



# Daughters of the land: the influences of the experience of being a farmer's daughter growing up or through the 1960s on adulthood and the individuation process within Australia

David Russell, University of Western Sydney, Jennie Hermiston, Community educator

Ah, not to be cut off,  
Not through the slightest partition  
Shut out from the law of the stars.  
The inner-what is it?  
If not intensified sky,  
Hurled through with birds and deep  
with the winds of homecoming.

Rainer Maria Rilke

## Introduction

*Daughters of the Land* is a phenomenological study<sup>1</sup> positioned within analytical psychology<sup>2</sup> that articulates women's experiences that grow up in the 1960s on family farms in Australia. The work comes from the heart of country and not the coastal or urban fringes where most Australian's live as if wishing to escape. At least that is what it looked like from where I lived as a child growing up on a farm in Southern Riverina. Huddlers and explores, Patrick White would say.

Daughters-of-the-land experiences grew out of the dreams and imagination of English and Scottish immigrants of the 1800s, the failure of such dreams and the rebirth of human spirit. My landmark generational stories of failed and reemerging dreams include a ship wreck on King Island (Saturday 14 July, 1866, 7.15pm), an overland trip from Adelaide to Bendigo (1850), the collapse of the first Bendigo mining battery (1850), dieing stock and the mud of dry farm dams. History books are also littered with stories that conclude with the bones of explorers and blood of traditional owners. The current generation of woman with stories of farm upbringings are strongly influenced by broader cultural, economic structures and immediate generational experiences.

The research project, *Daughters of the Land* was completed in June 2005 through the School of Psychology, University of Western Sydney. Ethic approval endorsed the research process. The work is personal yet intertwined with 12 other daughter-of-the-land stories. The articulated memories leave a sense of ambiguity and a story that can never be fully articulated.

The implication of this work for practical changes to health services on the ground is to invite an engagement in soulful or psychic processes, awareness of archetypal influences and articulation of the unspoken within a responsible framework. The aim is to understand ones relationship with self, family, community and land utilising a dialogue with the imaginal through metaphor, story and image; thus deepening experiences of relationship.

## Aims

The *Daughter of the Land* research project aspired to make sense of receptive relationships between self, family, community, culture, all beings including land. The aims of the Daughter of the Land research project included:

- ▷ articulating some of the common or archetypal threads by retelling specific experiences within a broader cultural context
- ▷ processing through poetic narrative the material and imaginative experiences of selected farmers' daughters growing up and through the 1960s on an Australian family farm

---

<sup>1</sup> Phenomenological research aims to articulate "a rich, deep 'snapshot' of an experience that includes qualities at many levels of experience but especially at pre-reflective levels".

<sup>2</sup> Analytical Psychology embraces, the imaginal, consciousness and archetypal representations.





- ▷ understanding if the my personal experiences were common or if indeed my feelings of alienation, dislocation and loneliness were peculiar to me.

Soul and psyche seem to be two terms that are interchangeable, soul meaning “movement at depth ... one which concentrates on depth imagery and the way in which the psyche converts events into experiences—soul making”.<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this work soul does not mean the “core, heart or centre”.<sup>4</sup>

## Methods

These processes and framework seemed apt to express the personal and rarely articulated experiences, of woman with daughter-of-the-land experiences that are conflicting and at times complex and contradictory.

There were two research stages the

- ▷ first being the research participant process and the
- ▷ second was personal, I researched through the writing process and worked with the emerging insights.<sup>5</sup>

### Research participant process

The twelve research participants, working from their respective homes, were asked to draw ‘mud maps’, Part 1, and complete quick written sketches, part 2.

Part 1; sketch stick drawings using material of your choice and paper, to describe:

- ▷ your childhood family farm
- ▷ your place within the family
- ▷ your relationship to the land—this may include a little writing and description
- ▷ childhood dreams of what you wanted to happen
- ▷ how it has turned out.

The sketches were to be completed in a fast-and-furious sort of manner.

Part 2; elaborate on the sketches, just a little, using the following themes.

- ▷ explain the extent of your childhood desires and dreams
- ▷ what was the extent of the duty and discipline expected of you?
- ▷ explain some of your disappointments and doubts
- ▷ what was the extent of double standards and double crosses if any?
- ▷ how have you been influenced in your adult life by your childhood within a farming family?

### Personal research through writing

I chose a poetic narrative style as it is the “language of the imagination (poetry, metaphor, imagery, wordplay) that allows us to dwell meaningfully ...”.<sup>6</sup> Metaphor can be defined as the “definition and exploration of one thing by reference to the image of another”.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Hillman, J. *Re-Visioning Psychology*. Harper Perennial, 1975.

<sup>4</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter B. Plaut, F. *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge 1997, p140.

<sup>5</sup> Richardson, L. A Method of Inquiry in Handbook of Qualitative Research by N Denzin and Y Lincoln, Sage Publications, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, D. A Psychological Perspective on Place, in *Changing Places: re-imagining Australia* edited by John Cameron, Longueville Books, 2003 p155.

<sup>7</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter, B. and Plaut, F. *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge 1997 p93.





I like engagement in this style of writing because my soul seems to sing and dance just a little. Fences become irrelevant. I am able to meander around my inner world at will. My historical threads can be linked to my current life and into the horizon of my dreams and desires. I feel connected. My imagination is engaged; an imagination that once roamed distant horizons while riding fence lines to destinations of psyche and body. Poetic narrative gives me a home within the paddocks of my mind. I use poetic narrative as I strive to make meaning of my childhood and adult experiences in the faith that "Meaning rather than treatment relieves the suffering induced by a neurosis".<sup>8</sup>

## Results

The research participants came from a variety of farm backgrounds and landscapes. We originated in southern half of Australia; areas included Perth, Western District, Gippsland, Riverina, North East Victoria and Table Top Mountain. I was surprised to reflect that I knew many 'daughters' as I have often felt isolated, slightly ridiculous and at times irrelevant with such a background. Commonality of experience is comforting but confronting.

### Image, dream and imagination

I dreamt the Red Tunic Dream in 1998. A relationship had recently finished and I was about to relocate back to my childhood home district for a short term work contract. It was a time of departure and return, conclusion and beginning. The dream:

I was home (farm) alone, in the kitchen. The power went out. I went to check the power pole. I felt fear. There was energy coming down the drive. I peered out of the kitchen door with caution. I hid in the kitchen with a false sense of security.

I was in a utility being driven into the Big Paddock (central farm paddock). I was dressed in my farm work clothes. My body was squashed against the passenger door. There was no handle on the door. I could not get out. We passed close by some women who were walking, sacredly, in from the edges of the Big Paddock. They were wearing red tunics. The women were majestic in an inner way.

A girl in a white tunic (I suspect me) was standing on a flimsy wooden platform, above the tree line. A fire was lit underneath the platform. Women in red were forming around this structure. The women in some areas formed into triangles or pyramid shapes. I am not sure if they were standing on each others shoulders or a flat triangle shape on the ground.

The women in the Red Tunic Dream appear to state an invitation through initiation into a world that has an inner richness with quiet assurance. It almost feels like the women were silently calling me into a world that I do not comprehend. I suspect that entry into this world cannot be travelled to but must be arrived at through immersion.

### A deep love of land and space

A deep love for and connection to land saturated each participant's essence.

In stillness,  
In silence it begins.  
Beneath ash  
The seeping of sap,  
Faint pulse of cord,  
Deep from a dark well.  
Sucked by sun  
To quicken small nipples  
Wrapped beneath black bark.  
Moist core swelling  
Filling buds sprouting,  
Blushing,  
Staining tissue and membrane.  
Red blood,

---

<sup>8</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter, B. and Plaut, F., 1997, p93.





Green life.  
The flame transformed to flesh<sup>9</sup>

How can I describe the love I had for our farm—so fundamental and complete? Our farm, 'Carisbrook' was everything to us as children, and we felt so lucky to be 'farm kids'. We had a profound sense of the beauty of the land ... from dawn 'til dusk, through each season ... nature all around us and we such a part of it!<sup>10</sup>

I'm often embarrassed by the depth and intensity of this emotion in relation to land.<sup>11</sup>

A love of land seems to permeate and filter adult choices at a micro and macro level.<sup>12</sup> The influence on adult life is significant. Land can arouse a sense of the erotic "... what I enjoy today—the same smells, spaces, landscapes—horses—even a man with a particular way—smell, sense of self—all very down to earth".<sup>13</sup> Love and longing for something as simple as dagging around in old clothes,<sup>14</sup> to spiritual rejuvenation<sup>15</sup> or a daily interest of rural news.<sup>16</sup> A love of land influenced career and family life style choices<sup>17</sup> and a love of skills that bring partial self-sufficiency.<sup>18</sup> This love gave "a strong sense of self-identity—as myself, as a woman, as a feminist, as a 'country gal', as a member of a family and a community ... I have a strong sense of my bodily strength, competency and capacity to do most things".<sup>19</sup> The "happiest days" of my life.<sup>20</sup>

A deep connection to land was also expressed through a love for the "essence of space".<sup>21</sup> Space that I suspect embraced the sky, horizon, centre of the earth and all the space in between, plus images of boots at a doorway, a flywire door and sounds of a dog's chain rattling at feed time or a bark across a frosty paddock. It may include the rush of getting dressed in whites for Saturday afternoon tennis in extreme summer temperatures or the curse of my father at a poorly trained sheep dog "I'll cut your bloody throat with a bloody blunt knife you bloody mongrel ..." as the mob splits amongst the sheds. I, as a child, and the dog cringed and scurried to please.

The receptive relationship with rural space seems to be associated with a love of freedom and a wildness of spirit. It was as if the farm was a large adventure playground of which exploration was a given.<sup>22</sup>

We were free. We had so much freedom ... all summer swimming and canoeing in the dam (by the end of summer our feet were stained yellow from the clay). We roamed the farm and district on our horses; never wearing shoes (winter time meant chilblains on our feet). Camping in the tree house ... and down the creek; making forts in the haystack (Dad fined us 50 cents for each bale that fell down); jumping into the big wheat bin from the top of the haystack; building dams in the creek ...<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Participant 7.  
<sup>10</sup> Participant 12.  
<sup>11</sup> Participant 7.  
<sup>12</sup> Participants 1–12.  
<sup>13</sup> Participant 1.  
<sup>14</sup> Participant 5.  
<sup>15</sup> Participant 9.  
<sup>16</sup> Participant 11.  
<sup>17</sup> Participant 12.  
<sup>18</sup> Participant 3.  
<sup>19</sup> Participant 5.  
<sup>20</sup> Participant 9.  
<sup>21</sup> Participant 1.  
<sup>22</sup> Participant 11.  
<sup>23</sup> Participant 12.





## Family dynamics and place within family and farm

Many participants mentioned their relationship to their farming father.

I was my father's shadow, under his feet, whether he was skinning a recently killed sheep, harnessing the horses or fencing the paddocks. I'd run and fetch for him and was seldom to be found assisting my mother with chores.<sup>24</sup>

I felt enormously for dear Dad, who had witnessed so much change in his lifetime. When wool was really good, everything was grand. In his era there were gardeners, cooks, workman and housemaids. The depression, rabbit plagues, falling wool prices, droughts and floods dictate a return to a much less opulent lifestyle. Mum and Dad worked extremely hard.<sup>25</sup>

I loved feeding the cows with Dad, and feeding orphaned lambs and helping out when he was moving sheep and marking lambs etc.<sup>26</sup>

All the participants were actively involved in the diverse roles of farm life including many outdoor and indoor jobs plus a duty to keep a school opened! Some of the skills are outlined below:

My eye was trained to see a cast sheep five paddocks away.<sup>27</sup>

I reared calves and cared for the chooks and ducks from the age of 10. By 12 I drove every harvest. I drove the cattle from 10/12 including off the farm. We fed out after school seasonally. We got stock to sale before school. We also helped inside on a daily basis. Being the eldest I did a fair bit—also cared for the younger kids.<sup>28</sup>

I don't recall sexism being too much of an issue. If there was work to be done we all did it eg Hay carting Mum and I threw hay bails just like the men. I had as much opportunity to drive utes and tractors as my brother.<sup>29</sup>

I loved the animals, especially poddy lambs, puppies, foals and frogs. Ponies were part of farm upbringing I started school at the age of 4 to help keep

the numbers up to keep the school open, 7 grades in a one teacher school.<sup>30</sup>

My job each morning was to make and pack our school lunches (eldest of 5, with 4 brothers).<sup>31</sup>

I was expected to participate in family activities—what ever was on the go that we were allowed to help out with—hay carting, shearing, wood collecting. But I never felt that I had to do these things—I wanted to because they were important activities ... and we weren't expected to do the work—just help out.<sup>32</sup>

As a child I felt I belonged to the whole - The farm and all it encompassed. I worked hard. I believed in myself as an equal contributor in a childlike way. There were clear rules and responsibilities in the family that related to keeping up with the work. I felt good about—feeling part of the farm team feeling capable and strong. The land was the place we all felt at home through a place separate to all else ... LOVE.<sup>33</sup>

I have no memories of having to do household chores except for rotating jobs with my brothers that included collect the eggs, feed and tie up the dogs, and drying up. I did cook cakes and biscuits but that was more because I was at a loose end rather than I was told. Otherwise I was on my pony participating in farm activities not because I had to but because that was my role; that was what I did.

---

<sup>24</sup> Participant 9.

<sup>25</sup> Participant 11.

<sup>26</sup> Participant 2.

<sup>27</sup> Participant 11.

<sup>28</sup> Participant 1.

<sup>29</sup> Participant 2.

<sup>30</sup> Participant 3.

<sup>31</sup> Participant 3.

<sup>32</sup> Participant 5.

<sup>33</sup> Participant 1.





My job was the stock work. This was my role in the social and economic structure of our family. I was the one who mustered the sheep and cattle, drove the stock between Boxlea and Karawatha (10 miles) and collected the Emu if he wandered from the farm. I worked on my own. I had support at premeditated tricky bits like the crossroads at our mailbox but more often than not I managed with a dog that sort of worked for a child.

I assisted with marking the lambs. My job was the injections and bringing the sheep in and returning. At shearing time my mother and I were in charge of the droving. I do remember not being welcomed when the calves were being cut; I hung around nevertheless. I was not permitted to watch the weekly kill of a lamb having its throat cut, but I helped carry the meat inside to place it on the cedar dining room table.

### Loss of innocence

A Voice from the City

Brown faces under broad-brimmed hats,  
The grip of wiry hands,  
The gallops on the frosty flats,  
Seem dreams of other lands.  
The camp fire and the stars that blaze  
Above the mystic plain ...<sup>34</sup>

In this poem Lawson expressed the romantic myth and national idealisation for Australian rural life. The farmers' daughter experience was part of the romanticised national myth. Greek mythology does not idealise but states the image and metaphor of human experience.<sup>35</sup> The romantic myth of rural Australia has a shadow or underworld.

The Red Tunic Dream took place in the Big Paddock; the centre of Karawatha, my childhood world and my soul. My journey of individuation, just as it is for others, is a journey of sacrifice and instinctive rebirth. The Red Tunic Dream suggested that sacrifice is an important aspect of archetypal and mythical experiences.

I reflect on the dream colour red. The lamb's throat is cut. Its blood soaks into the earth by the shed just as other blood before it has bled and soaked. Black and white blood mixed through cultural generational pain. Children grow. The earth is stained with blood. I am walking around the "knotted ball of wool" dropping into the underworld step by step.

Innocence is a state "of blissful unacquaintance with evil"<sup>36</sup> and "the innocent cannot know their bliss".<sup>37</sup> The loss of innocence appears to be part of the archetypal experience of being a farmer's daughter. The sacrifice or psychic death was experienced in outward actions such as selling the farm, relocation, redundant skills, double standards, double crosses, failed dreams and loss of identity.

I was super disappointed when I realised at 12 that Dad never imagined us (girls) taking on the farm, getting our drivers licence (harness racing) or going on with it in anyway. No future. The partnership was imagined by me through my work contribution. On the other hand I'd also had enough of Dad and Mums expectations and started rejecting them during adolescence ... I don't let myself think about what I miss very often and when I do I cry. I wrote a poem about the sale of our farm that is quite heart breaking ... I don't have a copy any more. I gave a copy to my Dad many years ago and I think I just caused him a lot of pain. I don't know if he kept it. We never speak of it these days.<sup>38</sup>

I was disappointed for Dad that the farm would be sold. It had been in our family since settling the area in 1840s.<sup>39</sup>

I was devastated when Mum and Dad sold our farm. I was 17 at the time and felt I would never survive such absolute grief. My parents knew the farm wasn't big enough to pass on, and were philosophically opposed anyway

---

<sup>34</sup> Lawson, H., *Collected Verse Volume Two 1901–1902* edited by Colin Roderick, Angus and Robertson, 1968 p39.

<sup>35</sup> Mills, A. (Chief Consultant), *Mythology Myths, Legends and Fantasies*, Hodder Headline Australia, 2005, p16.

<sup>36</sup> Leonard, J., Introduction and Notes, in Milton, John, 2000, *Paradise Lost*, Penguin Books, 2000 pxxxiii.

<sup>37</sup> Leonard, 2000, pxxxiv.

<sup>38</sup> Participant 1.

<sup>39</sup> Participant 2.





to passing it on to the son (my mother, at age 70, is still bitter about her fate to be married off while the farm was divided between her three brothers).<sup>40</sup>

Selling the Property was a huge disappointment. One never likes to see anything you adore disappear. Because I knew our property had been my home for over 25 years and Dad's home too. I didn't ever want to lose that sense of place, the sense of history, magic. I felt as if my childhood was sold. I felt as if my life in this wonderland was over ... I lost the rhythms of the seasons and the smell of the river. I watched the disposal of your stock, goods and chattels laid out in neat piles at the clearing sale ... every tool, box, piece of equipment had its own history attached ...<sup>41</sup>

I made the assumption that a life on the land would be mine when I grew up. I loved the land dearly. My childhood home was my only true home; the home of my heart and my forefathers since selection. I believed the farm would always be there to come home to. It was my heritage. It defined our family.<sup>42</sup>

In relocating I felt rootless. The ground was too hard, cold and dry. It did not receive me. I was a waterless soul searching for the sound of a creek or the sniff of dampness on the breeze, waiting for a season that would bring both humidity and warmth and soft air against which my muscles could relax and I could venture the risk of growing.<sup>43</sup>

Double standards galore; work like a man, behave like a girl. Expect marriage and accept that as a good outcome. Not contribute intellectually or critically.<sup>44</sup>

I grieve the lack of opportunity to engage my body in skills that I once loved. The ability to catch, saddle and ride my pony gave me freedom and independence at an early age. I don't remember learning to ride. I simply always could. I miss this freedom. I miss living, interacting, being part of and contributing to the family unit within a landscape that is mostly natural, one with lots of trees and few immediate boundaries. I miss being part of the natural rhythms. I miss the ability to meander at will in distances at the edge of my imagination. I grieve the loss of adventure and working on the edge of my ability and safety. I miss a relationship with animals.

### Sacrifice, death and rebirth

The death of innocence is neither fun nor an easy process. The psychic rebirth embracing the essence alluded to by the women in the Red Tunic Dream brings in an entirely new phase of consciousness and the promise of future development.<sup>45</sup> Some participants have arrived at a sense of resolution for now. The cycle of sacrifice and rebirth may occur continually throughout each of our lives. I will conclude this section with three participant quotes.

I see growing up on a farm and with my family as just another part of who I am. I love getting in the dirt in the garden.<sup>46</sup>

I love the fact that I can be helping feed out one day at the farm and the next day be at work dealing with complex issues and then come home, cut wood and light the fire. I love the fact that I notice the seasons, light, the weather, clean air, sweet smells, quiet and silence, the effect of the drought on farming families and communities even though I am not living on tank water or personally affected by the drought. I love the fact that I notice animals and green grass when it sprouts. I love the reality of community—chatting to strangers/neighbours in a country town and that I miss these interactions/eye contact/acknowledgments when I am on a tram or living in the city.<sup>47</sup> This participant's family farm is still intact with her parents running the property.

I am at a stage where I accept the outcome of our family succession plan. I don't like the outcome and have spent numerous years attempting to negotiate a fairer outcome, as I see it, but accept the decisions made as my parents

---

<sup>40</sup> Participant 12.

<sup>41</sup> Participant 11.

<sup>42</sup> Participant 8, in observation of her mother's experience.

<sup>43</sup> Participant 7.

<sup>44</sup> Participant 1.

<sup>45</sup> Tacey, D. *Edge of the Sacred Transformation in Australia*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1995, p142.

<sup>46</sup> Participant 2.

<sup>47</sup> Participant 5.





choice ... [it is] sad the siblings are divided because of the decisions. I am sad my parents don't realise they have been the cause for the sibling conflict. I fear that when my parents die the siblings difference will remain and the strong family unit which my parents worked for will be lost.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) is the founder of analytical psychology. An analytical psychological framework indicates that "... there are several different 'theories' in his life's work that exist side by side: complex theory, the theory of the archetypes<sup>49</sup> and the relationship between imagination or inner world and the material or the outside world".<sup>50</sup>

The 'Daughters of the Land' research project indicated that the experience of being a farmer's daughter has mythological or archetypal elements of 'this is how life is'. Life can include elements of human tragedy, double crosses, loss of dreams and homes, intense love for all beings and family connections fraught with tension.

It is impossible to isolate an individual experience such as the experience of being a daughter-of-the-land, without exploring the interrelationship between the individual and the broader cultural, socio-economic, generational context, family, community and landscape although beyond the scope of this work. Cultural and individual complexes are a key analytical psychological concept that articulates the "common emotional tone" within this work.<sup>51</sup>

In Patrick White's fiction the "huddlers cling to the coastal plain and the surface of life and the explorers plunge recklessly ... and destructively into the desert interior".<sup>52</sup> The daughter-of-the-land experience has grown out of the bones of explorers, blood of traditional owners and a generational inheritance of adventure dreams. It is as if the daughters are cultural taproots into the old and alien Australian soil that is far removed from modern Western consciousness.<sup>53</sup> The soil now battered, exploited and degraded as a consequence of an imposed economic system and imported values, perceptions and assumptions. The daughters are torn through a love and deep connectedness with an inability to fit the cultural ownership structure. At the onset of menarche or economic need the taproot of connectedness is cut. "I had to be cruel to be kind".

Woman with daughter-of-the-land experiences seem to be interconnected to the material of land, ponies, fencing and farm work. It is concrete. It is solid. It is real. It feels as natural as my heart beat, breath and rising images from the guts of my soul. It is who we are. Around the material swirls, scents of rotting carcasses, plenty of space between the blue sky, trees and a distant lambing ewe,<sup>54</sup> music of different harmonies, tastes of roast lamb and blood, plenty of blood. The material is associated with a multitude of feelings and emotions. It is from these material experiences that imagination arises with the non-rational feelings such as connectedness, love and grief of loss. They are images from a person's inner world. The metaphor, a "knotted ball of wool",<sup>55</sup> was used to describe the complex situation that women with daughter-of-the-land experiences finds herself enmeshed.<sup>56</sup>

The mother daughter relationship seems relevant here somehow despite many *daughters* indicating a strong connection to the farming father. Earth mother in Greek mythology is seen as the giver of life and the nourisher of her children.<sup>57</sup> In Patrick White's fiction Australia is the unconscious world that experiences the earth as mother but also as primitive, hostile and devouring force.<sup>58</sup> I wonder if there is a primitive unconscious fear of daughters being devoured by the dream earth imagery and hence the culturally severed taproots.

---

<sup>48</sup> Participant 3.

<sup>49</sup> Singer, T., Kimbles, S., eds. *The Cultural Complex*, Brunner-Routledge 2004, P2.

<sup>50</sup> Johnson, R., *Inner Work Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*, Harper San Francisco, 1986

<sup>51</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter, B. and Plaut, F. 1997, p34.

<sup>52</sup> Tacey, D.J, *Patrick White Fiction and the Unconscious*, Melbourne Oxford University Press 1988, Pxxvi.

<sup>53</sup> Tacey, 1988, pvvi-xvii.

<sup>54</sup> Participant 11.

<sup>55</sup> Participant 3.

<sup>56</sup> Singer and Kimbles 2004, p2.

<sup>57</sup> Mills, A. 2005 p20.

<sup>58</sup> Tacey 1998, p174.





The Red Tunic Dream suggests archetypal experiences of transformation, sacrifice and rebirth. The colour red in the women tunics could be seen as a symbol of blood and thus symbolic of two passages of rite for women. One, being menarche, the first menstrual bleed signifying fertility and the second the loss of virginity (a spot of blood) as a woman moves into a sexual life and the expression of fertility through childbirth. At both stages there is a sacrifice or death of one state and a rebirth of another.<sup>59</sup> I would like to suggest another symbolic meaning of the colour red is earth or land. The girl dies to become woman, the woman dies to become mother. The “daughter-of-the-land” dies to become “mother-of-the-land”.<sup>60</sup>

I find the image of “mother-of-the-land”<sup>61</sup> to be a profound metaphor; one that is not to be taken literally. Mother is an archetypal image. Mother-of-the-land could be seen as a transformative “image drawn from the collective cultural experience”<sup>62</sup> of being a daughter-of-the-land. The term seems to hold life long feelings of connectedness to the earth and all beings. It also seems to hold the pain of transformation from the death of a young girl’s soul that loves her childhood as her physical body or farm economic necessity transforms her into the world of womanhood, dominate culture and the associated cultural expectations. Such childhood experiences and cultural expectations appear to be contradictory. The material changes from farm work linked to the earth to imposed marketed feminine images.

The research participants in discussing how they have been influenced in their adult lives by their childhoods indicated a return to nature in some way. The return was through simplicity, daggy old cloths, a truth within self, a physical return to land or a habit such as short showers first developed as a child in a drought. I note that none of the participants have returned wholly to the land. I have at times yearned to return to the land and have looked extensively at land with a view to purchase. I was always cautious as I felt if indeed I did buy land, one day I would wake up with bars on the windows. Tacey, (1988 p55) proposes that to dissolve into nature is to find oneself in a matriarchal prison. Australia is seen to be a land of ‘sun, space and freedom’. Beneath the sun and clear blue sky the dams are muddied with pain. The daughter-of-the-land once in some sort of transition to a mother-of-the-land image appears to be cautious about a total return. But at the same time ambivalent and torn with tension of being in the material world.

Some, if not all participants, were appreciative of their ‘daughter’ experience. Amongst the research participants there was a deep sense of appreciation despite, and maybe because of, the outer and imaginal experiences accentuated by skill diversity and capabilities at times culminating in an almost spiritual fulfilment found in aloneness. Some participants experienced anger. I, as one example, largely stopped communicating. One of the younger research participants indicated family communications had changed from the 1960s, indicating that such pain could be avoided in future generations. I question if such experiences are beyond rescue with good communication skills.

Woman with daughter-of-the-land experiences could be called a psychology of dispossession, which includes sacrifice and feelings of longing, yearning, grieving, isolation, alienation and dislocation as one puts down roots in another location and an adult life. Going back does not console the feelings. Lives continue to grow and develop, to return as an adult one seems too large and does not fit the landscape. One feels like an unwanted introduced specie. The material is the same but the associated emotions seem out of place. The shapes seem familiar but the scent is off. Like the scent caught down wind of a dying carcass.

The psychology of dispossession is one of tragedy played out upon the Australian landscape that has a European history of domination and control resulting in destruction of another human race and land degradation. In the nineteenth century white rural women joined menfolk with pistols in their belts to visit aboriginal camps. Women also benefited from land laws and settlement practices “... They were the benefactors of an agrarian tradition that had justified dispossession and violence, and one that had flowed over into government policy and land settlement patterns”.<sup>63</sup> This is a daughter-of-the-land generational inheritance. The cultural patterns, albeit twisted, repeated as if ripples in a pond.

I felt relief that in some way there is a commonality of feeling around the experience of being a farmer’s daughter. I felt a less isolated as a dialogue was occurring. I felt less alienated, dislocated, ridiculous and irrelevant. I sensed that the

---

<sup>59</sup> Cloughley, G. personal communication, 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Participant 7.

<sup>61</sup> Participant 7.

<sup>62</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter, B. and Plaut, F. 1997, p62.

<sup>63</sup> Hunter, K.M, *Fathers Right-hand Man Women on Australia’s Family Farms in the Age of Federation, 1880s–1920s*, Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2004 p10 and 35





relationship between outer and inner realities is discussed in neither rural families nor cultural contexts. I sensed that some participants did not wish to raise painful feelings with their families. I sensed that the cultural complex is layered thick with intergenerational and cultural experiences that make articulation difficult. In the context of this research it indicates to me the silence around pain could well be typical of previous generations. Perhaps the adventure of immigration is dimming and the pain emerging. Perhaps the loss of a national innocence due to participation in two world wars is finally being articulated in families. I have a realisation that the responsibility of coming to terms, articulating and processing such psychological pain seems to be falling to our generation.

In writing up the research material I took a particular orientation that incorporated my experiences while using a poetic narrative style. The poetic style is hoped to articulate complex human experiences. A poetic narrative appears to create a sense of 'other' thus encompassing the total Self, consciousness and imagination, like a bridge between the two. "Metaphor is a third between the two of things and thoughts ... It reveals that the real is most radically the subtle body of the metaphor".<sup>64</sup> It is this 'real' that I am attempting to explore.

I feel a sense of some sort of resolution in terms of this particular work. I have attempted no matter how humble to see myself as part of the greater Jungian project, one that "is struggling to generate the emotions, images and words which will help us deepen our experience of our relationships".<sup>65</sup>

Implications of this work for practical changes to health services could be that another orientation is required. One cannot sort a marriage break up or inner unhappiness by 'fixing the fence'. A poetic narrative could be one tool that assists in giving a sense of wholeness and meaning from experience as it is able to incorporate myth and symbols to unify material with imagination, the outer with the inner world.

Meaning rather than treatment relieves the suffering induced by a neurosis.<sup>66</sup>

## Bibliography

- Alston, M. Women and Rural Crisis p11–17, in *Country Women at the Crossroads Perspectives on the lives of rural Australian women in the 1990s* Ed by Margaret-Ann Franklin, Leonie M, Short and Elizabeth K. Teather, University of New England Press, 1994.
- Bowden, R. *Women of the Land Stories of Australia's Rural Women*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1995.
- Braud, W. and Anderson, R. Ed. *Transpersonal Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Sage Publications, 1998.
- Cahalan, W. Ecological Groundedness in Gestalt Therapy' *Ecopsychology Restoring the Earth Healing the Mind*, ed. Roszak, T., Gomes, M., Kanner, A., Sierra Book Club, USA, 1995.
- Corbett, L. *The Phenomenology of Religious Experience in Pathways into the Jungian World* edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Carroll, M. *Ordinary people extraordinary lives inspiring stories from rural Australia*, New England Publishers, 2001.
- Douglas, C. The Historical Context of Analytical Psychology in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Dunne, C. *Carl Jung Wounded Healer of the Soul, An Illustrated Biography*, Continuum London and New York, 2000.
- Goodchild, V. Eros and Chaos in *Pathways into the Jungian World Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology*, World edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Hillman, J. *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Harper Perennial, 1975.
- Hillman, J. *The Dream and the Underworld*, Harper Perennial, 1979.
- Houston, J. Introduction in *Carl Jung Wounded Healer of the Soul, An illustrated Biography*, by Claire Dunn, Continuum London and New York, 2000.

---

<sup>64</sup> Romanyshyn, R., Alchemy and the Subtle Body of Metaphor, in *Pathways into the Jungian World, Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology* edited by Roger Brooke, 2000, Routledge, p32.

<sup>65</sup> Russell, D. 2002, personal communication.

<sup>66</sup> Samuels, A. Shorter, B. and Plaut, F. 1997, p93.





- Hunter, K.M. *Fathers Right-hand Man Women on Australia's Family Farms in the Age of Federation, 1880s–1920s*, Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2004.
- Johnson, R. *Inner Work Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*, Harper San Francisco, 1986.
- Lawson, H. *Collected Verse Volume Two 1901–1902* edited by Colin Roderick, Angus and Robertson, 1968.
- Leonard, J. Introduction and Notes, in Milton, John, 2000, *Paradise Lost*, Penguin Books, 2000.
- Marr, D. *Patrick White A life*, Random House Australia, 1991.
- Mills, A. (Chief Consultant) *Mythology Myths, Legends and Fantasies*, Hodder Headline Australia, 2005.
- Milton, J. *Paradise Lost*, Penguin Books, 2000.
- Read, P. *Returning to Nothing the Meaning of Lost Places*, Cambridge University Press, Australia, 1996.
- Roberts, B. *Biographical Research*, Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 2002.
- Romanyshyn, R. Alchemy and the Subtle Body of Metaphor, in *Pathways into the Jungian World, Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology* edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Russell, D. Psychological Perspective on Place in *Changing Places: re-imagining Australia* edited by John Cameron, Longueville Books Australia, 2003.
- Samuels, A. Shorter B. Plaut, F. *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge, 1997.
- San Roque, C. Coming to Terms with Country, in *Landmarks, Papers by Jungian Analysts from Australia and New Zealand* compiled by Heather Formaini, 2001.
- Schenk, R. Spirit in the Tube The life of Television, in *Pathways into the Jungian World Phenomenological and Analytical Psychology* edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Simms, E. In Destitute Times, in *Pathways into the Jungian World Phenomenological and Analytical Psychology* edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Singer, T. Kimbles, S. eds. *The Cultural Complex*, Brunner-Routledge, 2004.
- Tacey, D.J. *Patrick White Fiction and the Unconscious*, Melbourne Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Tacey, D. *Edge of the Sacred Transformation in Australia*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1995.
- Thoroughgood, A. Bradley E. Hucker, W. *Memories of My Mother Recollections of everyday life of rural women in the Tumbarumba district 1850–1950*, The Pioneer Women's Hut, 1990.
- Watkins, M. Depth Psychology and the Liberation of Being in *Pathways to the Jungian World Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology* edited by Roger Brooke, Routledge, 2000.
- Cloughley, G. Personal communication 12.6.2005.
- Russell, D. Personal communication 2002.

