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Interview with Paul Levy

“They May Say I’m a Dreamer”

From Paul Levy’s biography, posted on his website:

In 1981 Paul Levy had a life-changing spiritual awakening, in which he began to wake up to the dream-like nature of reality. During the first year of his spiritual emergence, Paul was hospitalized a number of times, and was diagnosed with having had a severe psychotic break. Much to his surprise, he was told that he had a chemical imbalance and had manic-depressive (bipolar) illness, and would have to live with his illness for the rest of his life. Fortunately, he was able to quickly extricate himself from the medical and psychiatric establishment. Little did the doctors realize that he was taking part in some sort of spiritual awakening/shamanic initiation process. . . . In 1993, after many years of struggling to contain and integrate his experiences, he started to teach about what he was realizing. He has been in private practice for fifteen years, assisting others who are spiritually emerging and beginning to wake up to the dreamlike nature of reality. In a dream come true, psychiatrists now consult with him and send him patients. A pioneer in the field of spiritual emergence, Paul is in the book *Saints and Madmen: Psychiatry Opens its Doors to Religion*.

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Paul has developed and teaches a unique and creative vehicle to introduce people to the dream-like nature of reality that he calls “The Dreaming Up Process,” which is based on the realization that the same dreaming mind that dreams our dreams at night is dreaming our life. He teaches this dreaming up process, where people who are awakening to the dream-like nature of reality come together and collaboratively help each other to wake up in the dream together.

Deeply steeped in and inspired by the work of C. G. Jung, Paul is an innovator in the field of dreaming (both night dreams as well as waking dreams). He has had innumerable articles published on consciousness, dreaming, and spirituality, and has lectured about his work at various universities. Paul is the founder of the “Awakening in the Dream Community,” and his work is the inspiration for the “Awakening in the Dream Center,” a psychospiritual healing center in Mexico. A visionary artist, Paul is helping to create an “Art-Happening Called Global Awakening,” a work of living art in which we, as a species, collaboratively help each other to become lucid in the dream of life.

A long-time practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, Paul has intimately studied with some of the greatest masters from Tibet and Burma and

serves as the coordinator of a local Buddhist center. Paul is the author of *The Madness of George W. Bush: A Reflection of Our Collective Psychosis* and is currently writing a book about his work in dreaming.¹

During the summer of 2009 I was grateful to be able to speak with Paul Levy by phone. Levy has never been in the patients' rights movement. However, as he describes in the interview, he was hospitalized numerous times and diagnosed as a bipolar psychotic. He knows about and is a supporter of the Mad Pride movement.

Farber: Albert Schweitzer rediscovered the historical Jesus back in the later nineteenth century, this is confirmed by most of the scholars involved today in the "quest for the historical Jesus." Schweitzer was right—the historical Jesus wasn't the domesticated figure that liberal Protestantism made him out to be in the early twentieth century. Forget about fundamentalism, that's off the map, it's not even worth

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discussing. Jesus, in fact, thought he was going to usher in the kingdom of God. Now Anton Boisen, the theologian who had had a breakdown and miraculously recovered—I say miraculously because this was in the 1920s, and the mental hospitals then were worse than they are now—he went on to become a chaplain and worked in mental hospitals. He pointed out that many of the hospitalized mental patients had similar ideas to the great spiritual geniuses. That was the most radical conclusion he drew. Jesus thought he was the Messiah and he was going to usher in the kingdom of heaven, and he didn't. Many people in mental hospitals think they are going to usher in the kingdom of God. This is considered a sign of schizophrenia, thus the question that could be raised is, Was Jesus mad? Was Jesus schizophrenic?

Paul Levy: Okay, is that the question? It makes me think of my experience. When I was having my spiritual awakening and when it first started, and I was having the realization of being the Messiah too, but I was realizing we all are—we all are the Messiah. I actually made out these business cards that just said "the Messiah," and I was giving them out to people, and I was saying "Look, here's my card, and if you want some you can have some too, you can give them out to people." The point is for us to remember who we are, and that's exactly, I think, my understanding of what Christ was saying. He would say, "We are God, his scripture can not be broken." He was pointing out that outside of time, in the atemporal dimension, we already are these enlightened beings—that's our true nature. Jesus was having the realization of his own self, if it's a genuine realization it's not inflation, it's not you thinking you're the Messiah and no one else is, it's the realization that that's who we all are. I think that's what Jesus was experiencing, and that definitely to some degree that's what happened for me.

Farber: I think Boisen also said, Well these patients are not completely wrong; maybe they're on to something. The modern secular idea is that a human being is just a mix of chemicals and epiphenomenon of a biochemical

process. The people in the mental hospital say they're Jesus actually have a higher conception of themselves and their calling. They typically have this kind of inflation that you talk about; that's inevitable I think because most of them don't have any spiritual cultural

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context in which to put this sense that they are more than the little ego. So without this context they just conclude "I am Christ."

Paul Levy: Sure, the thing is to just point out we are card-carrying members of the consensus-reality under a collective spell and part of awakening almost always involves some sort of ego inflation. It's necessary to break out of that inertia. Almost like when you have like a rocket, it needs a certain amount of energy to break out of the earth's atmosphere, out of its gravitational field. If it's an organic spiritual awakening, the ego inflation—which was necessary to break out of the consensus-reality trance—very organically and effortlessly falls away and becomes integrated into a broader perspective. That's very much in contrast to people who then stay in the inflation and they inflate the ego with the Self—that's a form of insanity. It's just important to understand that when we have the recognition of our divine true nature, there is always a phase of ego inflation, and that actually helps us to break out of the collective trance.

Farber: That would also be in accord with the Laingian theory that I'm trying to advance: This process of awakening to one's true Christ-like nature is happening among many people in the mental hospitals and it is suppressed by the psychiatric establishment. This cultural stasis is a deeper crisis of modern civilization; we can't get out of this spiritual stagnation we are in where the pursuit of more and more money by the elite is leading to the destruction of the planet. So, in fact, the people who are really the most likely to be attuned to the cosmic rhythms and universal things that are happening on the planet have particular vulnerabilities because they're so personally disturbed by the destructiveness of the world. If these people's higher attunement is leading them at that time to be singled out as bipolars or schizophrenics and taken away and removed from the social body, then the process of social transformation that might ordinarily take place in terms of the an awakening and of taking collective responsibility would be prevented by the psychiatric priesthood itself. Do you agree with that?

Paul Levy: Absolutely. I mean the thing is that the people who are really sensitive, the ones really have like a permeable boundary between

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their ego and unconscious both individually and collectively, they're very attuned to the collective unconscious in the field to what's going on, just like any artist, poet, or seer or anything like that. They're also being altered and receptive; they might not have a solid ego structure that protects them, they might not have developed that strong of a persona or they have fallen under the hypnotic spell to such a degree that

they're just more vulnerable. Then when they try to share their gift they're maybe even in more of a fragile state; they're not as grounded as someone who just has the nine-to-five mentality. You know if they get in the clutches of the psychiatric system—which is trained to interpret any sort of abnormal behavior as being pathological—they just act to suppress it. That's a tragic thing because so many of these people are potential shamans. The archetype of the shaman gets activated precisely by being emotionally disturbed: There's something in the psyche that hasn't been able to fully adjust to a crazy culture. So inwardly we become a little bit out of balance and disturbed, and that constellates the shamanic archetype. The indigenous cultures would understand this is somebody who might be called by the spirits and might actually have a real gift for the community—and they'd be honored as such—but in our culture we don't have any understanding of that, so anybody who might be actually be a potential shaman, a being in whom the shamanic archetype can incarnate, is typically labeled psychotic and medicated and suppressed. It's tragic: they can spend their whole lives just having bought into this label of being mentally ill, there are lots of people who that's happened to—it's unbelievably tragic, because it's taken away this incredible gift for society that we potentially have. In sacred cultures when somebody accomplishes the whole shamanic ordeal, as he or she comes back from the underworld, they have the wisdom to share with the rest of the tribe, which in this society is the human species, which can potentially be of incredible benefit for all of us. And we're actually aborting that process by pathologizing them and medicating them. The following is from *We Are All Shamans in Training*:

The shaman's descent into the darkness can be agonizing, a veritable crucifixion. Part of the (arche)typical shamanic experience is to become dis-membered, which is a cooking and smelting of psychic

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contents that have become rigidified, ossified, and have outlived their usefulness. To quote Jung, "The shaman's experience of sickness, torture, death and regeneration implies, at a higher level, the idea of being made whole through sacrifice, of being changed by transubstantiation and exalted to the pneumatic man—in a word, apotheosis," or elevated from an ordinary person to a "god." The goal of the shaman's death and dismemberment experience is to "re-member" himself, which like true soul retrieval, brings all of his dissociated parts back together into a more integrated synthesis. By embracing, assimilating, and metabolizing what has gotten triggered in them, however, shamans are able to heal themselves and in so doing non-locally send healing to the whole "community." In our current moment in time, as interdependent members of an evermore interconnected global village, our "community" is the entire planet.²

Farber: I was going to say Perry said at one point, "My God! What is society doing to its visionaries?"

Paul Levy: Exactly, it's these people who are the visionaries, totally. It's

exactly what happened to me. I had this incredibly abusive father in the family system—I was the only child—I was the recipient of the emotional energetic abuse, and I was the one who actually got propelled out of my egoic perspective very much into a way more expansive point of view.

Farber: Expansive in a more cosmic sense?

Paul Levy: Yeah, yeah. Expansive in a cosmic sense in that on the one hand I was the one who was seeing the deeper field—the deeper noumenal* field—and the abuse that was playing out in the interpersonal

*In Western metaphysics, a noumenon refers to an object in itself, which is supposedly beyond the ability of the senses to perceive. A phenomenon, on the other hand, is the object as filtered through our senses. The mystic often claims that her intuition gives her direct non-sensual knowledge of the object itself. Levy is using this distinction metaphorically, as it often is used, to distinguish between the spoken text and the unspoken sub-text of interpersonal interactions.

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psychological area; the family system. Concurrent with that I was stepping out of my identification with myself as a discrete skin-encapsulated ego, I'm realizing that I'm actually interconnected and interdependent with everyone and so is everyone else. I was stepping out of the limited point of view the ego and stepping into the more expansive view of the self where I saw that we could actually—you know as being the Messiah—help each other to activate our collective genius; that we could conspire to co-inspire each other. I have a zillion different ways of saying it, but we can basically configure ourselves in a way that we could actually help each other to awaken. That's the cosmic visionary aspect you know, and there was also the interpersonal stuff that I was seeing going on between my family. Then the mental health system got involved and instead of helping, they actually made the matters worse . . .

Farber: You said the more you attempted to communicate authentically the crazier the mental health system became. As you put it:

In essence, the more I authentically expressed my experience, the more I was convincing the doctors that I was crazy. It was like I had stepped through the looking glass and found myself in a dimension of existence that was truly bewitched, as if I had entered a domain which felt, qualitatively speaking, under a curse of black magicians. It felt like I had shamanically journeyed into the underworld and wound up in some sort of weird, perverse hell realm where reality was inverted in a way, which was get-me-out-of-here crazy. Little did I realize at the time, however, that this was all part of the deeper awakening process that I was going through.

By myopically seeing people's behavior as being pathological, the psychiatrists literally drew out the pathology in the person, which only further confirmed to them [the psychiatrists] the correctness of their diagnosis in a self-fulfilling prophecy, as if they were both under a spell and casting one at the same time.³

Paul Levy: The crazier they became. . . . The more I expressed myself authentically and gave voice and articulated my experience, the more

they saw me as crazy. There was like this diabolical feedback loop: it

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was like falling into this other psychiatric universe that was ruled by black magic. It was completely like—fuck, really—it was so abusive. I don't have a family—psychiatry destroyed my family. I'm still trying to wrap my mind around the unbelievable toxicity and abuse that the psychiatric community played out.

Farber: One woman who suffered from incest said she was “reincested” when she went into the psychiatric system.

Paul Levy: Totally—that's in a sense true. For me it was like you are trying to heal the trauma and you get re-traumatized sort of a thousandfold: it was like the reiteration of the same fractal process that occurred in my family, and it got played out totally unwittingly in the psychiatric system under the guise “it's all for your own good.” What they're doing is just enacting their own unconscious will-to-power of the shadow.

They have no idea they're doing that, and the more you point out to them that you're experiencing that, the more that proves to them how crazy you are in that diabolical negative feedback loop. I can just tell you I have a lot of stories between 1981 and '82 or something, it was a number of times I was thrown in mental hospitals, and I always got diagnosed. I was called bipolar, but then it was called manic-depression.

Farber: Because you were literate enough to escape the schizophrenic diagnosis would you say?

Paul Levy: Yeah, I think that's what it was. Also I did not hear voices but I had certain so-called “manic” behaviors, like maybe I was spending a lot of money, or talking a lot or not sleeping.

Farber: Did you know *manike* means prophet in Greek?

Paul Levy: Right and also the word, *entheos*, enthusiasm means to be filled with spirit.

When I got out of the last hospital I had found this supposedly real good psychiatrist. At that point when I got out of the hospital in 1982, I was really fucked up. I was really traumatized—not only with the abuse from my father—but also from the trauma of the psych system. So, I found what I thought was a good psychiatrist who I saw for seven years twice a week.

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Farber: Was he a Freudian?

Paul Levy: Yes, she was—but the thing was here I was commuting from the suburbs twice a week for seven years, and then at a certain point I really began to have an experience of her unconscious and her shadow. It was fine, because we all have that, but as soon as I began pointing that out—

Farber: Which in Freudian terms is good—she's supposed to become aware of her “countertransference.”* She should have welcomed your pointing.

Paul Levy: Instead of welcoming it, she was immediately like, “I'm the

doctor and you're the sick one." She actually said that, and then she said, "How come none of my other patients are saying this?" I said very clearly, "Well they probably aren't as aware as I am to see this" . . . but the point was we were like actually reenacting the very process that I was trying to heal with my father: He was an authority figure, and I was trying to step into my power and speak my voice. Instead of her having that realization and being able to follow that process and unfold it and self-reflect, she immediately got caught in the role of being the one with the power and the authority figure and that I'm crazy if I'm saying things that she can't see. So then it was actually a reenactment or the re-traumatization of the process I was trying to heal from. That's when I left her, that's when I stopped the therapy.

It has come out in my family since then that my father was a genuine psychopath, he was a criminal and he should have been behind bars, literally. His sister, his only sibling, said to me probably a few years before she died—she asked me if I knew who Hannibal Lector was, and she's an eighty-year-old Jewish woman. I replied, "Of course Aunt Helen I know who Hannibal Lector is." She says, "Paul, that's the sort

*In the Freudian model, transference is the redirection of a patient's feelings for a significant person (usually a parent) to the therapist. Countertransference is the redirection of these feelings by therapist onto the patient. The therapist is supposed to be aware and mature enough to be aware of countertransference when it occurs. The ideal for an adult is to overcome transference through therapy but since no one achieves that ideal the more realistic goal is to be aware of transference and countertransference.

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of person your father is—before you were born he did something so horrible and so terrible, our parents died brokenhearted because of this. I'll never tell you what it was because it was so horrible." She never did; she died and took the secret to her grave.

Farber: Was it something like murder?

Paul Levy: I think it was something sexual. I think he definitely acted out—I think he raped—I think he raped her, I'm almost sure of it. I would bet bottom dollar that it was something sexual, or something with rape because when I described issues with my father, he was into domination: objectifying me, getting off on his narcissistic pleasure—like a rape, but without the sex—and then from many dreams I've had about it. I'm not sure what happened, but that's what I hypothesized. The whole point is I've tried now, a number of years later, to connect with the psychiatrist I was seeing—who was a very loving, good, intelligent person. Once a month she would see my parents, and I was seeing her twice a week. Of course, I was the identified patient. Here I am number of years later, and I called her up to say, "By the way it came out my father was a world class psychopath and you didn't know that. I would like to complete the process with you because I have feelings about this," and she has made a point in no way to be in contact with me. She won't return my phone calls. I have had other therapists of mine call her, and she won't even return *their* phone calls. That's just

another more subtle form of psychiatric abuse—I'm not wanting to sue her, or get any money or anything. I'm just wanting to say, "Hey look, I appreciate all your help, yet session after session, I was telling you what was going on with my father and instead of you having the recognition of something going on here, you just saw me as crazy." Anyway, it still pisses me off to this day.

Farber: This psychoanalytic thing is a continuous battle within the field to compete for higher status, to stay on top of the client, to stay on top of each other. Did you ever read Jeffrey Masson, who wrote these books against Freud? He was a psychoanalyst who rose very high in the Freudian establishment, and was given access to the Freud archives when he was doing research. He was very disillusioned when he found

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out Freud had been suppressing evidence that women were sexually abused by their fathers. He thought the psychoanalytic field would welcome his discovery, but Anna Freud tried to shut him up and they tried to destroy him once he started writing about these things. Jeffrey Masson's last book on that topic was a memoir called *Final Analysis*. When he first became a Freudian he was socializing with others and going to all their meetings: He shows that not only are they trying to maintain their one-up status with the patient, but they're always talking about each other behind their backs. One would say, "You know Kernberg is a narcissistic personality disorder, blah blah blah," and of course Kernberg (for example) was the expert on personality disorders—borderline [personality disorder]—but they seem to prefer to use the term narcissistic for each other. It's continual preoccupation with their own intellectual-spiritual status. They're describing other analysts all the time in psychoanalytic terms.

Paul Levy: Wow.

Farber: Of course, these are very stigmatizing labels when they call someone narcissistic personality disorder. It's not like the colloquial use. A narcissistic personality disorder is supposedly not capable of intimacy. They use these "diagnoses" as insults—behind the back of their peers.

Paul Levy: It's really just here we're all fluid open-ended holograms. When you stigmatize someone like that and you're concretizing their infinitely fluid hologram, it's a form of abuse—particularly when you're doing that with a patient, somebody who is in a role you have authority and power over—when you're concretizing them it's like you're casting a spell.

Farber: I don't recall you mentioning being on psychiatric drugs. They must have put you on psychiatric drugs. Am I wrong, you don't refer to that much?

Paul Levy: On some of my articles I have mentioned drugs, I don't know off hand which ones, it was a very short time They had me with lithium, and they had me on Haldol, an antipsychotic, which I experienced as an anticreative—it just completely shut down my creative impulses.

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Farber: That's a pretty typical response.

Paul Levy: It's horrendous. They also put me on antidepressants, because I was like Wow, I'm on all these drugs, I don't feel my creative impulse; I feel really shut down. Then they say, "Oh you're really depressed, let's put you on an antidepressant, too." The thing is I was really on these drugs probably a whole number of months, it wasn't a long time. The Haldol was for a week, and they had me on lithium probably for six months or so but then I just stopped taking it. I stopped taking the antidepressant really quick. It wasn't that long that I was actually on some sort of psychiatric drugs, during that year between 1981 and '82, there were like six or ten or twelve times—I even lost count—I was put in mental hospitals, diagnosed, and forced to take drugs. The thing which was weird, I was telling them I'm not manicdepressive, I'm emotionally disturbed because my father was an abuser, which to them proved even more how crazy I was. There was that first year I was on like SSI or social security, it was fucked up, I couldn't work.

Farber: You said you had to go back to live with your family for a year, and you knew how abusive they were at that time. You knew how traumatizing your parents were when you went back.

Paul Levy: Here's the thing: My parents from the surface seemed like really good people. My mother was a beautiful person, my father appeared normal, everybody thought he was a normal guy, but he was a complete narcissist, a sociopath, and a criminal. The thing to keep in mind, even though I knew it was the last place I wanted to be living back with my parents, I didn't have the insight I have now. I was in my early to mid-twenties when that was happening. I was a normal, healthy, happy kid growing up, very bright with lots of friends, but my father was a failure, he owned a cigar store in Queens that wasn't doing well. He was happy his only child was like a superstar academically. I went to Binghamton University, I was hired by Princeton University; they were paying me money to do research in economics. I was a straight-A student, the whole point is he was, in a vicarious way, identified with me, living his life out through me like a lot of

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parents do. It was positive until I decided I did not want to be a doctor, lawyer, or economist: I wanted to become an artist. They say the mythic Chronos,* the negative father, gets constellated when the son begins to separate individually from the parent. As soon as when I was in college, when I was like nineteen or twenty, I was beginning to get into art, philosophy, and spirituality. That's when just in essence—to describe the abuse, when I would express any sort of separation or differentiation, my father who was so unconsciously identified with me would become completely possessed, and go into demonic rages. The mantra was "You're killing me," and he would literally be having heart

attacks. The worst time it ever happened, I woke with a fever that lasted for a year. At the end of that year, that entity that had taken over my father—it was like that entity was inside of my psyche and it was getting constellated. Every impulse I had toward expressing myself in any way, in any of my own natural healthy impulses whenever I would express them would constellate this raging demonic father that was now living inside of my psyche telling me I was killing it and having heart attacks. . . . Let me explain the archetypal process here. My father fell totally into his unconscious and acted out his darker impulses—we could say he was fully possessed by an unconscious complex. Because of this, his person became an instrument for a nonpersonal, archetypal energy to come through him. Much to my horror, I found the entity that had possessed and taken over my father was now living within and introjected within my psyche—it was raging, saying I was killing him whenever I would express my true self. Seen symbolically, this translates as me stepping into and expressing my authentic self, who “kills” the negative father Chronos; in essence, I found myself enacting an archetypal, mythic process in, as, and through my personal life. Once I understood this later, once I got beyond seeing it in purely personal terms and saw it as a universal archetypal process, then I could begin to heal, but that was later.

*In Greek mythology Chronos was the god of time, serpentine in form, with three heads—that of a man, a bull, and a lion. Chronos is usually portrayed through an old, wise man with a long, gray beard, such as Father Time.

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The Way of the Shaman

Paul Levy has written extensively regarding the interaction or mirroring of the inner and the outer, of the individual and the cosmos. I include three quotes from his work here because they help to understand his theory that what manifests itself as a personal problem is a reflection on the inner plane of a more extensive problem in the macrocosmic world. It is very seductive to personalize, and pathologize, our inner experiences, believing they are just our own problems, without realizing that we might be unwittingly being dreamed up by the underlying field to pick-up, like a would-be shaman, the split-off, unconscious energies that are playing out all around us.⁴

Interestingly, linear time is symbolized by the mythic Saturn/Chronos, Father Time, whose shadow aspect is the negative patriarchy, which happens to be one of the deeper, underlying archetypal patterns wreaking unspeakable havoc in our world through its obsessive addiction to power, control, and domination. Saturn/Chronos' peculiar form of “blessing”—restraining us as it seemingly takes away our freedom—is always “cursed” by its recipient, and yet it is the very thing that inspires us to discover our own power and authority.⁵

Like an iteration of an inter-nested fractal, the (macro)cosmic, collective process that is happening on the world stage reflects and reveals itself on the inner, personal plane [of the individual] at the same time, as well as vice versa. Different dimensional reflections of each other, the outer collective process and the inner personal process, are beyond interconnected—they are the same process simply explicating itself in different dimensions of our being simultaneously. The microcosm (our inner, personal process) and macrocosm (the world process) directly, instantaneously, and reciprocally affect each other, as the two are one and the same. This means that the way to effect real change in the

world is to transform ourselves by becoming more conscious, as, holographically speaking, the world is enfolded within us while at the same time “We are the World.”⁶

Farber: Okay, you had introjected this entity. Did you hear a voice?

Paul Levy: I wasn't hearing voices. It was like feeling that energy that my father was literally possessed by embodying, it was literally like I

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was reenacting that moment of trauma again and again. At the end of that year, after the fever, I moved to the West Coast to get away from my parents. You know I was in my early twenties, I graduated college, I wanted to move away from home like any normal healthy kid does, after that year of having the fever. At the end of 1979 finally the fever went away. By late '79 through '82 I was living in Berkeley.

Farber: You were also conscious of your father raging?

Paul Levy: Once the fever went away—when I'd moved to Berkeley—it was then I was realizing “Oh my God, I'm like reenacting that trauma, it's now inside of my psyche”—that every impulse I have, like if I had a thought to go for a walk on a beautiful day, or to play basketball, or to draw, or paint, or anything any healthy activity that is in the service of myself that would reactivate it.

Farber: Had you been somaticizing your experiences, meaning were they repressed and assuming a physical form?

Paul Levy: It was like my mind-body's way of dealing with what basically happened. I was afraid I was going to get murdered, my father was taken over by rage, by a demon, to the point I thought he was going to literally kill me. At the same time he was having a heart attack, he was jumping up and down, he disowned me, he threw me out of the house. It was over the house. Think of me as a glass vase, like a container, it was like I was a glass vase that got shattered, my boundaries of myself shattered, something entered me, something penetrated that was not me. That's when I had the fever for a year. The way I see it was it was my mind and body's way of trying to metabolize what happened.

Farber: When you say something penetrated you, what was this something?

Paul Levy: For me it wasn't a physical rape, it was an energetic psychic rape. We all have these natural boundaries of a self, and that's why I was using the image of a glass vase to convey a sense of the integrity and fragility of my personality at that time, which got shattered and transgressed by my father—who on the one hand completely unconsciously identified with me. Here I was separating from him and becoming my

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own person and he was going into his raging and dying and laying a guilt-trip on me, and unconsciously saying “You're killing me,” while he was having heart attacks: it was unbelievable. The thing is, once I got out to Berkeley after that year of the fever a lot of these kind of paranormal things began happening to me. One example of it was there was

a black shadowy substance that began coming out of my head.

Farber: Literally?

Paul Levy: Totally literally. It was like a vapor. I would see it. Other people saw it. Sometimes it would happen a hundred times a day, sometimes it wouldn't happen for months, sometimes it would come out of my eyes and when it came out of my eyes it was like coming out of a camera, when the shutter opens and all of a sudden your field of vision expands. The whole point of why I'm telling you this part, was the suffering I was going through made me go inward, and that's why I began meditating and watching what was happening. I very quickly figured out that I couldn't figure my way out with my intellect, and I was very fortunate that I began to meet the greatest enlightened teachers in the world. I met these teachers who I'm still really close with. One of them is a Buddhist nun from Burma, a very great healer.

Farber: Rina?

Paul Levy: Have you met her? You know Rina?

Farber: Yes. She led meditations at the California Institute for Integral Studies in San Francisco when I was there in the early 1980s.

Paul Levy: We are very close, we're like family members. One night I was with her and she said, "I want you to meet this great clairvoyant who just arrived from Burma, he has this special power, whatever he predicts automatically comes true." This person wasn't a monk, he was a clairvoyant, and basically when I went to meet him in the next room he said, "I'll answer any question. You ask me, I will answer." It stopped my mind; I didn't know what to say; I described to him in much detail the black vapor that was coming out of my head. He said to me, "There is an incredibly negative evil force that's trying to stop you, the only thing you can do is to take refuge in your self, in the truth."

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Farber: The self, not the Buddha, and the sangha?

Paul Levy: That is the Buddha, he might have said Buddha too, I don't have the exact words. I had already done the formal vow, he was saying to just depend on the truth of yourself and just put it in simple language, you'll soon see the light, there's nothing else I can do for you. And that sort of contextualizes the stuff with my father. When someone becomes taken over by deeper archetypal energy they're just an instrument for some sort of darker force to come through, and more and more I'm understanding it was initiatory. The key was to not to allow myself to get stuck in the personal dimension, in which case I would've stayed stuck in despair and resignation. By expanding my awareness and realizing I had gotten drafted into a deeper, archetypal process, I had recontextualized my experience, expanded my consciousness, and concurrently enlarged my sense of identity and the process I was involved in, which allowed for healing to occur. I saw that by going through this I could become a healer for others, and that was why I had to go through it. It really fucked me up and created enormous suffering

and it made me very sick. But it was a healing crisis, over the course of my life, as I'm healing and integrating I'm more and more discovering the work I do, which is hopefully helping people.

The following is from Paul Levy's work "We Are All Shamans in Training."

Fortunately, soon after getting out of the last hospital I began meeting my spiritual teachers, some of the greatest living Buddhist masters from Tibet and Burma, who, unlike the psychiatrists, helped to evoke the healthy part of me. When I described to them what I was subjectively experiencing, instead of being pathologized, they reflected back to me that I was beginning to remember what in Buddhism is called our "true nature." In finding my teachers, I had dreamed up the part of me that was seeing and relating to the part of me that *was* awakening. Having someone else bear witness and reflect back the healthy part of me created a bridge that helped me to see it, too. It was as if my teachers became engaged with me in an intimate relationship that helped me to not get stuck in the trauma of it all, to not get caught in

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being "sick." By simply relating to the healthy part of me, which was an expression of their own level of health and wholeness, they helped me to step into and incarnate the part of me that was well. My teachers and I had instinctively created a supportive, nourishing container between us, which cultivated healing. As if figures in a fairy tale, they had gotten dreamed up to help me learn how to "dis-spell" and transmute the darker forces with which I had been wrestling. . . .⁷

Farber: This healing took place in spite of the whole so-called mental health system. Did you feel that your psychiatrist was helpful or mostly harmful?

Paul Levy: The psychiatrist was a good person: well intentioned, very bright. On the one hand she helped me a lot, because I had a real transference with her, a positive transference. As I said, I saw her for seven years twice a week, and she was a very good person. Keep in mind, I see now that she didn't even have a clue that she was so completely and totally incompetent. I was coming to her every session and I was having dreams about my father being a bad guy and I was telling her the abuse he was enacting. Her point of view was Paul seems to be obsessed with his father, when is he going to get over his father? Not realizing that his father should be in jail and his father is a complete criminal. She was helpful in one sense. When I found her after I got out of the hospital I was totally shattered. . . . She was a good person with good intentions. Keep in mind she was seeing me twice a week and she was seeing my parents once a month, she never saw us together. She never got that the real sick one in the family was my father.

Farber: So the major transformation took place soon as you moved; just the act of getting into a new environment initiated this?

Paul Levy: You're talking after that year of the fever? What happened Thanksgiving night 1978 was the worst of the abuse, and the next day I got the fever. That next year I was sick with the fever, then at the end

of that year I moved to the West Coast. That's when all of a sudden the abuse really came out. It was when I felt like my father was living inside of me but he had gotten possessed by this demonic entity. That entity

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was getting constellated inside of me every moment. So for that next year or two I was completely trying to deal with that.

Farber: Were you healing or were you still under the thrall of this force?

Levy: Oh, I was totally under the thrall. That was the beginning when I realized "Oh fuck, I have a problem." Until then I was a healthy normal kid. I was seeing a normal therapist, and all of a sudden, I went inward and doing intense meditation because that was the only thing that made me feel better. That's when all of a sudden I got hit by a bolt of lightning inside of my brain, I went into this total altered state, got brought to a hospital where I met this blind woman and was able to help her heal her sight. That was the start of that next year. Probably ten different times I was thrown into mental hospitals and told, "Oh, you are manic-depressive."

Farber: Ten different times! This was in Berkeley?

Levy: This was between 1981 and 1982 in Berkeley, and at certain points I got flown back to New York.

The Healing of the Blind Lady and the Crucifixion

by Psychiatry by Paul Levy

I had begun acting so unlike my ordinary, conditioned, and repressed self that a close friend thought I was going crazy and had me brought, by ambulance, to Highland Hospital in Oakland, California. In the very first room I was brought to in that hospital, some sort of lounge for psychiatric patients, was a blind woman. Immediately upon seeing her, without any thought on my part at all, I went right up to her and found myself looking at her eyes and saying over and over the following words: "All you have to do to see is open your eyes and look." These words were literally coming through me. It was as if the words I said to her had fallen into my head, as if I myself hadn't consciously thought them, as if I was channeling them.

I kept on getting closer and closer to her as I repeated these words, staring at her eyes all the while. Her eyes were a blind person's eyes, opaque with no color or radiance at all.

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What happened next I will never forget. In front of my very eyes her eyes began regaining their color and luminosity, going from the dead, diseased eyes of a blind person to normal, healthy, seeing eyes. She had regained her sight. At that moment, as if it was divinely choreographed, a doctor brought me into another room and strapped me on a table. And there I spent the night. I remember lying there knowing I was going through some sort of spiritual experience and feeling that whoever I would think of I was in some way "bringing along." So I began trying to think of everybody I had ever known.

The next morning I was brought to a room and the only other person in the room, sitting across a table from me, was, coincidentally, that ex-blind woman. She was looking at me and smiling from ear to ear, not having said one word to me as of yet.

All of a sudden it was like a closed fist that was in my heart just completely opened. It was perfectly clear to me that this was my heart chakra blossoming. It

is described as the opening of a thousand-petaled lotus, and though I had never had this happen to me before, it was an experience that I immediately recognized. At a certain point I had the spontaneous realization of what had happened with this woman the day before. I intuitively understood that her eyes were physically fine, it was just that she was not letting herself open her (inner) eyes to look. It was like she herself was keeping them closed. I somehow had “seen” this the day before and I had known what to do. It was like I had become a conduit for some deeper, healing force. It was also clear to me that it was no accident that she and I had come together. It was clearly a synchronistic meeting, one in which we were both playing roles in a deeper drama.

At a certain point she said to me “Aren’t you going to answer the phone call from Roy (my father’s name)?” These were, literally, the first and only words she ever spoke to me. Moments later the nurse came into the room and said my father was on the phone.

Even though the situation with that blind woman actually happened in waking life, it is quite profound to contemplate what happened symbolically, as if it were a dream. To see our life in this way is to view the events in our life as if they are a dream that a deeper part of us, what I call the “deeper, dreaming Self” dreamed into materialized form in and as our life itself. Just like doing dreamwork about a night dream, we can then ask ourselves, what is the meaning of this dream? How would I interpret it? What parts of myself are embodied in the different dream characters?

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This was clearly a dream that the two of us were collaboratively dreaming up together. We can look at what got dreamed up between us from either of our point’s [sic] of view (what dream character am I in her dream, and what part of myself was she?), as it was a mutually shared dream. Who was I in her dream, but an awakening part of herself that she was split-off from, and hence projected out and dreamed up into and as a (dream) figure in her (waking) dream? It was as if I was open and sensitive enough to simply pick up a role that was being dreamed up in the dreamfield, waiting for someone to give it fully embodied, incarnate form.

I began to realize that what happened between the two of us, when contemplated symbolically as if it were a dream, was revealing what is happening all of the time, with everyone, only it’s happening unconsciously. We are all mutually, interdependently dreaming each other up, in a nonlinear, acausal process that happens outside of time, in no time, faster than the twinkling of an eye. In this waking dream of ours, we are all picking up roles in each other’s dreaming processes. We are all dreaming up the deeper dreamfield as well as, concurrently, being dreamed up by it, a process that Buddhism calls interdependent co-origination, in which every part of the universe is evoking, while simultaneously being evoked by, every other part. Having experiences with this (ex-) blind woman, and contemplating them symbolically, was a key that helped me to extract the blessing of what these situations were revealing, becoming the seeds that later helped me to articulate and develop “The Dreaming Up Process.”

In the waking dream that I was having, who was this blind woman but the part of myself that wasn’t really blind, but was literally refusing to look at something. To see this as a dream would be to realize that she is an embodied reflection of a part of myself that is actively refusing to look at something. Doing dreamwork, I immediately have two associations. First, I think of the part of me that has been definitely unwilling to directly look at and come to terms with the depth of the darkness, the shadow, the pain inside of myself. But I also think of the saying of Christ, when he says, “The kingdom is spread all over and people just don’t see it.” There is definitely something about opening one’s eyes and

simply seeing what is there. I notice that at times when I am teaching, this is exactly what I am trying to get across, for us to simply open our eyes, so to speak, and recognize our situation. And of course, you teach what you need to learn.

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I also found it interesting to contemplate how the very moment that her eyes got healed, I got taken into another room and strapped, Christ-like, on a table. To view this actual event as if it were a dream and read it symbolically is to realize that somehow it is expressing and reflecting a process happening not only deep inside my psyche, but deep inside the collective psyche of humankind. For a dream is our inner process, going on deep inside our being, being projected out, and both literally, as well as symbolically, “dreamed up” into materialized form in, as and through the dream. So a dream is not separate from the psyche, it is the deeper psyche externalized. The seemingly outer events in the dream are themselves, in symbolic form, the very inner process of the psyche.

To view my getting strapped up as if it were a scene in a dream makes me immediately associate to being crucified right at the moment I had stepped into my light; the symbolism is very clear. It was as if a deeper archetypal mythic dimension was enacting itself through me, through events in my life. Upon reflection, this makes sense, as if the archetype of the Self, to use Jung’s language, was birthing itself through me, and these events were all symbolically expressing the deeper process that I had fallen into.⁸

Farber: Did the healing begin after you met his Rina and his clairvoyant?

Paul Levy: I met Rina in ’81, and I met the clairvoyant in the early ’90s—much later. Here’s the chronology: Thanksgiving 1978 was the worst of the abuse there; I had the fever for a year; late in ’79 I moved to the West Coast; that was when the abuse came out when I was completely feeling my father inside of me for the first time in my life. That was also when I had the realization, Well, I really have a problem, I have to deal with this. That’s when I went inward and mediated to try to understand, to try to watch what was happening. In May of 1981 was when the thing with the blind woman happened, that was the first mental hospitalization. During the next year, May 1981 to September 1982, I was put in mental hospitals a lot because I was having this huge awakening and I was out in the world. I wasn’t in a monastery; I wasn’t in an ashram; I was totally uncontained. When I got out of the last hospital, I think that was in September ’82, that’s when I was really depressed and traumatized by all the hospitalizations, conditions, and

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the abuse. That’s when I found that psychiatrist, and I worked with her up until I moved to Portland in 1990. It was in the early ’90s Portland when I had the realization, Oh well, I’ve actually discovered something: I can be of help to other people. I integrated my own process, and that’s when I opened up my private practice, and began giving lectures and writing articles. That was in the early ’90s.

Farber: When did you feel you were over the worst parts of the breakdown?

Paul Levy: The thing was when I had gotten out of that last hospital, which I believe was ’82, that next year I was living with my parents was the

real dark night of the soul. At the end of the year I found a place to live, I found a girlfriend, and I found my lamas, the Tibetan lamas that are living in New York. That's when I found a psychiatrist who was actually helpful at first. That's when I began having, you know, really sort of a normal life.

Farber: You moved back to New York in 1982?

Paul Levy: I was flown back for final hospitalization for three weeks to be stabilized with meds.

Farber: Why did they fly you back to New York?

Paul Levy: I got in trouble with the law, and part of the court agreement was that they would make sure I got flown back to New York and stabilized on meds. I was acting out in such an uncontained, unrestrained way that the authorities got alerted; I was breaking the rules of society.

Farber: You're one of those people who are supposed to be a chronic mental patient today.

Paul Levy: And so it is. I haven't been on any sort of psychiatric medication for over twenty-five years, I haven't been in mental hospitals for over twenty-five years. Here I am, I have psychiatrists who consult with me, study with me, and send me patients. I'm a little bit off the radar.

I was one of the lucky ones, however, as I was able to extricate myself from the Stone Age horrors of the mental health [*sic*] community as soon as I was able. Tragically, many others are not as fortunate, and their potential spiritual awakening/shamanic initiation process becomes aborted as they become bound and captive to the psychiatric establishment. The

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psychiatric system and the pharmaceutical companies (Big Pharma) are co-dependently intertwined with each other in a genuinely pathological, mutually profitable, and crazy-making relationship. . . . In essence, the sick part of the psychiatric system/Big Pharma is that it/they are in the business of "making crazies" so as to support its/their pathology, which is to be guilty of genuine "mal-practice." To people who have fallen into the black hole and become caught in the double-bind of the psychiatric/Big Pharma "field-of-force," it is a very dangerous situation, as if an insect had gotten too entangled in a spider's web to extricate itself. I was lucky to escape with my sanity intact.®

Farber: Pretty much you're now a spiritual teacher?

Paul Levy: I'm not putting myself as an enlightened person like I think of with my teachers, they're really integrated and they're enlightened, like Rina and the Tibetan lamas. I'm in a role where I'm a teacher but the way I do it is I openly share my wounds, my trauma, my unhealed suffering. I'm not saying I'm this enlightened person. Yeah, I've been through a incredible ordeal I'm still healing from, and still integrating and assimilating. I genuinely and authentically share my struggles.

People are really inspired by the honesty of that.

The following is from

"We Are All Shamans in Training"

It's been very helpful for me as I continually deepen my own healing to remember that my experience of trauma in myself is simultaneously a microcosmic,

personalized fractal reflecting the greater trauma resonating throughout the collective field. This realization allows me to not personalize the moment of feeling the trauma, or concretize myself as being traumatized, but allows me to give myself over to and embrace my experience . . .

We then can envision ourselves from this more expansive point of view to have, like a shaman, the intention to take into ourselves the madness in the field [the universe] which ultimately is our own madness, so as to creatively assimilate it into our wholeness in our own unique manner as a way to help serve the field.¹⁰

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Farber: Through the 1980s would you say that you reached a satisfied creative life?

Paul Levy: That happened as soon as I moved out of my parents' house, which was probably in '83. That's when I'd gotten my teaching certification, and I'd gotten teaching appointments.

Farber: Teaching kids?

Paul Levy: I have a degree both in economics and art. I'm an artist, and I was teaching art, having a girlfriend, and having a normal life. I still am healing from the torment of having had the father I did. Keep in mind I was a very happy normal person, as a teenager. I used to play sports all the time, and I was introspective, too. There are a lot of people I know whose teenage years were like nightmarish; mine were very happy. That is why my father was so kind of living his life through me and so identified his success with me because I was so accomplished.

Farber: He didn't lose it until you started diverging from what he wanted you to become.

Paul Levy: Exactly, that's the whole myth of the negative father, that Chronos the negative father gets constellated as soon as the son begins to separate and individuate from the father. As soon as I began to step into my own self separate from my father, that's when he began to go insane. The thing which is sad is I would have loved—my parents are both dead now—I would have loved to deal with the sort of unconscious abuse that was in the family system. I was hoping that's what the mental health system was going to do, but unfortunately and ultimately it wound up being complicit in the abuse I was wanting to help liberate.

Farber: I studied family therapy with Jay Haley and Salvador Minuchin, and for a couple years I was doing that kind of thing in clinics. Unfortunately, I kept getting fired for getting people off drugs, and by 1990 I could not get hired in the public sector as a psychologist because I opposed keeping people on psychiatric drugs—and that is not tolerated. After being involved with psychiatry you became a Jungian right? It sounds like you've read more Jung than most Jungians.

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Paul Levy: I'm not a Jungian. I studied Jung everyday for twenty-five years; I'm a self-taught Jungian. There's sort of a way I have of being able to translate Jung—which hasn't been done in the modern idea of Jung—that a lot of people feel is very helpful. I don't have any degree in

Jung. I studied him on my own.

Farber: But was that a part of your spiritual growth? When did you start becoming optimistic about solving the crisis of humanity?

Paul Levy: Right when I was having my awakening in '81. I had this clear vision. It's not a theory but a total vision of clear being who we are. That we all are the Messiah, that all this is a mass shared dream, that when a certain sufficient number of us recognize that fact and become lucid we can connect with each other and we can literally change the dream, and that's evolutionary. I had that idea from the beginning and that's a vision I had imprinted in my psyche so fully. My work is about is trying these incredibly imaginative ways of trying to get that across to people.

Farber: That's similar to the kind of archetype that possesses me, the idea of the messianic consciousness, separating it from the tradition of one individual coming back.

Paul Levy: That's totally in line with what Jung talks about when he talks about the Christification of the many. He said they are incarnating within ever-increasing numbers of brothers and sisters in humanity. It's only if we're able to withstand that tension of opposites, to not just split off and project out one of those opposites but to hold that creative tension that the transcendent function can manifest through. That was exactly his vision. I feel like I'm almost one of the translators of Jung.

Farber: Jesus put it that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the kingdom of God is at hand.

To say that nowadays would immediately arouse suspicions among most people that you are psychotic—or quixotic at best—even among many people who call themselves Christian. This is why I say either Jesus was insane or modern society is insane.

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Paul Levy: I talk about it in my book, that we are enlightened, and this is the kingdom of heaven spread all over and we don't recognize it. That's the deepest teaching in Buddhism too, that our true nature is right here right now and even our impurities' obscurations are the form our true nature is taking.

Farber: That's one of the reasons that my hopes are resting on being able to interest people who were called mentally ill and schizophrenic not in just trying to heal themselves but in trying to heal the world. You talk about various different roles, you talk about the creative artist, and when you talk about the artist it sounds more like a prophet than the artist because your creative artist is not the one who is writing books for the entertainment of individuals but trying to change the zeitgeist.

Paul Levy: Totally—what I'm pointing at is that the figure, whether you call him the artist, the shaman, or the wounded healer, is in all aspects of the deeper archetype, because we are interconnected in the field. Somebody's able to get in touch with what's constellated inside of

them, keeping in mind we're not just these discrete egos separate from the universe, we are actually all oracles of the collective. The microcosm and the macrocosm are reflections of each other. When any of us, whether you call them the hero, shaman, artist, bodhisattva, prophet or whatever, are able to somehow creatively express and give shape and form to what is going on inside of us—which is not separate from what's going on inside the collective unconscious of our species—by us expressing that it actually affects, in a powerful way, the whole collective unconscious, the whole field. It can actually be transfused, and activate in others the same realization that we're giving shape and form to.

That's why I say that the figure of the wounded healer, shaman, artist, whatever is the figure that's going to heal our planet.

Farber: So if the people who are today mental patients locked inside a hospital can make the same transition you did to being a creative artist, or the shaman in training, I'm hoping that reading this book will help them to do that. Who else has the motivation to do it? Most people want to belong to the rat race, that's what Laing said. He said our society has become biologically dysfunctional and some forms of

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schizophrenic alienation from the alienation of our society may have a sociobiological function we have yet not recognized.

Paul Levy: You know Seth, you are so right on that there are probably so many people in mental hospitals or even outpatients who just bought into the diagnosis, which is then to fall under the psychiatric spell; it's like we talked about before in the self-fulfilling prophecy, or the infinitely self-perpetuating feedback loop. The mental patients are having the space, having the container, to creatively express what they're envisioning, what they're seeing, what they're experiencing, and what they're saying could be incredible—not to just heal themselves but it could be helpful to help the world.

Farber: Jesus thought he could bring about the kingdom of heaven on Earth. As I said, it turned out that, from a conventional viewpoint, Jesus was mistaken. Inversing the usual thing that Jesus was pathological, I say that the mental patients who, like Jesus, want to bring about the kingdom of God, if there were enough people who had that consciousness, who went through what you and Jung refer to as inflation, we'd have a number of people committed to the messianic transformation.

Paul Levy: Right. What I'm saying is that that's the way, what you just described, that's the way I see it happening. It's one thing if you or I wake up right now and stabilize and have the lucidity and the realization that this is a mass shared dream. So what? The point is that the way you understand this if you have the lucidity in the night dream—that's one thing—but when you connect with other dream characters in that night dream, other aspects of yourself who are also turned on and lucid and realizing the nature of the situation they find themselves in (i.e., that they're dreaming), which means that the environment they're

in is nothing other than their own thought-forms, their own energy, their own consciousness—what they discover is Wow, we can configure ourselves together. It's what I call our sacred power of dreaming: we can re-configure ourselves together and change the dream we're having. We can dream whatever we want into materialization. That's what this is all about, and that's evolutionary, that's what's available to us.

Farber: For one thing it entails coming to the realization—which the

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schizophrenics and the bipolars, as they're called now, can accept, but can the normal people accept it?—that the laws of nature are not laws of nature. They're not the eternal laws of nature. As Rupert Sheldrake said, these are habits of nature: everything from death to disease to all the things we regard as inevitable, parts of the human situation.

Paul Levy: Like this friend of mine, who also was thrown in mental hospitals when he was younger, he's a genius now. He's an incredible physicist, and when he has the realization he's dreaming he does physics experiments in the lucid dream state. What he's discovering endlessly in his life is that it's all a function of consciousness: if we are fed a particular axiomatic viewpoint that we become entrenched in then, being like a dream, this world will supply all the evidence we need to confirm the seemingly objective truth of that viewpoint. We're just entrancing ourselves by our own ability to create reality.

Farber: One of these spiritual kind of books at . . . I think you might have been alluding to it—was the idea of individual realization and just becoming oblivious to the world. It seems to work for some people but it's not doing anything to save the Earth. You find that in Buddhism, you find it in many spiritual traditions.

Paul Levy: That's not the real Buddhism, because the real Buddhism is talking about when you wake up. It's the Mahayana, it's the Bodhisattva, it's like the Bodhisattva's about to enter nirvana and they look back and they see all their brothers and sisters and the Bodhisattva says "I'm not going to enter nirvana until I bring everybody else there first." And who is everybody else except aspects of me?

Farber: But Theravada Buddhists are pretty much into individual realization, are they not?

Paul Levy: Yeah, they are and yet I also have to say, because I'm connected with some Theravada teachers they're also some of the most incredible and loving, some of the most wisdom-filled and compassionate people I know.

Farber: That's in spite of the theory?

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Paul Levy: It's somehow in spite of it. I almost think it's a question of semantics; when somebody has some degree of realization they understand that we're not separate from each other, and that we're interconnected and interdependent, me and separate self don't exist.

Farber: I guess all religious mystics have had that kind of—

Paul Levy: I don't get caught up in the semantic thing about the Hinayana being just about personal salvation and forgetting about everybody else.

Farber: If you want to change the communal mind you have to recruit people who are not advocating individual liberation.

Paul Levy: That's what I talk about in my book, about being a spiritually informed political activist. You can't be a spiritual practitioner without being a political activist, and you can't be a political activist without being a spiritual practitioner; we're at the point where they really have to cross-pollinate each other.

Farber: In the entire Indian tradition, the ultimate goal is seen as disincarnation. Isn't that true in Buddhism, too?

Paul Levy: The point is that when you become enlightened then when you pass away you don't get blown by the winds of karma and incarnate back into a body. You want to break the incarnation cycle, but then that needs to be complemented by the idea of the Bodhisattva who attains the realization and breaks from the incarnation cycle and consciously chooses to come back.

Farber: Sri Aurobindo says that—I don't mean to cite him as the authority—but the ultimate goal is the highest realization will take place on Earth, even the mode of coming back at this point may be not to help other people attain freedom but ultimately to transform the whole Earth-consciousness. There would then be incarnation but, as Aurobindo puts it, continuous evolution in the Knowledge rather than the evolution in the Ignorance. It would be the realization of the ancient dream of the kingdom of God on Earth.

Paul Levy: I fully agree with that and that's why, in the last chapter of

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my book *Creating an Art Happening called Global Awakening*, I present the idea of these dreamers and artists whose canvas is this universe and if we could actually have the recognition of the nature of our situation, then just like an artist, we can create an art happening where we actually help each other to wake up. That's like a radical thing and that, I think, is what Aurobindo was pointing at.

Farber: Are you aware of the split in society between spirituality—which is seen as a kind of get yourself together thing, and politics—which is seen as a change society type of thing?

Paul Levy: To answer that I go back to Jung who talks about how the real change in the world is going to happen through the individual: it doesn't happen through making new legislation. Any one of us doing our own work and actually waking up to a degree has a real effect, and that's where we can be really active and an activated agent. Particularly when people like that connect with each other and, of course, then there's the whole idea of whether its in the revelations, they talk about a 144,000 or the hundred monkey phenomenon. There's a certain critical mass—the thing is that any one of us, you know if you in this moment

and me in this moment, we integrate our shadow and wake up or whatever and individuate to whatever degree—that might be the sort of putting this grain of sugar in the saturated solution that forms this crystal. It might be any one of us in this moment waking up who might be that very . . .

Farber: How would it then manifest in society? We couldn't continue to go to war, and even the slaughter of animals—the things we take for granted as we eat our food—the enormous amount of suffering that's being inflicted upon other beings . . .

Paul Levy: The point is that when there are a sufficient number of people getting together and not only just actually getting together but even just the way we affect the field, if I wake up in this moment even more that has an . . . effect on the whole thought field of consciousness that actually exists. I can't say how that's going to get incorporated or institutionalized into the existing paradigm, what we're stepping into is more and more the realization that we have to have for the survival

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of our species, that we're actually on the same side, that we're actually interdependent and interconnected and it's really like a stepping out of the illusion of the separate self. I mean that's really what it's about.

Farber: What would be an example of a global—can you give a historical example; you make passing reference to the sixties—of an art happening called global awakening?

Paul Levy: I don't even know if there is such an example because it's such . . . like an epochal radical evolutionary event arising that we're approaching, you know? What I think in terms of when you think about our species, however many 6.5 billion of us there are . . . think about in a family system, or even a relationship, where all of a sudden there will be polarity, there will be conflict. And then all of a sudden something will happen where that will shift and the whole configuration will change: where all of a sudden it will go from kind of war and adversarial diabolical creating separation to all of a sudden—connection—instead of separation. That's what I call a microcosmic freckle; that's like showing up the minutest microcosmic level, whether it be personal relationships or family dynamics, it's what's available to us as a human species. The thing I'm saying is that whether it be the women's movement, the gay rights movement, the blacks movement—all of these movements maybe would be examples on a smaller scale but instead of it having to do with just a specific thing—what about it being just a fully human movement, where we're *all* having a realization? So yeah, I'm saying these things have happened, whether it be on the smaller scale of relationship or group dynamics or even within a particular group.

Farber: Do you remember the Harmonic Convergence?

Paul Levy: Oh, I know—I know who started that; he's a friend of mine.

Farber: Do you expect any transformation in 2012? You've been in contact with Arguelles? He's still very much a believer.

Paul Levy: He's married now to my ex-girlfriend; we are really good friends. The point is for me I don't know what's going to happen in 2012. My imagination is that it's some form of potential conscious expansion, but I can't say. The thing that really gets my attention as

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someone who tracks the dreaming, is just the fact that there are tons and tons of people who are even contemplating or asking the question what's going to happen in 2012; it just seems like something's going to shift. Just that itself is a psychic phenomenon that merits our attention.

Farber: Do you see the sixties as some sort of global—you make reference to the music of the sixties and the contagious effect of that?

Paul Levy: Yeah. I see the sixties as totally an example of some form of global awakening, and the thing that is sad is that so many people who, in the sixties were the proponents of these more progressive liberal expanded points of view, have now become card-carrying members of the machine, so to speak. It's kind of tragic in a way. There are lots of people who grew up in the sixties who still carry that frequency and that vibration in their own way. So yeah, that might be a good example of that.

Farber: I guess you're not pessimistic when you see all these efforts to change the world. I don't know how much hope you had in the Obama movement. One would have thought with the campaign or whatever, you saw a reaction to the horrific things that Bush did.

Paul Levy: I didn't have much hope with him because I was aware of that he was just whatever in the pockets of big business. I do study a lot of what's happening in the world, because I have to be tracking what the dreaming is doing—cause I see it all as a dreaming process. The big danger is to get really absorbed in despair and pessimism because it's very convincing how terrible things are. I also feel there are so many people who are awakening and who are these visionaries, whether or not they're mental patients, and that gives me incredible hope, so I definitely am an optimist.

Farber: What about the fact that people that are not awakening are the ones who have the guns and bombs and police and all that?

Paul Levy: Right, that's true, and I'm not going to debate that, it's really unfortunate, you know.

Farber: You may have read about internment camps; I don't think

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we're putting them in now but they definitely have them and have been building them.

Paul Levy: I have no doubt about that, and that really concerns me. I don't know what to say; I'm not this naive person who is like, Oh no, everything is going to turn out great, let's hope for the best. No. I mean things on one hand look very bleak and are very . . . I sort of see it as like the powers-that-be are really wanting to centralize power and control and have dominance over the planet, over everyone. I want to say

that's a dreaming process, that's an archetypal process that has enacted itself all throughout history on a smaller scale.

Farber: What makes you feel that now is the time—within the next century or our lifetime—that we can transcend this?

Paul Levy: One way of understanding what's happening collectively is to just take a look at an individual and when she, when the unconscious creates a situation that puts her in a corner or a potentially fatal situation, this also can precipitate her to wake up individually. It's a similar thing on the collective scale: If you look at this thing of dream and the unconscious of our species, that we're dreaming ourselves into this incredible corner and potentially creating a fatal situation for ourselves, but the other half of that is that it could potentially snap us out of our spell.

Farber: Even on mainstream TV there's commentary that no one's going to take global warming seriously until there's a catastrophe. It's an inconvenient truth, to use Gore's phrase.

Paul Levy: Right, and so the thing is that stuff on so many fronts—whether it be economic, environmental, or militarily or political or social—they're all converging, and we're given a choice: Are we going to wake up to a degree or are we just going to be like sheep and be led along and go over a cliff?

Farber: Going back to the Mad Pride movement, do you see a positive shift as I say in the kind of transition from the psychiatric survivors' movement—which seemed to be focused just on the mental health system and its crimes—to the Mad Pride movement, that seems to be expanding its focus?

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Paul Levy: I don't know, I'm not really plugged into that community. I'm just sort of an independent agent doing my own thing. I might be open to kind of connecting with more groups like that; I've just felt so strongly pulled to do my own thing. I guess the one thing I want to say is that, if we're talking about Mad Pride and having these visionary gifts and awakenings, you can't take out of that equation that you are a member of the human community, and that part of what gifts you are bringing forth have to do with helping our species and the greater collective field to heal and to wake up. I don't see any way to separate that from your own personal healing. It's sort of like the way I saw it, because I was so committed to my own healing, but at a certain point I had the realization: Wow, I'm not gonna be fully healed until the whole universe is healed.

Farber: I've come to the point where I see the mental health system as just completely incapable of change, and if we change society what need would there be for a so-called mental health system, anyway?

Paul Levy: That's true. I think the mental health system is a sort of self-sustaining system, particularly when you factor in the big pharma companies involved there. Change isn't going to come within that system, particularly with big pharma involved. The thing is I feel like any

of us stepping into our light, which involves, of course, integrating the shadow, but really stepping into our genius and particularly connecting with other people who are doing the same, it activates the collective genius, which is greater than the sum of its parts. When I talk about this in my work—that's the way we're going to change things, whether it be the mental health community or the world.

Farber: Just to sum up, it seems to me you pretty much accepted what I saw as many if not all of the basic assertions implied by the Mad Pride movement. You did seem to agree that people who get labeled schizophrenic or bipolar seem to have a distinctive kind of personality characteristic in terms of being more sensitive or more aware?

Paul Levy: Yes, but the thing is maybe it's not fully integrated. Thus they can get overwhelmed by being more sensitive and aware that they can feel the unconscious, the shadow in the field, but they don't

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necessarily know what to do with it. A healer feels that unconscious shadow stuff but they're able to metabolize what gets activated in them so that they integrate it and then they can be of help, whereas the mental patient is sensitive and aware and feels that stuff but he or she hasn't developed the container to be able to metabolize it.

Farber: No, they haven't gotten much help. The point I was making is that this group, who are more constitutionally sensitive and aware, has been marginalized for a long time and they continue to be marginalized.

Paul Levy: I want to point out that marginalization is a reflection of how we people in the consensus-reality tend to marginalize our own sensitive parts or our own parts that are a little bit idiosyncratic or abnormal. That then plays out as a reflection collectively in the world.

Farber: You have noticed that many people who are psychiatrically labeled are more mystically inclined than the average Joe?

Paul Levy: Totally; they're more mystically inclined. Is it grounded, is it integrated? No. Where people tend to think they're Christ, or the Messiah, and that's seen as part of the pathology, but yet what we're pointing out is that it can be ego inflation, ungrounded, and out of balance, but they can still actually be onto something. We only need to keep the realization they're not getting metabolized or integrated in a certain way.

Farber: I'd like to think of St. Paul who was blind for all that time, and these people who developed a messiah consciousness that was not egocentric: St. Paul, George Fox.

Paul Levy: I agree.

Farber: When you say that human beings are dreaming the dream and we could dream it together, do you also see that as a manifestation of a kind of evolutionary tendency, a telos?

Paul Levy: Definitely. I totally see that. The way I see it is that when you step into the atemporal dimension, from that point of view we already are enlightened and woken up. All exists in that atemporal

dimension and its almost like it's an attractor, that everything going out

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as linear time is the medium through which we as a species are actualizing and having that realization in time.

Farber: How do you see these attractors?

Paul Levy: I'm not sure, because attractors is also a term in physics, and so I don't quite know. I just think of it in the realm of the mind where there are archetypes, and they get activated and act as attractors. They attract both the inner and outer environment as to give form to themselves. That could be potentially negative or positive.

Farber: So then what you believe is realized in the temporal world manifests itself as purpose and striving in our created universe?

Paul Levy: I definitely see this as some form of telos, like a teleology thing . . . the whole purpose or a goal. That's like a deep sense I have, whether in the individual life and also in the collective life of our species. I immediately associate with Christ when he says, You're Gods and scripture cannot be broken—he was actually speaking from that place where he actualized that realization.

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