

Interpretation of Inanna's Descent Myth

"From the Great Above Inanna opened her ear to the Great Below."

In Sumerian, the word for ear and wisdom are the same. For example, Enki, the God of Wisdom, is said to have his ear "wide open" -- an unfiltered receptivity! This implies that Inanna's primary reason for "going to hell" was to seek wisdom and understanding. But in order to make such a spiritual journey, she first had to give up her earthly powers and possessions. They don't allow a lot of luggage on the road to hell.

Preparing for the Descent into the Underworld

In the myth, she abandoned heaven and earth to descend to the underworld, her office of holy priestess, her temples in the seven principal cities where she was worshipped. She gave up her earthly powers and possessions -- an essential willingness required of any soul undertaking such a journey, of any soul following such a path of initiation.

Inanna also recognized the need to protect herself. She gathered together seven of The Me, attributes of civilization which she transformed into such feminine allure as crown, jewelry, and a royal robe. These were intended serve as her protections. They included her crown, earrings of small lapis beads, a double strand of beads about her neck, her breastplate called "Come, man, come", her golden hip girdle, the lapis measuring rod and line, and her royal breechcloth.

Each of these adornments were worn at the level of each Kundalini chakra!

Finally, she instructed her faithful servant, Ninshubur, what to do in case she did not return -- to lament her loss, beat the drum for her, and go to the cities -- to the temples where Enlil (her father's father), Nanna (her father) and Enki (her mother's father) were, and ask for their help.

Ninshubur

Ninshubur's name means "Queen of the East" -- she was handmaid or vizier to Inanna. Other myths, such as "Inanna and the God of Wisdom" (Enki), also describe Ninshubur as she comes to the rescue of Inanna, warding off the fierce emissaries sent by Enki. There Inanna describes Ninshubur as: Once Queen of the East, now faithful servant of the holy shrine of Uruk, "Water has not touched your hand, water has not touched your foot. My sukkal who gives me wise advice, My warrior who fights by my side."

As Inanna's "faithful servant", "she seems to embody that small part of us that stays above ground while the soul descends, the still conscious and functioning aspect of the psyche which can witness the events below and above and feel concern for the fate of the soul." Ninshubur may be a "model of woman's deepest reflective-of-the-Self, priestess function, one which operates as simple executrix of the Self's commands, often when the soul is most threatened." [1] Ninshubur seems to have no life of her own, no specificity beyond her capacity to serve. No ego, she simply carries out precisely and competently whatever Inanna asks of her. And yet it is Ninshubur who saves Inanna's life. Ultimately, initiation

and/or descending into the underworld is not something to be undertaken without divine guidance and support.

Ereshkigal's reaction to Inanna's intended visit

When Neti described Inanna at the outer gate -- in all her glory and wearing the garments of her power, light, and movement -- as well as her wish to enter the underworld, Ereshkigal is not at all pleased. Inasmuch as Inanna's light, glory, and movement had been, to some extent, achieved at Ereshkigal's expense, the Queen on the Underworld is enraged at Inanna's appearance.

The Queen of the Underworld can be thought of as the neglected side of Inanna, that part of Inanna that was unloving, unloved, abandoned, instinctual, and full of rage, greed, and desperate loneliness. Ereshkigal's one great craving was for her own sexual satisfaction, and which was not being fulfilled.

Ereshkigal "is paradoxical: both the vessel and the stake. She is the [kundalini] root of all, where energy is inert and consciousness coiled asleep. She is the place where potential life lies motionless -- but in the pangs of birth; beneath all language and its distinction, yet judging and acting." [1]

In the Descent myth, "Ereshkigal is described first as enraged, due to Inanna's invasion of her realm; secondly, as actively destructive; third, as suffering; and finally as grateful and generous." "There is a quality of primal rage about her. She is full of fury, greed, the fear of loss, and even of self spite." "And she sends her gatekeeper to deal with the intruder, a male to defend her." "These images suggest that chaotic defensive furies, such as rage, greed, and even the unleashing of the animus, are inevitable aspects of the archetypal underworld. They are the ways the unconscious reacts to unwelcome visitation." [1]

Ereshkigal, in some respects, is Lilith. "She ruthlessly destroys all that is not our true individuality or appropriate life path. She will not lead us to our goal by revealing what it is but rather by eliminating everything that it is not. The black aspect of Lilith closes all the wrong doors that face us." "The black Lilith in us will accept nothing less than our true individuality, not in the sense of separateness, but in the sense of who we intrinsically are. When we are secure in acknowledging and expressing our true self, we don't falsify ourselves in order to be accepted by others." [2]

Ereshkigal's instructions to Neti represent the fact that she wants Inanna to experience what it is to be rejected, to enter the royal chamber "bowed low".

Seven stages of the Descent

The removal of Inanna's crown, the first of her protective Me -- symbolically deprives her of her godhood, her connection with heaven. The small lapis beads from her ears -- her sense of magic and ability to manifest. The double strand of beads about her neck -- her rapture of illumination. Her golden breastplate called "Come, man, come!" -- her emotional heart. Her ringed hip girdle -- her ego. From her hand the lapis measuring rod and line -- her will. Her garment of ladyship (breechcloth) -- her sex role. Each represents, in order, the Kundalini chakras. Inanna is thus forced to give up her earthly attributes, her roles as queen, holy priestess, and woman. Her royal power, her priestly office, her sexual powers are of no avail in the underworld.

Naked and bowed low, Inanna entered the throne room.

The Annuna, the judges of the underworld, surround her and pass judgment against her, the judgment of the external against each of us. Ereshkigal then fastens on Inanna the eye of death, speaks against her the word of wrath, and utters against her the cry of guilt. She strikes her. "Inanna was turned into a corpse, a piece of rotting meat, and was hung from a hook on the wall." Obviously, on our own, even with preparations, we're dead meat!

Ninshubur seeks help.

Ninshubur waits three days. Inanna was considered to be daughter of the moon -- thus these three days may be the "Dark of the Moon". Ninshubur set up a public lament, beating the drum, circling the temples, tearing at her eyes, mouth and thighs, and dressing in sackcloth. Grief expressed! She pleads before Inanna's paternal grandfather, Enlil, and Inanna's father, Nanna. She cries that they not let their bright silver be covered with dust, their precious lapis broken into stone, and their fragrant boxwood cut into wood.

They reply angrily, that Inanna "got what she deserved!" And that she could not return, that the rules of the underworld could not be broken. Both are angry their daughter should pursue a different direction from theirs. Each in turn, refused to help.

But in pleading before Enki, Inanna's mother's father and the God of Wisdom, there is a different response. Enki has compassion for his daughter who is in difficulty. Not only does the God of Wisdom value the journey Inanna has undertaken, but he does not forget that his grand daughter's existence is vital to humankind. In reacting to what has happened, Enki moves with feeling. He improvises to create what the moment needs. He empathizes with Inanna.

Enki's plan

Enki knows the nature of the underworld and its rule by a jealous, anguished Ereshkigal. He also has the power to create and facilitate. He creates from the dirt under his fingernails the kurgarra and galatur -- instinctual, asexual creatures who Enki endows with the artistic and empathetic talent of being professional mourners, capable of mirroring the lonely queen's emotions. "They are humble, nonheroic creatures, without definition or even the need to be separately defined, without any sense of what we would call ego-needs. These little asexual creatures represent the attitude necessary to draw a blessing from the dark goddess." [1]

Enki also instructs his creations on how to enter the underworld and how to deal with Ereshkigal. He tells them how to recover Inanna from death.

The Rescue

When the kurgarra and galatur arrive, Ereshkigal is moaning "with the cries of a woman about to give birth." She complains both for her "inside" and her "outside". Having willed Inanna's death, she can scarcely bear it, for Inanna is the other side of herself. Ereshkigal was also needing rebirth from the night time aspects of the feminine -- the powerful, raging sexuality and the deep wounds accumulated from life's rejections -- and which sought solace in physical union only.

The kurgarra and galatur moan with Ereshkigal, appeasing her anguish by the echo of their concern. "They affirm her in her suffering. They have been taught by Enki to trust the life force even when it sounds its misery. Complaining is one voice of the dark goddess. It is a way of expressing life, valid and

deep in the feminine soul. It does not, first and foremost, seek alleviation, but simply to state the existence of things as they are felt to be to a sensitive and vulnerable being. It is one of the bases of the feeling function, not to be seen and judged from the stoic-heroic superego perspective as foolish and passive whining, but just as autonomous fact -- 'that's the way it is.' Enki's wisdom teaches us that suffering is part of reverencing." [1]

Ereshkigal is so touched by the attention they offer to her in her pain that she extends herself and offers gifts of fertility and growth. Following Enki's instructions, however, the creatures refuse these gifts and ultimately ask for Ereshkigal most wants to give and that which is most difficult for her to give. They ask her to release part of her personal anguish, her despair and anger, which is embodied in the glorious Goddess of Love. They ask for the rotting body of Inanna.

When Ereshkigal agrees to release her nemesis, and thus part of her pain, the kurgarra and galatur sprinkle the food and water of life on Inanna's corpse. And Inanna arose.

Ascending from the Underworld

The Annuna must maintain the rules of the underworld, but they must also deal with the fact that Inanna has been reborn in the underworld. Their tactic is to tell Inanna that she must provide someone in her place. In essence, Inanna cannot be allowed to again forget her neglected, abandoned "sister" -- that part of herself that is Ereshkigal. A passageway has been created from the Great Above, the conscious, to the Great Below, the unconscious, and it must be kept open. Thus the galla, the demons of the underworld, those who cannot be bribed, are assigned to accompany Inanna as she leaves.

The Replacement

Inanna is resorted to active life, but returns demonic, surrounded by the galla. "She has met Ereshkigal and knows the abysmal reality: that all changes and life demand sacrifice." This is knowledge that few would not flee from. "Inanna comes up loathsome and claiming her right to survive." The same fearsome characteristic of any woman coming out of hiding and ready to stand her ground. [1]

Meanwhile, Ninshubur and Inanna's sons, Shara and Lulal, had abandoned the routine of their daily lives and gone into mourning for Inanna. When Inanna returns from the underworld and meets each of them in turn, the galla are ready and willing to take them in Inanna's place. But Inanna knows that each cared deeply for her and had mourned her death. She does not choose them.

However, Dumuzi, Inanna's consort and the shepherd she had installed as King of Sumer, has gone on with life as if nothing had happened. He had grown so attached to and identified with his high position that he had neither wept for his lost wife, nor ran to greet her when she returned. While Inanna had ventured into the unknown, Dumuzi had turned his attentions to earthly achievement. But Dumuzi is the logical candidate, as well, in that only her best beloved consort is equal to Inanna. Furthermore, Dumuzi had dared intimacy with the goddess and that entails a price, the price of initiation.

"Inanna challenges her equal to make the same descent she endured -- perhaps to claim the same strength and wisdom." [1] Dumuzi's attempts at scapegoating or taking flight betray "his need to descend into the underworld himself, his need to find a relationship to an inner feminine whom he can accept nondefensively and revere as equal." Thus is the stage set when Inanna tells her consort to go to hell and makes it stick!

The galla seized him and beat him, until Dumuzi preys to Utu, the God of Justice and brother to Inanna. Utu mercifully turned Dumuzi into a snake, so that he could escape the galla. At the same time Dumuzi gains the serpent wisdom: that nothing in the Great Round dies, that life's forms are not lost but renewed. "Utu, the sun god, is the balance of Ereshkigal. He -- like Enki -- is outside the patriarchal Logos modes, not adversary but complement of the feminine. The solar god and the dark goddess are the pillars of the esoteric temple with its wisdom of change. There is no lysis that we would find stable in this myth, no resolution except that profound wisdom." [1]

The Dream of Dumuzi

Dumuzi had been king, but the qualities of understanding, compassion, devotion, and belonging to others, he had lacked. He had turned to the feminine wisdom of his younger sister. But even in the dream, there was a portent of hope -- for just as Ninshubur, at Inanna's request, had wept for Inanna and saved her life, so it was to be that Geshtianna would take up Dumuzi's spirit and not let it die. Dumuzi's friend betrays him for material profit, but his sister is true to the end. And even with Dumuzi being transformed into a snake and then a gazelle, he is still unable to escape the galla.

The Return

With the dye cast, the realization that Dumuzi is no longer welcome on earth, Inanna, Dumuzi's mother and sister begin to weep for his fate. Inanna has been denied her beloved consort, even if by her own willful act. But the "very nature of earth's life, and of the goddess herself, prevents the possibility of her having an undying, single partner." [1] Geshtianna, who is also mortal, is even more grief stricken.

Being very close to Dumuzi, Geshtianna offers to take his place in the underworld. This is not the grand gesture of a Christ on the cross, but much more personal and deeply feminine. "He gave his life for all men, a grand gesture. She offers herself, courageously accepting her own destiny, for one man she cares for, her brother." "Her motivation is human passion -- love and grief." [1]

Geshtianna, whose name means "vine of heaven", is thought of in the myths as a "wise woman". In service to the human dimension, she does what she can to redeem the one lost to the underworld. "She acquiesces to her own cutting down." "She does not flee from her fate, nor does she denigrate the goddess of fate as do Gilgamesh and the patriarchy. She volunteers. And in this courageous, conscious acquiescing, she ends the pattern of scapegoating by choosing to confront the underworld herself." [1]

Geshtianna "is the result of, and an embodiment of, the whole initiation process." "She feels personally and can be lovingly related as partner of the masculine. She is also willing to serve both the light and dark aspects of her own depths and of the goddess." [1] She has not yet made the descent, but there is no struggle "between her instincts to relate to her beloved, and her instinct to stand alone and for her own depths."

Geshtianna's offer moves Inanna as the two sides of the feminine meet -- passion and compassion, willfulness and feeling. It is the presence of her earthly sister, Geshtianna, that completes Inanna's journey on earth, and reconnects her to Dumuzi, an other, and so to all of life.

Inanna decrees that each will spend half the year in the underworld. At Arali, a stopping place on the way to the Great Below, Inanna blesses the brother and sister with both eternal life and death. Dumuzi

is thus married to the composite goddess Inanna-Ereshkigal, and as such is to experience all of the woman. Not only is he to know the love goddess, but the goddess of death as well.

In the end, Ereshkigal is praised.

Inanna's reasons for making the descent

"She turned her ear to the Great Below"-- (1) Seeking wisdom and understanding.

When Inanna approached the outer gate of the underworld and announced herself, she said she was on her way to the East. This phrase survives into modern day Freemasonry, where a candidate for initiation is warned that he will never return from his quest -- and then passes inward to the Ordeal which is the real initiation.

"It is a story of an initiation process into the mysteries." "Inanna shows us the way, and she is the first to sacrifice herself for a deep feminine wisdom and for atonement. She descends, submits and dies. This openness to being acted upon is the essence of the experience of the human soul faced with the transpersonal. It is not based upon passivity, but upon an active willingness to receive." [1] A feminine, boundary penetration quality, letting another exert influence upon itself, "analogous to the soul's penetration by the divine."

(2) Because of my older sister, Ereshkigal -- Perhaps she heard the pain and anguish of Ereshkigal, her denied and dark side, and wanted to meet and acknowledge all of her denied feelings: abandonment, guilt, etc. Inanna was facing her dark side!

It is also approaching the dark forces of earthly reality and the unconscious; slowly peeling away defenses and ego-identifications -- particularly after "the conscious ideal of the personality has been wounded by being cut off from its roots by the devaluation of matter and the feminine." [1]

Ereshkigal was moaning for both her "inside" and "outside" -- as if she had gone into labor, needing to be reborn -- It was this labor or call that Inanna had heard in the Great Above and to which she responded.

In an earlier myth, Inanna, as an adolescent, had been frightened by Lilith, the neglected side of Inanna - the powerful, raging sexuality and the deep wounds accumulated from life's rejections. The powerful Lilith had to be sent away so Inanna's life-exploring talents could be developed. But now she deals with them.

"Inanna's suffering, disrobing, humiliation, flagellation and death, the stations of her descent, her crucifixion on the underworld peg, and her resurrection, all prefigure Christ's passion and represent perhaps the first known archetypal image of the dying divinity whose sacrifice redeems the wasteland earth. Not for humankind's sins did Inanna sacrifice herself, but for earth's need for life and renewal. She is concerned more with life than with good and evil." [1]

(3) To observe the funeral rites of Gugalanna, the Bull of Heaven -- to gain power and knowledge from observing such rites, particularly since Gugalanna was as impetuous and emotionally aggressive as Inanna

The Descent into Hades as a Psychological Tool

“All descents provide entry into different levels of consciousness and can enhance life creatively. All of them imply suffering. All of them can serve as initiations. Meditation and dreaming and active imaginations are modes of descent. So too are depressions, anxiety attacks, and experiences with hallucinogenic drugs.” [1]

Letting go of illusions and old outworn patterns -- “Ereshkigal is like Kali, who through time and suffering pitilessly grinds down... all distinctions... in her indiscriminating fires -- and yet heaves forth new life.” [1] It is an adherence to a pre-ethical natural law! It is an acknowledgment that life is inconstant, that there are cycles. It is not pathological to wrap the partner in an active loving and caring embrace (Inanna), and then back down, being disinterested, alone and even cold (Ereshkigal).

(4) Finding pure gold and enlightenment. Hades as the “Bringer of all Good Things”. Demeter’s Eleusian Mysteries -- “Beautiful indeed is the Mystery given us by the blessed gods: death is for mortals no longer an evil, but a blessing.” -- Inscription at Eleusis. [2]

“Not caring first and foremost about relatedness to an outer other, nor to a collective gestalt or imperative. Seeing this way -- which is initially so frightening because it cannot be validated by the collective -- can provide what Logos consciousness fears as mere chaos, with the possibilities of a totally fresh perception, a new pattern, a creative perspective, a never ending exploration. Such seeing is radical and dangerously innovative, but not necessarily evil.” It may feel monstrous or ugly, “for it shears us of our defenses and entails a sacrifice of easy collective understandings and of the hopes and expectations of looking good and safely belonging.” “This knowledge implies that destruction and transformation into something even radically new are part of the cycle of reality. Such knowledge is hard to endure. But knowing this basic reality permits a woman to give up trying to be agreeable to parental and animus imperatives and ideals. It is like hitting rock bottom, from where they are irrelevant.” [1]

“The major difference in masculine development is that until recently -- and then only in the second half of life -- most men have not needed to go down into the repressed depths once they have initially freed themselves from their childhood and identified with the ideals of the culture, for they have been supported by the outside world without inner dissonance. Increasingly, as there is no adequate masculine wholeness pattern that is collectively sanctioned to form a model of masculine ego development, and as the heroic ego ideal is also found inadequate, more and more are men forced to relate differently to their own depths, and to dare the individual descents that permit them to reclaim repressed instinct and image patterns.” [1]

“Men who have not made peace with Medusa in themselves will see feminine sexuality as something that fascinates them, but also as the source of their self-undoing. As they try to protect themselves against its frightening power by destroying the monster, they will unconsciously incite the Medusa woman in their lives to retaliate by castrating them physically and psychologically. A man who desires a positive relationship to women’s dark moon sexuality must make the descent into his unconscious, listen to the wailing agony of his decapitated Medusa, reach out in sympathy to her pain, heal the wounds of her rejection, and return whole-within-himself to the upper world. After the hero has proved his separation from his mother, he must reestablish a loving relationship to his inner dark feminine. Until he can do this he will remain trapped in a web of destructive sexual relationships.” [2]

Differences from Later Patriarchal Myths

Original Earth Goddess as the predecessor of Inanna. Fertility and ample bodies versus Inanna's beauty and Goddess of Love status. Inanna, as goddess, living within the domain of masculine power. Inanna's myths are not purely matriarchal, but reflect growing male power

Inanna's myths as a process of growth. Initially, to have her throne and bed -- her sovereignty and sexuality. Then to be Queen in deed as well as pomp -- bring home The Me. Then to have a consort, who can then be King. To be wife and mother. Then to become whole by accepting her darker half!

In terms of the Dance of the Seven Veils:

1. Inanna "has met Ereshkigal and knows the abysmal reality: that all changes and life demand sacrifice. That is exactly the knowledge that patriarchal morality and the fathers' eternally maiden daughters have fled from, wanting to do things right in order to avoid the pain of bearing their own renewal, their own separate being and uniqueness. Inanna comes up loathsome and claiming her right to survive. She is not a beautiful maid, daughter of the fathers, but ugly, selfish, ruthless, willing to be very negative, willing not to care. We know this demonic return of the repressed power shadow. Although it stands ultimately for life, it often erupts in birth and takes a lot of taming. It may be a 'rough beast', or it may, indeed, merely feel fearsome when a woman comes out of hiding to stand her ground -- to herself and/or to those around her. We see this demonic form of the returning goddess in much of the early women's liberation fury. For the most part that stage in the movement has passed, but each individual woman initiate may have to go through it." [1]

2. Dumuzi "embodies the life-death bipolarity of the eternal process of change. That frightens and disgusts the side of us that, like Gilgamesh, wants eternity and stasis. But as the goddess is also matter, there is no stasis and no eternity of form possible for material life. We must gain our eternity in another way, not by clinging to the embodied identities we call heroic ideals. We must go beyond Gilgamesh's and the patriarchal ego's denigration of the goddess as fickle and learn to serve her rather as inconstant. This is the primary psychological task to which our age is called." [1] The price is willing acceptance.

3. The "self-experience of soul through subjective and personal feeling and intuiting in relation to the concrete here and now. What is valued is the feel of this moment in joy and pain, not the abstract ideas or remote heavens of unending, peaceful perfection to which the patriarchy was wont to aspire. Patriarchy repressed the magical stratum, the fairy-world. In this global awareness, life and death were the peak and valley of one wave. Emotional oneness was experienced with group, clan, nature, and blood. Life was known through instinctual tides and rhythms, ESP communication, and yielding openness to whatever came along." "The new femininity is to establish the value of inwardness, and of affirmation (but also conscious clarification and differentiation) of whatever is. It is open to -- and able to integrate -- woundedness, pain, and ugliness, as well as joy and beauty. The sensuous is to be valued no less than the spiritual; the intangible no less than the concrete." "The archetypal role of the new femininity is to stand as a priestess of the fullness of life as it is, with its unpredictable pitfalls and unfathomable depths, richness and deprivation, risks and errors, joys and pains. She insists on personal experiencing and personal response to the needs of the human situation." The idea is to transform the chaotic power of the abysmal Yin, the Medusa, into the play of life, to mediate the terrifying face of the Gorgon into the helpful one of Athena. "Life is to be lived and savored for its own sake, in sensitive interplay with earth and cosmos as living organisms, rather than as dead objects of exploitation for the sake of economic or technological 'progress'." There is needed the awareness that hurts can heal us, "receiving into consciousness and clarifying feelings, fantasies, and desires regardless of their moral or

esthetic implications. It also means separating emotion and motivation from action." The challenge is "to think and feel through everything that may present itself, and wait for its hidden symbolic message, rather than to act out or sweep things under the rugs and let sleeping dogs lie. The new woman (or the anima in a man) will have to champion and protect the need to live through and experience everything that (lest it threaten established order with chaos) has been repressed by the patriarchy." The key is to avoid the temptation to deny, repress the experience, and do something instead! The idea is to be.

4. Pain is "a valid part of life's process -- no one's fault, just a fact of existence. This takes it out of the patriarchal-adversary-scapegoating perspective that blames someone or something and wants it removed, wants something actively done with it." Instead, we must trust "the participation mystique of the deepest levels of consciousness as a process of the goddess, sometimes even when it feels painful and seems to aim towards death and depression, and makes us feel keenly our own inadequacy to bring about change. There we wait with patience, going deeper and waiting together until the goddess as Time is ready to 'decree a kind fate'. [1]

5. The neofeminist consciousness "is like instinct, in being unified, direct, immediate, full of feeling, sympathetic, and vital. But it is also like the intelligence, or masculinism, in being alert to distinction, capable of discursive and indirect reasoning, disinterested, and controlled. And it has a new quality of its own in its penetrating vision, the holistic insight that comprehends many experiences in one meaning." "It is a reunion in dynamic harmony of our own multiplicity and unity." It is ego death -- a shift toward a consciousness of the interconnectedness of life; a shift from the individual, analytic consciousness to a holistic mode, brought about by training the intuitive side of ourselves. (B. Bruteau)

6. "The implication for modern women is that only after the full, even demonic, range of affects and objectivity of the dark feminine is felt and claimed can a true, soul-met, passionate and individual comradeship be possible between woman and man as equals. Inanna is joined to and separated from her dark ancestress-sister, the repressed feminine. And that, with Ninshubur's and Enki's and Dumuzi's help, brings forth Geshtinanna -- a model of one who can take her stand, hold her own value, and be lovingly related to the masculine as well as directly to her own depths; a model of one who is willing to suffer humanly, personally, the full spectrum that is the goddess." [1]

7. "To the goddess it is no shame for a woman to be submissive. But as von Franz has pointed out, such willing service is not always the way to gain what is necessary from the goddess of nature. Sometimes she must be approached with active, heroic courage rather than heroic submission. Gretel had to push the dark goddess into the oven of transformation. Sometimes she must be endured or avoided or cleverly fled from. It seems to depend on the conscious personality of the visitor and what qualities are to be gained from the dark side of the instinct and image pattern. For the high goddess Inanna, proud and passionate and active, submissive sacrifice, humility, and passive mirroring are the compensatory ways to set her free." [