researcher into the development of children, Jean Piaget, had derived an axiomatic conclusion confirming "common knowledge", that "the child's initial universe is entirely centered on his own body and action is an egocentrism as total as it is unconscious (for lack of consciousness of the self)." (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969, p. 13) But by that time, I as a father had observed some infants who seemed to be exceptions to Piaget's dictum, in that they could entice me and other adults around them to play with them in joyous interaction. Then I ran across some research findings confirming my sense that infants are quite capable of being part of We. Condon and Sander of Boston University made a remarkable discovery, which they published in 1974. Using microanalysis of high speed sound films of mothers speaking privately to their babies between 12 hours and 2 days after delivery they found that even at this early age, (and it may be as early as minutes after delivery), babies move in synchrony with their mother's voice, as do the mothers, thus executing a sort of dance. Specific body movements are linked with particular sounds, with such regularity that one can learn to predict just how a baby will move when its mother addresses any communication to that baby. A casual onlooker misses this subtle linkage, but the attentive mother does not; rather she is "turned on" by her baby's responses to her. Commenting on this responsiveness between newborn and mother, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a leading neonatologist of Harvard and Boston, likened it to the "mating dance" of swans (Brazelton, 1976, p. 74). For further confirmation of the reality of We-oriented behaviour by infants, examine these observations by Brazelton, et al. published in 1975: We are convinced that in a "good" interaction, mother and baby synchronize with each other from the beginning and that pathways may be set up in intrauterine life, ready to be entrained, especially by the mother immediately after birth. Intrauterine experience with other maternal cues, such as auditory or

kinesthetic, may well set the stage for enhancing the meaning of the synchronous rhythms. Rhythmic interaction seems to be basic to human affect. (Brazelton, 1975, p.148) It seems that before I am, We are, in primal ways. Yet we all know about "terrible two's" and about children "wanting their own way" to the extent of having a temper tantrum in the supermarket. We remember our own childhood yearnings to become competent as I and to be validated by significant others. Can someone now make sense for us of a developmental journey from a primal propensity for We through the terrible two's and later, through adolescent rebellion focused entirely on I to a mature propensity for We and I? As I have pondered the complex interweavings of We and I, what I have come to call "the dynamics of We and Me", I have been assisted by the metaphor of "duet". In a bona fide duet there are two developing centers of self-expression, two I's, but each also is learning to be attuned to their We to achieve the duet interaction. Accordingly, this duet is made possible by both "duet soloing" and "attunement", both being competencies to be developed but also naturally wired into us from birth. Duet soloing is familiar to anyone who has watched a superb doubles match in tennis, or Olympic skating pairs as they interact in their precise dance, or "No. 99"-Wayne Gretsky, as he combines his dazzling individual prowess with his equally dazzling assistance to his hockey teammates. For such duet soloing, a willingness to listen is a prerequisite combined with a capacity for empathy with the energy, the pacing, and even the mood of the duet partner. Exquisite self-control must be learned to match the moves of the partner, while at the same time expressing one's solo artistry. The attunement competency is like having an ear for resonance, for "picking up the vibes" and adapting to them. But it is even more complex because each would-be member of the duo must first know what the other is doing. This coming-to-know process entails a "decoding". Each has to read new signals and make sense of them to collaborate appropriately. A duet is not always balanced like a seesaw: one partner may be more developed than the other. Nevertheless, attunement is possible so that old and young, senior and junior, veteran and amateur, can enter into duet. It requires a patient effort by the more advanced partner, who is able to be more responsive to the duet possibility, not to remain in that imbalance but to foster the development toward balance. A mother and infant duet starts off imbalanced. How early does their duet start? I was pondering that pivotal question some years ago when another surprising thought came into my head to jar my "common knowledge", and this one, like the others, has by now become insistent. I had been listening to a Capitol recording called Lullaby from the Womb, made by a Japanese obstetrician, Dr. Hajime Murooka. (This recording has recently been re-issued on cassette.) On one side I had heard recorded the pumping sound of the maternal hydraulic system as picked up by a small microphone placed in the uterus beside the head of an eight month fetus. The pulsating "body beat" is deep and "whooshy", its frequency that of the pregnant mother's heartbeat, around 90 beats per minute. On the reverse side are several beloved classical music selections, each with a fundamental rhythm close to that of the maternal heartbeat. Bach's "Air on the G String", on the second band, led me to the notion that my fondness for that piece of music could be related to remembering the rhythm I had once heard or felt in my mother's womb. Dr. Murooka reports on the record jacket that "of the 403 sobbing babies who listened to the tape, every single one stopped crying, with 161 infants dozing off to sleep in an average of 41 seconds". The thought of a possible connection between music we love and our mother's heartbeat excited me and it raised other conjectures, about aboriginal drumming, about the big lush beat in many country and western favourites, and the too-fast-for-me beat in much contemporary pop music. I thought of comments made by war veterans concerning Scottish pipe bands. They insisted that "you could march all day to their beat and not get tired". But then came a startling new thought, triggered by hearing the last selection on side 2 of Murooka's Lullaby, "Panorama" from *The Sleeping Beauty* by Tchaikovsky. This music has the same hydraulic pulsation, but I suddenly heard a second beat, faster and higher-pitched. . . . Like the fetal heartbeat? The thought stunned me! Dare I speculate that Tchaikovsky so composed that music because he remembered a rhythmic duet in his mother's womb? Could it be true that we are drawn to it as a favorite because we too find the duet to be familiar? I was told, on inquiring, that the heart of a pre-nate starts beating the 25th day after conception, about 180 times per minute and gradually slows down to 120 by delivery time: the

maternal frequency starts around 80 beats per minute, and gradually increases to 95 or 100. Thus the ratio of the two frequencies varies considerably, but may average about 2:1. Then my speculation might not be wild? I dared to set my hearing to pick up rhythmic duets in other favorite music, and lo, they are there in abundance! I began to watch the clapping hands and tapping toes of musical performers and their audience; I talked to a professional drummer from a Forties big band; I studied fingers strumming guitar strings; I heard in a new way what may be the most beloved of all classical pieces-Pachelbel's Canon, I was soothed deeply by Mozart's twenty-first Piano Concerto, the second movement, which is the familiar "Elvira Madigan" music, I was "grabbed", like most other listeners, by an amazing electronic rendition of Oxygène by Jean Michel Jarre. And I "found" what has become my favorite country and western song-Willow in the Wind as sung by Kathy Mattea. A rhythmic duet was manifest in all of them! I knew that Native peoples sometimes speak of the drum as being the "heartbeat" of Mother Earth. Accordingly, when the opportunity came for me to watch Native men around one big drum, I was all eyes and ears. But when the drumming began I was puzzled-they were beating too fast for a usual maternal frequency, about twice too fast . . . ? Then I saw a Native woman standing beside them, moving to every second beat! I explored music made by Québec Inuit people, expecting to hear a characteristic drumbeat, but instead I heard remarkable throat singing by three women at a concert: their Song of a Tree and Song of the River and other songs pulsated just like the recorded mother's hydraulic system. I was not able to be present to watch for a twice-as-fast second frequency in the movement of bodies in their audience, but I am confident it was there somewhere. A student returning from Nepal reported seeing folk-dancing each evening by the people of an isolated mountain village, the women in one circle and the men in another concentric circle, dancing to two frequencies matching those of the mother and fetus! By now I was intuiting a memory of two beats interacting, because, to put it in fun terms, each of us was gestated within a jam session featuring two drummers for 24 hours a day for about 36 weeks. The fetal child is one of the drummers, i.e., its pulsating system, and the mother is the other, through her pulsating womb. But what about persons who are not musically inclined? Would they have a corresponding fascination for two interacting beats? So I began to ask persons in every audience available whether they had an inclination to avoid stepping on the cracks in the sidewalk. (As one walks along, one's feet tap out one frequency, and the sidewalk cracks passing underneath mark out another, which is about half as fast.) Sure enough, there would be a ripple of amusement in every audience as many admitted their fascination with how these two frequencies relate to each other. Then I would ask how many were drawn in by the two windshield wipers on buses to see whether they would ever get in step. This question drew much laughter every time. It seems that windshield wiper watching on buses is almost an obsession! Why?! Two interacting frequencies again! Had I found sufficient evidence to justify a hypothesis that you and I were a duo with our mother from almost the beginning of our development? I wanted more. So, if there are two hearts beating in a 1: 2 ratio and the mother's beat speeds up, does the fetal beat also speed up? Yes. How quickly does it respond to the change? I still do not know enough about this, but I began to play with the possibility that with some time lag between maternal heartbeat and fetal heart adjustment, there would be for the fetus the feeling of rhythmic syncopation. This rhythm would happen over and over again. Who knows how this subtle shift could be registered in a pre-nate's memory, but surely it is interesting in this connection that many of us really like Dixieland music which is packed full of rhythmic syncopation. Listen to the Preservation Hall jazz band playing Blues and be "torn apart" by the shifting frequencies. The noteworthy thing is, we LIKE it, it feels "right" even though formally, it is "wrong". Did J. S. Bach also "know" this when he wrote his six Brandenburg Concertos? I suppose the supreme test of my hunch would come in the case of twins, where three "drummers", not just two, would be interacting. I recall vividly a night in Naramata Centre, British Columbia, when I was speaking to an audience about this duet theory: at the end of my talk a middle-aged woman stood before me, tears streaming down her cheeks as she said, "All my life I have loved music with three beats. I have never understood why until tonight-I am a twin whose brother died at birth." About this same time I received a remarkable confirmation of the primal duo from two parents, both Special Education teachers. In the account of

the gestation of their two children, a girl then two and a boy, age one. During each pregnancy both mother and father had sought to send repeated messages in to their babies. The mother beamed in love as she read aloud in their quiet home each afternoon. The father on arriving home from school each day, said "Yoo Hoo, I'm home" from just outside the mother's abdomen. From 25 weeks on, in both pregnancies, an astonishing thing happened: every day, as the father said his words on one side, a bulge appeared there; when the father shifted his voice to the other side, the bulge went over there. Back and forth from side to side, every day for the 15 remaining weeks, in both pregnancies, father and fetus played tag! The very close bonding of the newborns with both parents was dramatically manifest and has strongly continued in the years since. I am now persuaded that for human beings, the first natural learning habitat is in duet. That the interplay of two beats draws us is undeniable, but I think this is only an indication of our profound readiness for interactive, interdependent, "duocentered" development almost from the beginning. It is no fluke that babies right after delivery will imitate the facial expression of the adult nearest them (Meltzoff and Moore at the University of Washington, reported by Schiefelbein, 1986, p. 39). It is no one-in-a-million happening that newborns move in compelling ways so as to "capture" their caregivers. (Brazelton, 1985, xi) It is no chance variation that an infant begins to learn its mother tongue through interaction with its primary caregiver and even earlier, while in the womb! As a duet/soloist in the making, a human infant comes equipped with a remarkably sensitive attunement capacity comprised at least of an aptitude for decoding the strange signalling of its primal duet partner plus an aptitude for adapting its own signalling for the sake of resonance. I have not yet worked through how the decoding and adapting for resonance flow into the complex mental powers of the burgeoning child. I surmise that where the sensitive receptiveness of the infant is overtaxed, blocking/filtering out can occur. Not that one bad day will ruin a life, for a baby is very resilient and there is some built-in protection against overload. Of course, if a mother is psychologically unbalanced and thus unavailable for consistent, positive duet learning, then the fetal child must learn not to reach out for a duet partner. Duetting itself might prove so painfully unpredictable that it would be filtered out as an option. Research has shown that newborn infants of sighted mothers turn first to the mother's eyes for a response, while infants of blind mothers, having tried the eyes, turn to mother's hands. Infants of weakly sighted mothers waffle between eyes and hands. Maybe similarly, an infant with a psychotic mother seeks in her eyes, her hands and in all else about her, consistent signals to decode for mutual resonating, but in vain, so gives up on duetting. How would such duet deprivation affect the infant's subsequent interactions? Might he/she come to declare with Piaget that all human infants are egocentric, because he/she had to be so, to survive at all? Might the meaningmaking following upon that early loss and the resulting decoding bias be diverted away from affirming human interdependence and move instead toward a declaration of independence, starting in infancy and peaking in adulthood? In his 1990 book, *Iron John, a Book About Men*, Robert Bly declared: When we are tiny we have the feeling we are God. Our kingly life in the womb pointed to some such possibility, and if anyone, once we are out, tries to tell us we are not God, we don't hear it. (p. 33) I am curious what led Bly to that biased generalization. In the case of Piaget's generalization about infant egocentrism, he himself has said somewhere in his writings that his mother was psychotic. One must be wary of drawing hasty conclusions, but the omission of any reference to the mother's personal contribution to her children, from Piaget's summative work, *The Psychology of the Child* (1969), tempts one to do so. The mother is represented in that book only by "the nipple", her caregiving is reduced to nothing more than responding to the "the sucking reflex". (p. 7) A great deal of study is needed to refine an understanding of infant duocentric development, but already, the possible implications and ramifications are far-reaching. How many North American school-children today are duet-damaged or worse, duet-deprived? One hears reports of increasing student hypertension and restlessness to the point of unmanageability. Are these children behaving just like fish out of water, because they have been deprived in infancy of their water of duetting? Were their parents unable to continue in duet with them after delivery because they themselves had been duet-damaged earlier and accordingly, carried their own decoding bias against resonant relating? (Note the generational spiralling potential.) Were those parents once

among those infants for whom hospital procedures, at that time, were disruptive of mother-newborn relating? Had their school teachers along the way been similarly duet-damaged, so that their ways of managing children did not offer much by way of duet recovery, and thereby exacerbated the filtered "independence" of these students? (Some might call it "armoured aloneness".) Of course, there were other factors to be considered in the socio-cultural flow, like the emergence of the nuclear family to be an emotional hothouse, and the increasing occurrence of single parent families, where too much can be expected for too long of too few. One must not fall into single factor causation, but one is tempted to link much of the malaise in our society today, including the battering, the addictions, and under it all, the anxious individualism, to the fundamental flaw of duet damage. If it be true that duetting is the water in which human fish are made to swim (first), then we must consider the disquieting possibility that we are witnessing now the frantic struggles to survive of a host of fish-persons out of water. In a very recent conversation, another new thought has come: each time there is a breakdown of mother-infant duet, the mother also is duet-damaged or deprived. During pregnancy her being has anticipated relating closely with her baby. Forces deeper than her conscious choice have predisposed her for duetting. But if negative procedures and attitudes jeopardize the sensitive beginning of the duo and instead of the mother/child "duetting dance" flowing, it becomes a dutiful "forced march", the loss to the mother could also be enormous. She may bounce back. Like a baby, the mother also can be very resilient. But she may not recover. How many women are carrying the resulting loss? CONCLUSION At the risk of being superficial in my brief comments, let me nevertheless relate these conclusions about our primal duettedness and the duet damage rampant in North American society to several current themes and movements. There is much said now about "co-dependence". Melody Beattie's 1987 best-seller by that name had this definition on the cover: "Codependent, a person who has let someone else's behavior affect him or her and is obsessed with controlling other people's behavior." Anne Wilson Schaef, in her 1987 best-seller, *When Society Becomes an Addict*, wrote of the addictive relationship as the basic relationship within North American culture: It is a "cling-clung" relationship. Both persons involved are convinced that they cannot exist without it. They see themselves as two half-persons who must stick together to make a whole. They arrive at decisions in tandem. They practically synchronize their breathing. We are taught from an early age to call the addictive relationship by another name: true love. True love is when two people are incapable of functioning or even surviving without each other. We are also taught from an early age that the way to attain "security" is by establishing such a mutual dependency, (p. 26) Is this a sort of inverse duetting, fostered by duet damage in infants who struggle into cling-clung adulthood, there to lock into "true love" as better than no relating at all? A key element in the socio-cultural analysis provided by Schaef is dependency: a state in which you assume that someone or something outside of you will take care of you because you cannot take care of yourself. Dependent persons rely on others to meet their emotional, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual needs, (p. 72) Recovery from dependency comes with the realization that one can rely on oneself and take care of oneself while also staying close to others. "True intimacy requires us to be ... whole in and of ourselves. ..." (p.73) If one brings to the same situation the metaphor of duet, so that one values interdependence between duet soloists, the analysis could turn out differently. In Schaef's incisive analysis of the "Addictive System" in our society, she wrote: In the Addictive System, the self is central. Everyone and everything must go through, be related to, and be defined by the self as perceived by the self. The Addictive system . . . really believes that it is possible to be God as defined by that system. In holding this belief, it also assumes that it has the right to define everything, which is the epitome of self-centeredness. (pp. 40-41) I think it is confusing to equate being dependent and being in dependency. Also, I wonder if one can really be whole in and of oneself. Terry Kellogg in his 1990 book, *Broken Toys, Broken Dreams*, paralleled what I am thinking in reaction to the currently popular downgrading of dependent behavior: Independents are led to believe they were always on their own: a hard baby to hold, always squiggling, did things their own way, played alone, etc. The independent buys the myth of their separateness and differentness without realizing they became independent, not because of who or what they are, but because there was no one around for them to

depend on. (p. 9) Kellogg has provided a less confusing word than dependency-"enmeshment"- "defining ourselves through others, suffering for and because of others . . . when we can't tell where we stop and others begin . . . arrested individuation in childhood." (p. 10) He wants us instead to have both intimacy and detachment in relating: "detachment means we still care and feel but are no longer controlled" (p. 11). But surely detachment is not a good word to link with caring and feeling. The duet metaphor would serve well here. John Bradshaw in his analysis on the wounded child says much but not all that is congruent with my conclusions. In his his 1990 book, *Homecoming*, he indicates that: We first see the world through the eyes of a little child, and that inner world remains with us throughout our lives. . . . If our vulnerable child was hurt or abandoned, shamed or neglected, that child's pain, grief, and anger live on within us. I believe that this neglected, wounded inner child of the past is the major source of human misery. Yes. Reclaiming your inner child involves going back through your developmental stages and finishing your unfinished business. Probably. With you as his nurturing and protective parent, your wounded inner child can begin the process of healing. You will connect with a fresh vision of your child, enriched by your years of adult experience. This is your true homecoming. It is a discovery of your essence, your deepest, unique self. No. I am persuaded, contrary to John Bradshaw, that in the dynamics of We and Me, there is no shortcut back to We through Me. How could a duet-damaged or deprived child cum adult rise up to offer duet-healing to oneself? Although Bradshaw here and there pointed his readers beyond self-healing to a healing relationship with a "Higher Power", and though he also acknowledged that "a child's healthy growth depends on someone loving and accepting him unconditionally", (p. 39), he also declared on the very next page that "in reclaiming and championing your wounded inner child, you give him the positive unconditional acceptance that he craves." (p. 40) It would be deeply regrettable if Bradshaw's zealous effort, which is urgently needed in this sick society, is thus flawed. Another healing thrust is coming from "Re-evaluation Counselling", which was launched by Harvey Jackins in the 1960's and by now has spread to many countries. One of its fundamental affirmations is that humans are naturally given to mutual co-operation and enjoyable communication with each other (Jackins, 1978, p. 27). In the co-counselling that participants offer to each other in dyads, the basic activity is co-listening so as to take turns releasing the stress blocking the effective living of each partner. This is totally compatible with my conclusions about our essential duettedness. At the Stone Centre in Wellesley College, Massachusetts, there is work in progress on "relational theory". A paper presented at a Stone Centre Colloquium in November, 1990, by Stephen J. Bergman, M.D., Ph.D., on "Men's Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective" has been summarised as follows: Current theories of male psychological development emphasise the primary importance of the "self and fail to describe the whole of men's experience in relationship. Men as well as women are motivated by a primary desire for connection, and it is less accurate and useful to think of "self than "self-in-relation" as a process. As with women, the sources of men's misery are in disconnections, violations, and in dominances, and in participating in relationships which are not mutually empowering... . (Bergman, 1991, p. 1) This surely was an enlightening paper. The duet metaphor and duocentric development theory could be a constructive complement. Another complementary contribution has been provided by Riane Eisler's research and labors pertaining to partnership. In her study of major currents in human history as reported in her 1987 book, *The Chalice and the Blade*, she found running throughout, two conflicting paradigms, "partnership" and "dominator". Like Fritjof Capra in *The Turning Point* (1982), and Thomas Berry in *The Dream of the Earth* (1988), Eisler sees an urgent need for a paradigm shift if the human species is to thrive or possibly to survive at all: Capra has called for the recognition now of the essential interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena-in "the systems view of life", (p. 265) Berry seeks the healing of the earth through a "mutually enhancing human presence to the earth community" (p. 212): Eisler would foster a shift from a dominator model of human relations to a partnership model "in which social relations are primarily based on the principle of linking rather than ranking... ." (xvii) Unlike Capra and Berry, however, Eisler has hope that such a basic turning may be possible as a returning, in that some 5000 years ago, according to recent archeological research

findings, there actually was an era of partnership which proved to be both workable and productive of human and earthly well-being. Now if it be also true that we as human beings begin our personal development as duettable and thus partnership-prone, there is another good reason for that hope. Before I am, We are. But what if on my developmental journey I was deprived of duet and alienated from attunement, so that without We, I now thrash about without integrity of spirit or integration of action, is there for me any way forward? This is surely an urgent question. Maybe that way forward can begin by my being taken back to the time, early in gestation, before my primal duet dance was interrupted, to be "recalled" there by music carrying the duet rhythms that accompanied my very early thriving. I am prompted to suggest this primal duet recall approach by an experience I had with "Frank", an abandoned 14 year-old student in a residential school. He had been born out of wedlock to a mother who immediately turned him over to her parents to raise. Then she died, followed soon by her parents' deaths, leaving Frank utterly alone. He had survived somehow in foster settings, and at 14 was highly artistic, socially withdrawn, uncommunicative and suicidal. I met him when he, having overheard some rhythmic duet excerpts which I played from the record *Oxygène* by Jean Michel Jarre, came up to me to express his preference for "that breathing music". While I replayed the excerpts for him he put his ear right up to the speaker box to listen intently, and then he said, "That music makes me feel important."! After that, in the days following, he and I worked together on a building project in that school, and he was cooperative and enthusiastic, as if he had a new lease on life. So I wonder what would happen if teachers and principals were to build into the school curriculum "music for primal duet recall". It might be conveyed through invitational "dancercise" activity for students and staff, to open each school day. Or it might be built into the curriculum by individual teachers in ways still to be worked out. Parents too might be drawn into the exploration of "healing music in education". All of this remedial effort is urgently important because what fish out of water need first is not to be taught how to be fish, but to be brought back into the water. Joanna Macy is an American "despair worker", becoming ever more widely known for her book *Despair and Power in the Nuclear Age*. In a 1989 conversation with her, recorded in Catherine Ingram's book *In the footsteps of Gandhi: Conversations with spiritual social activists*, there is this exchange: Ingram: Our entire media colludes in this hysteria of: "We're great, we're wonderful, let us wave the flag and pledge allegiance. We may have some problems but this is still the greatest country in the world, rah, rah." The house is burning on many levels, as you well know. And yet there are so many people still in denial about it. What is beneath this tremendous denial? Macy: I think it has to do with the notion of the self that our culture has conditioned us to believe through its emphasis on individualism. That view and the way it is conveyed puts a tremendous burden on a person in terms of holding himself together, in terms of competition, in terms of defendedness. . . . So what's drawing me more and more is to work directly on that notion of the self and provide people with experiences and illustrations that can help them shed that old notion of self. . . . they want to be invited to come home to the way of participation ha this world, knowing that they are part of the web of life, which in our heart of hearts is what we want most. (pp. 164-65) Can we hope that however frantically the fish out of water thrash about, what they really want, more than anything else, is the water of their life? From the 13th century poet, Rumi, this comment: I have a thirsty fish in me that can never find enough of what it is thirsty for! Show me the way to the Ocean! (trans. Coleman Barks) My persistent hunch is that the way to the Ocean lies through music. REFERENCES Barks, C. & Moyne, J. trs. (1988). *This longing-Poetry, teaching stories & selected letters of J. Rumi*. Threshold, Vt. Beattie, M. (1987). *Codependence*. Hazelden. Bergman, S. J. (1991) *Men's Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective*, Work in progress, No. 48. Wellesley, Mass. The Stone Center, Wellesley College. Berry, T. (1988). *The dream of the earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. Bly, R. (1990). *Iron John. A book about men*. New York: Addison-Wesley. Bradshaw, J. (1990). *Homecoming. Reclaiming and championing your inner child*. New York: Bantam Books. Brazelton, T. B. (1976). *Comment, Maternal-infant bonding*. Klaus, M. H. and Kennell, J. H., St. Louis: Mosby. Brazelton, T. B. (1985). *Introduction, The biography of a baby*, M. Washburn Shinn, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. Brazelton, T. B. et al. (1975). *Early mother-infant*

reciprocity, Parent-infant interaction. Ciba Foundation Symposium 33 (new series). Amsterdam: Associated Scientific Publishers. Capra, F. (1982). The turning point: Science, society and the rising culture. New York: Bantam Books. Condon, W. S. and Sander, L. W. (1974). Neonate Movement is Synchronized with Adult Speech, *Science*, 183. Eisler, R. (1987). The chalice and the blade. Our history, our future. San Francisco, Harper & Row. Ingram, C. (1990). In the footsteps of Ghandi: Conversations with spiritual social activists. Berkeley, Cal.: Parallax Press. Jackins, H. (1978). The human side of human beings: The theory of re-evaluation counselling. 2nd rev. ed. Seattle: Rational Island Publishers. Jarre, J. M. (1977). Oxygène. Polydor. Jordan, J. V., Kaplan, A. G., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I. P. and Surrey, J. L. (1991). Women's growth in connection. Writings from the Stone Center. New York: Guilford Press. Kellogg, T. (1990). Broken toys, broken dreams. Understanding and healing boundaries, co-dependence, compulsive behaviors, and family relationships. Amherst, Mass: BRAT Publishing. Murooka, H. (1974). Lullaby from the womb. Capitol. Piaget, J. and Inhelder, B. (1969). The psychology of the child. New York: Basic Books. Schaef, A. W. (1987) When society becomes an addict. San Francisco: Harper & Row. Schiefelbein, S. (1986). Beginning the journey, The incredible machine. Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society. AuthorAffiliation Mac Freeman, Ph.D. AuthorAffiliation Mac Freeman is Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Education Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Appendix APPENDIX In the Introduction to their 1991 book, Women's Growth in Connection, Writings from the Stone Centre, the five women authors, while acknowledging that they cannot speak for all women, pose this fundamental challenge: We know that the shift we are suggesting from a psychology of "The Self to one emphasizing relationships does not apply to women's psychology only. It points to the need for a rethinking of our study of all people. . . . Psychological theory, like any other cultural institution, reflects the larger Western patriarchal culture in the unexamined assumption that the white, middle class, heterosexual "paradigm man" defines not just his own reality but human reality. (p. 7) From Chapter 1, by Dr. Jean Baker Miller, Director of Education at the Stone Centre, Wellesley College, comes this: The concept of the self has been prominent in psychological theory, perhaps because it has been one of the central ideas in Western thought. While various writers use different definitions, the essential idea of a "self seems to underlie the historical development of many Western notions about such vast issues as the "good life", justice and freedom. Indeed, it seems entwined in the roots of several delineations of fundamental human motives or the highest form of existence, as in Maslow's self-actualizing character. As we have inherited it, the notion of a "self does not appear to fit women's experience. . . . A question then arises, Do only men, and not women, have a self? In working with women the question is quite puzzling, but our examination of the very puzzle itself may cast new light on certain long-standing assumptions. Modern American theorists of early psychological development and, indeed, of the entire life span, from Erik Erikson (1950) to Daniel Levinson (1978), tend to see all of development as a process of separating oneself out from the matrix of others-"becoming one's own man", in Levinson's words. Development of the self presumably is attained via a series of painful crises by which the individual accomplishes a sequence of allegedly essential separations from others, thereby achieving an inner sense of separated individuation. Few men ever attain such self-sufficiency, as every woman knows. They are usually supported by wives, mistresses, mothers, daughters, secretaries, nurses, and other women (as well as other men who are lower than they in the socioeconomic hierarchy). Thus, there is reason to question whether this model accurately reflects men's lives. Its goals, however, are held out for all, and are seen as the preconditions for mental health. . . . Thus, the prevailing models may not describe well what occurs in men: in addition, there is a question about the value of these models even if it were possible to fulfil their requirements. . . . It is very important to note, however, that the prevalent models are powerful because they have become prescriptions about what should happen. They accept men: they determine the actions of mental health professionals. They have affected women adversely in one way in the past. They are affecting women in another way now, if women seek "equal access" to them. Therefore, we need to examine them carefully. It is important not to embrace them because they are the only models available. (pp. 11-12) Jordan, Judith V., Kaplan, Alexandra G., Miller, Jean

Baker, Stiver, Irene P. and Surrey, Janet L. (1991). Women's Growth in Connection. Writings from the Stone Centre, New York: Guilford Press.

Publication title: Journal of Prenatal&Perinatal Psychology&Health

Volume: 13

Issue: 3/4

Pages: 263-277

Number of pages: 15

Publication year: 1999

Publication date: Spring 1999

Year: 1999

Publisher: Association for Pre&Perinatal Psychology and Health

Place of publication: Forestville

Country of publication: United States

Journal subject: Medical Sciences--Obstetrics And Gynecology, Psychology, Birth Control

ISSN: 10978003

Source type: Scholarly Journals

Language of publication: English

Document type: General Information

ProQuest document ID: 198682551

Document URL: <http://search.proquest.com/docview/198682551?accountid=36557>

Copyright: Copyright Association for Pre&Perinatal Psychology and Health Spring 1999

Last updated: 2010-06-06

Database: ProQuest Public Health

Contact ProQuest

Copyright © 2012 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved. - [Terms and Conditions](#)