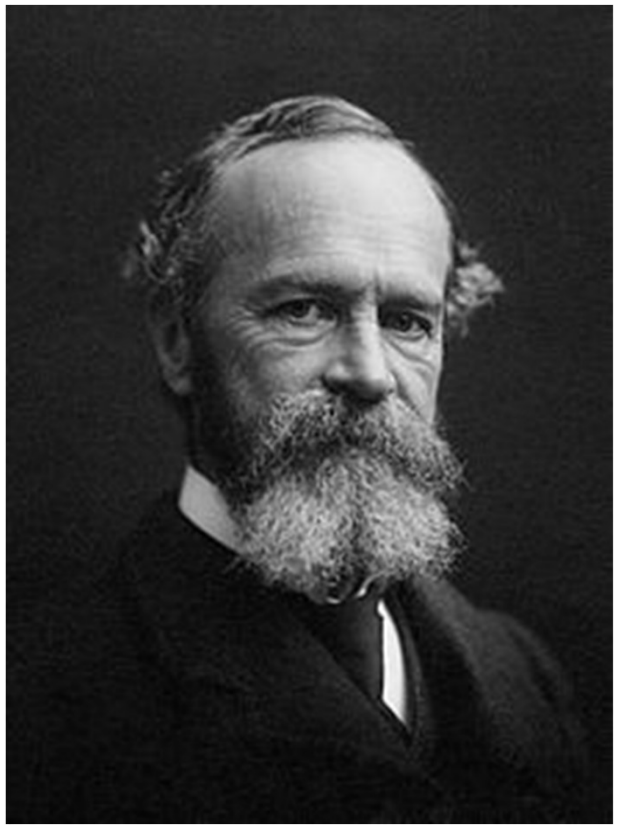
WILLIAM JAMES & CARL JUNG:

The Religious Function in the UU

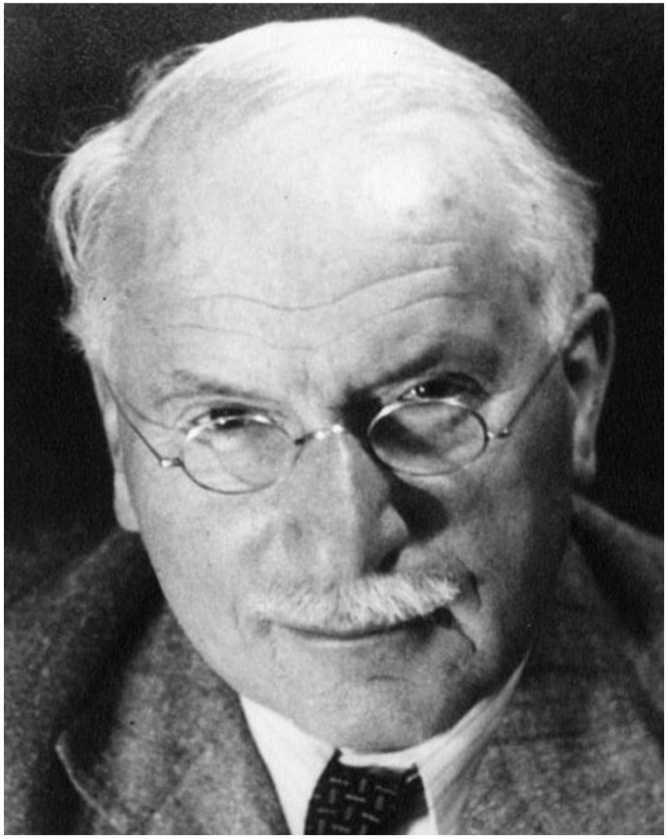
Steven Herrmann, Ph.D., MFT,

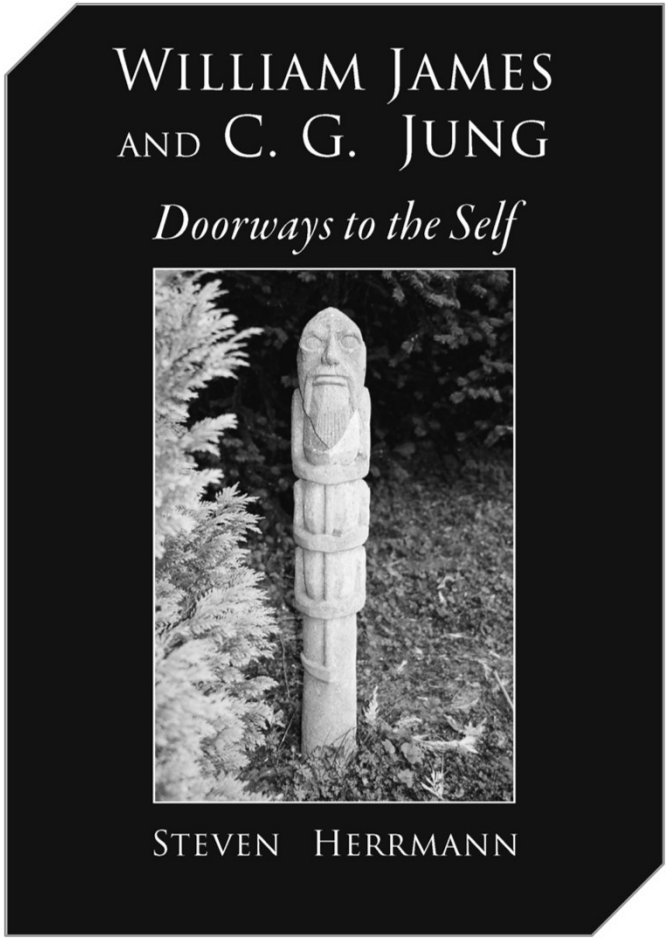
Jungian Analyst

WILLIAM JAMES (1842-1910)



C. G. JUNG (1875-1961)





CLM

1) It was from Flournoy that Jung learned to value the rigorous method of scientific objectivity in his work.

2) Jung says James “had a greater breadth and horizon than Flournoy.” Moreover, Flournoy was a Jamesian pragmatist and shared James’s views on many subjects, including parapsychology and the science of religions.

3) Initially, Jung learned James’s philosophy directly from Flournoy, before he met James. Jung says Flournoy and James were alike: both men shared a similar attitude of psychic objectivity, an ability to clarify things in a very “broad framework.”

4) Jung felt secure in the safety of these two friendships because of the sense of mutuality and “equality” the three men shared together. Jung was warmly included into the circle of these two mentors and teachers. What James and Flournoy had in common is that they had each placed an emphasis on scientific detachment, or psychic objectivity.

At the center of my own research into the nature of religious function, a term Jung probably borrowed from James, although he did not credit him properly. I discuss this subject in my book "Spiritual Democracy" and again in my James & Jung book.

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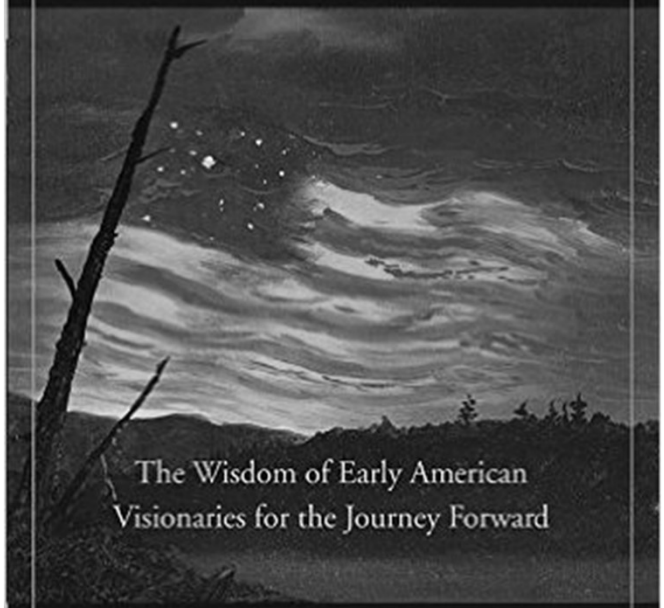
Spiritual Democracy



The Wisdom of Early American Visionaries for the Journey Forward

STEVEN HERRMANN

Foreword by John Beebe, author of *Integrity in Depth*

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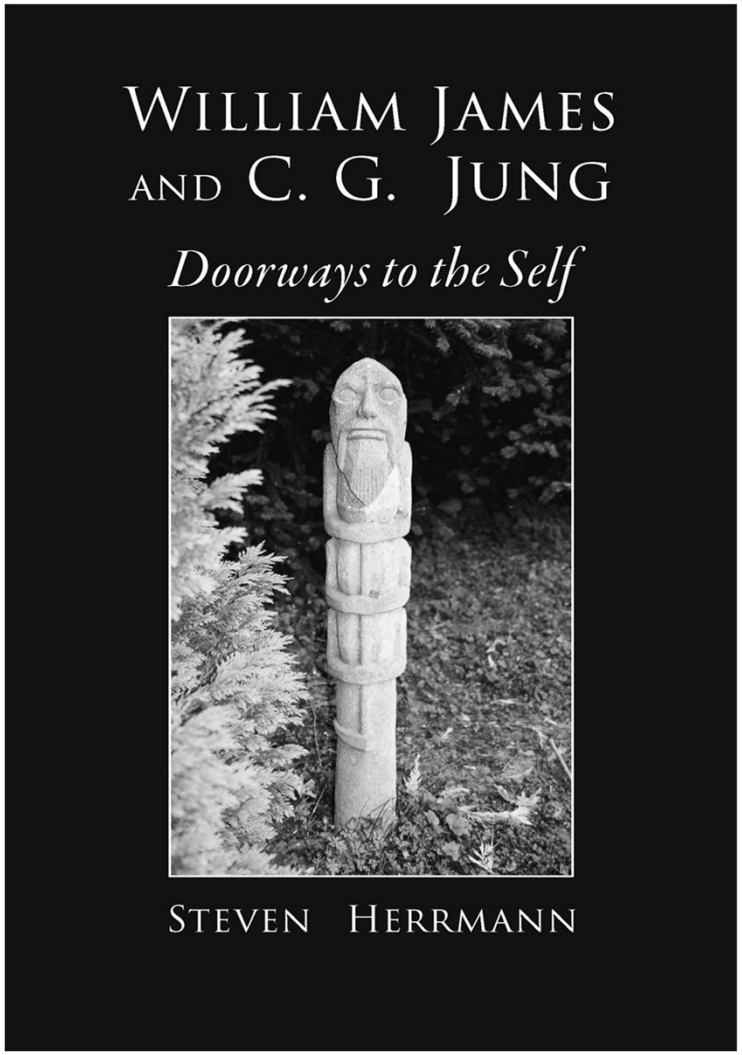
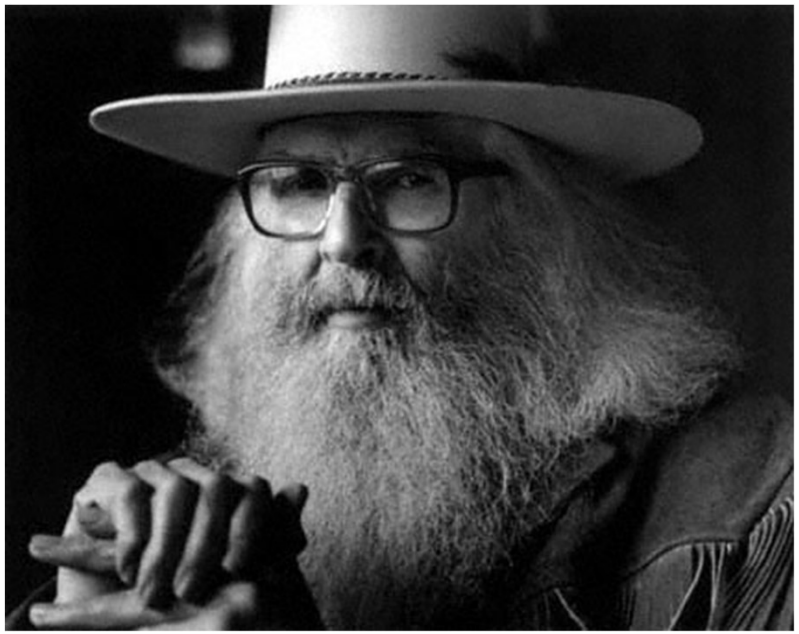


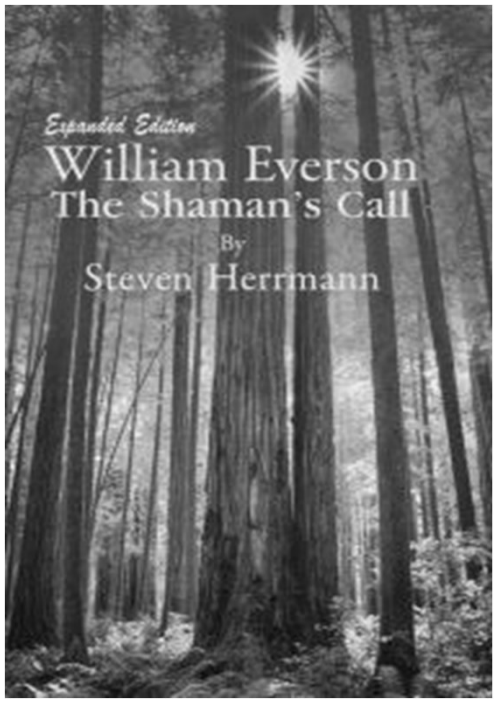
COSMIC FUNCTION

In my new book, *William James and C. G. Jung: Doorways to the Self,* I've shown that the religious function is also a cosmic function, a function of the Universal Self. It is a function of harmonization between all religions of the globe operating in a unitary way towards the unification of the World Self, and ultimate Peace. James and Jung called it a religious function, or God-function. Today, we might call it *Cosmic*. The religious function of the American psyche was shaped by the spirit of the mind and earth. It is the still living function of equality that we must heed today or face the possibility of self-annihilation as a species.

JUNG SAID ABOUT WILLIAM JAMES DURING HIS 1936 LECTURE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY:

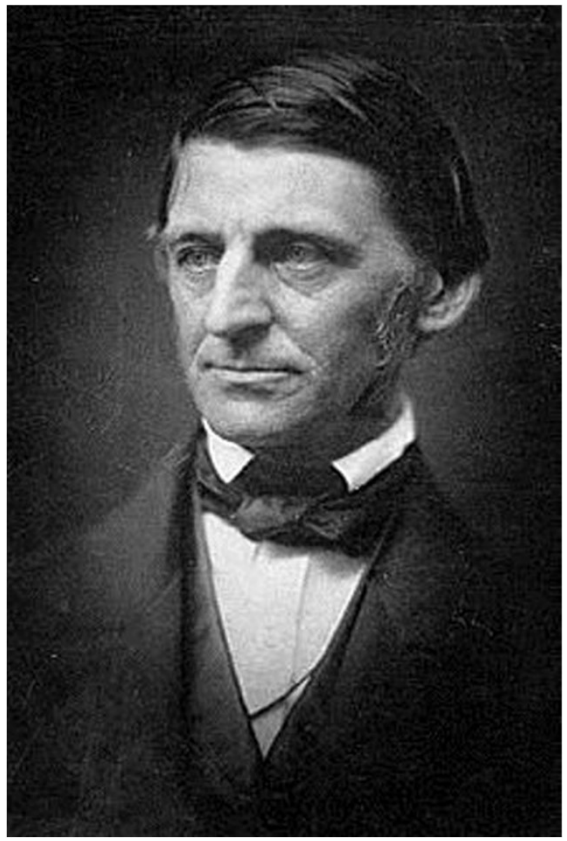
"It was [James's] far-ranging mind which made me realize that the horizons of human psychology widen into the immeasurable." By immeasurable, Jung means boundlessness, spaciousness, the infinite expanse of the human psyche.

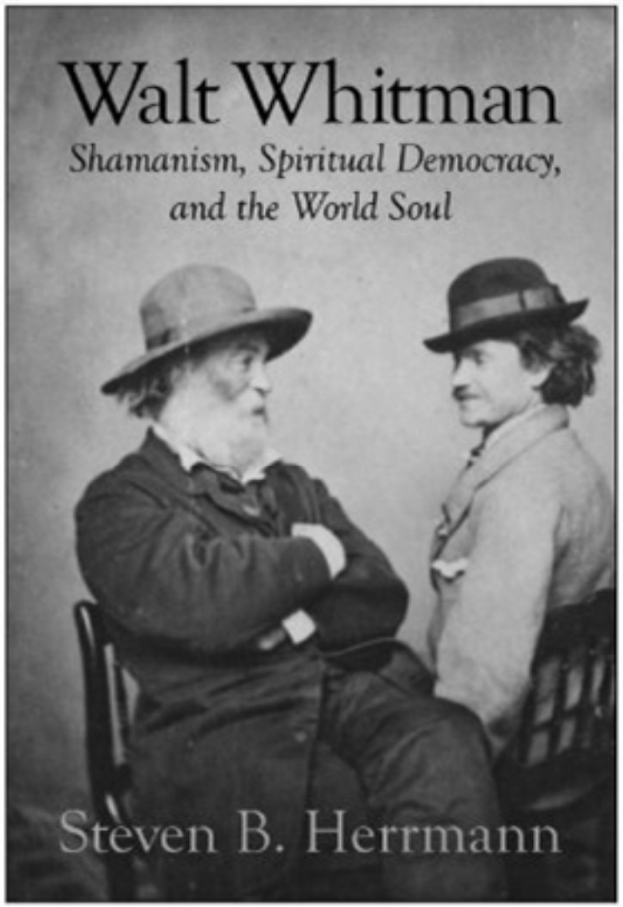




UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST (UU) CHURCH OF BERKELEY, KENSINGTON, CA:
DECEMBER 16, 2012:
"WILLIAM EVERSON ON THE SHAMANIC ARCHETYPE."

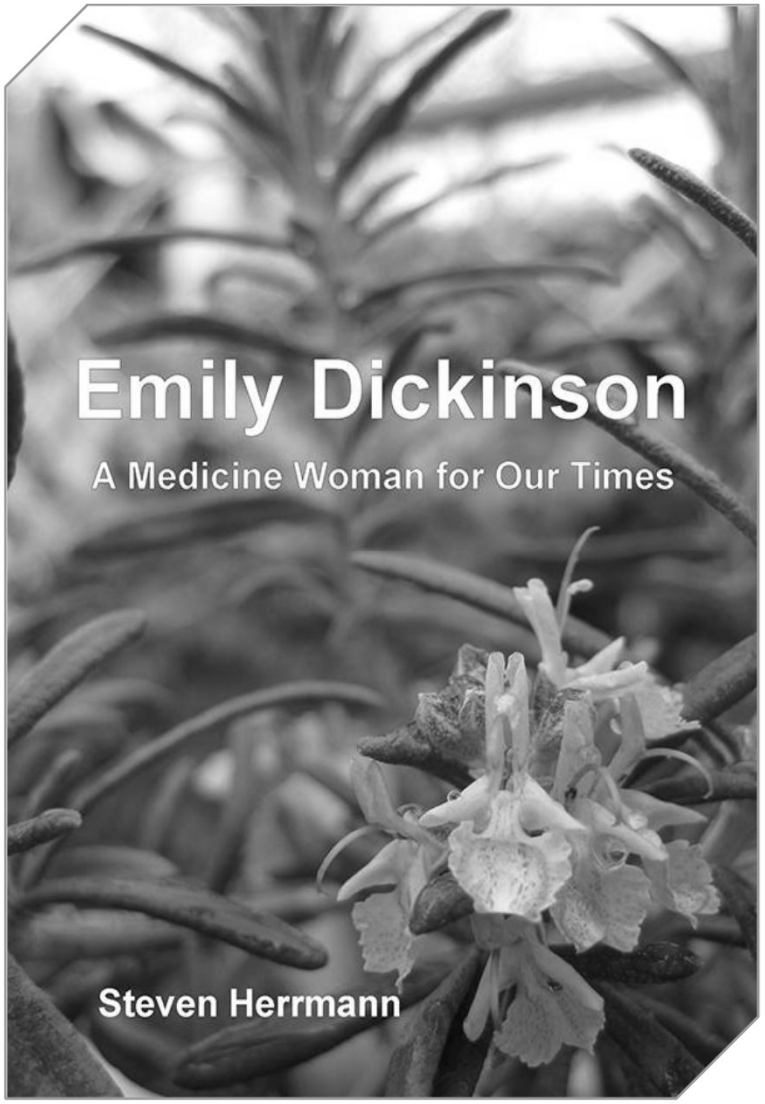
RALPH WALDO EMERSON
1803-1882





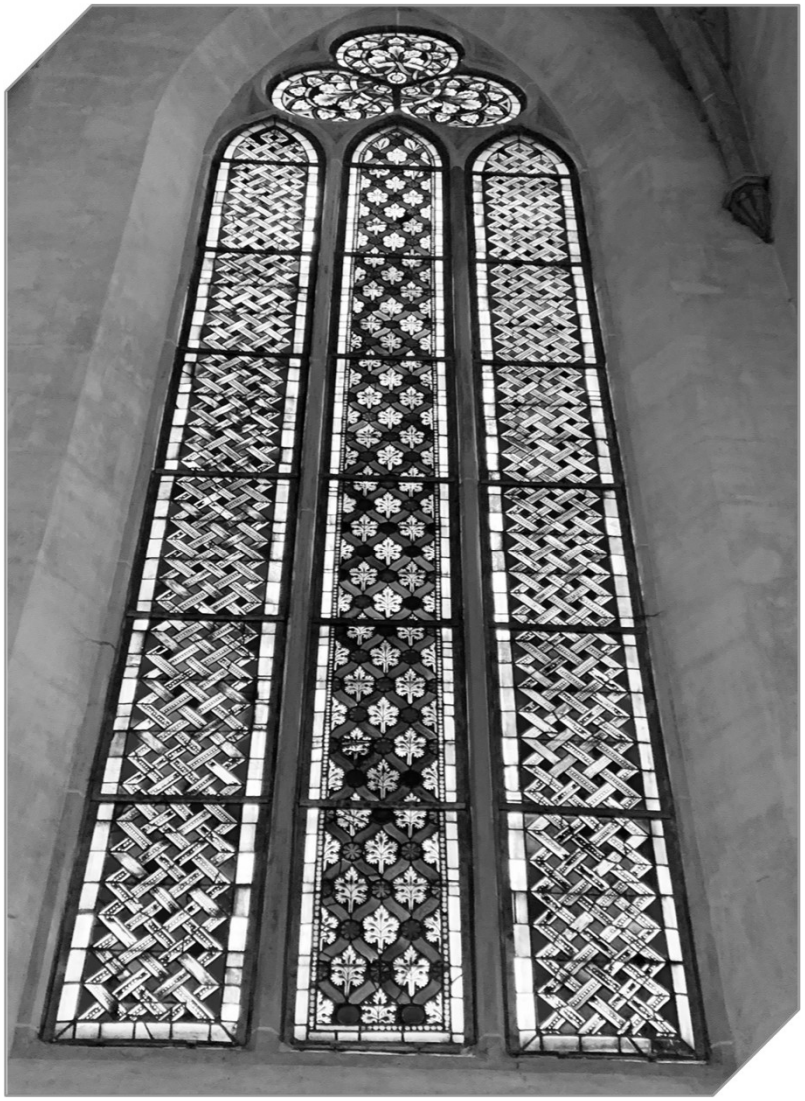
UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST (UU) CHURCH OF BERKELEY, KENSINGTON, CA

February 6, 2011:
"Walt Whitman's Vision of Spiritual Democracy," with conversant Matthew Fox.



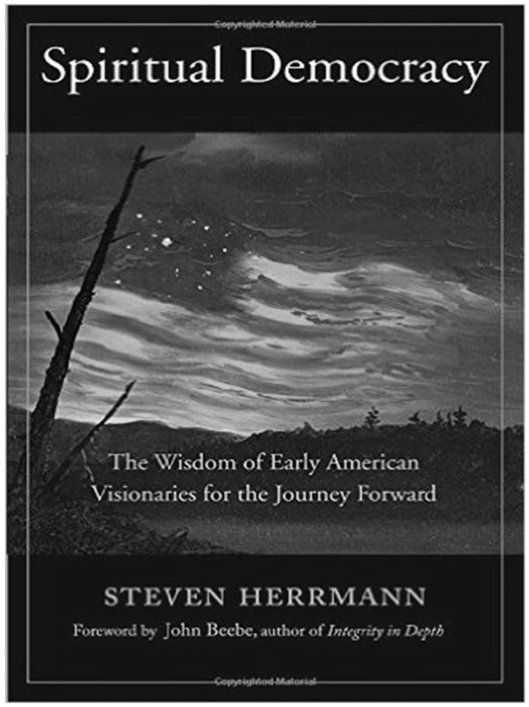
UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST (UU) CHURCH OF BERKELEY, KENSINGTON, CA

April 22, 2018: “Emily Dickinson: A Medicine Woman for our Times.”



UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST (UU) CHURCH OF BERKELEY, KENSINGTON, CA

November 2, 2014: “Spiritual Democracy.”



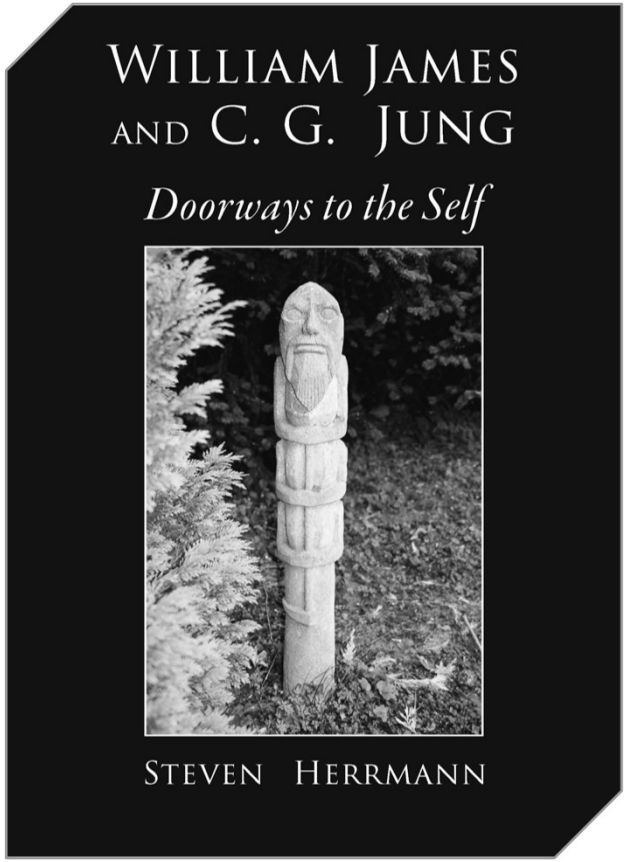
IN HIS "CONCLUSIONS," JAMES SUMS UP HIS MAIN POINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE:

1) It evokes our individual or "private destiny;"

2) It rehabilitates the feeling element in religion and subordinates its intellectual parts;

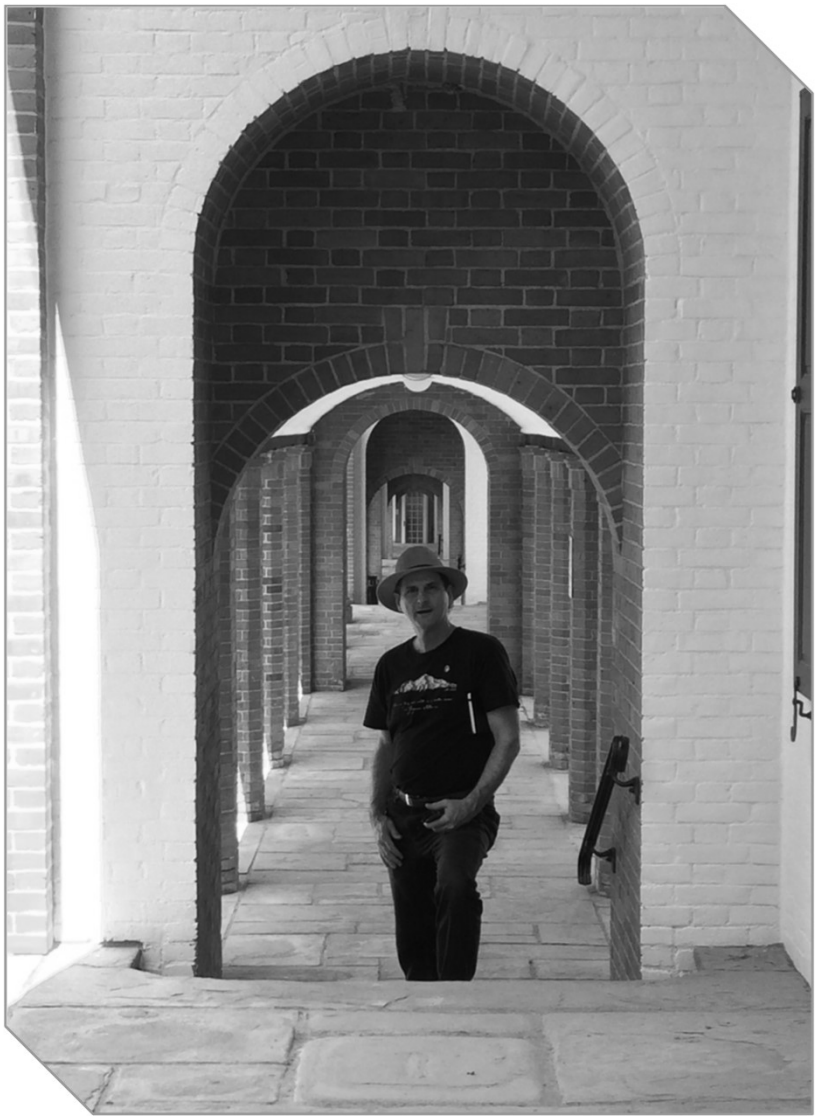
3) It leads to the *"fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come"*; and

4) The pragmatic way of taking religion is the "deeper way" because it gives the "body as well as soul" some "characteristic realm of fact as its very own"



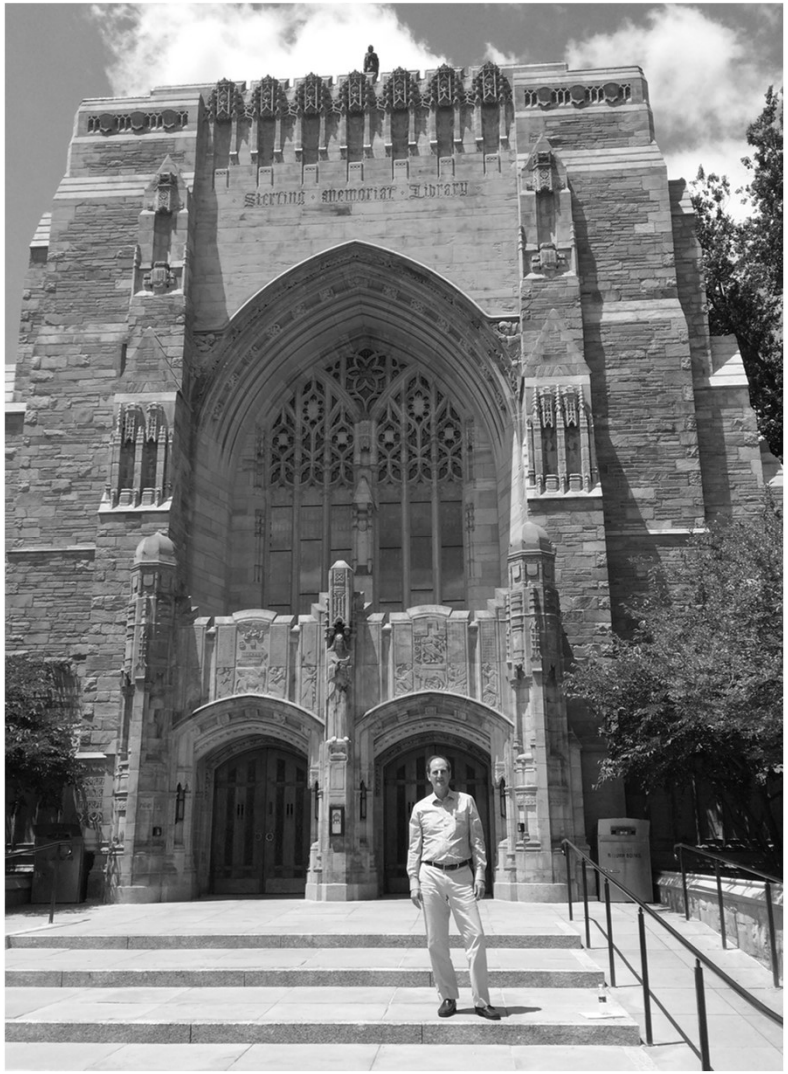
THE GOD BEHIND THE DOOR

(**Page xxii in *JJ***). Whether the Self is a conscious or unconscious entity in the human psyche is one of the main questions that I will explore in the pages ahead. James and Jung each had something significant to say about this very question. Everything depends upon human consciousness. Our very subsistence and survival of our planet, and the life of many living species, are dependent upon individuals assuming moral responsibility for our own individuation, something Jung and James believed in and lived out, each in their own singular ways.



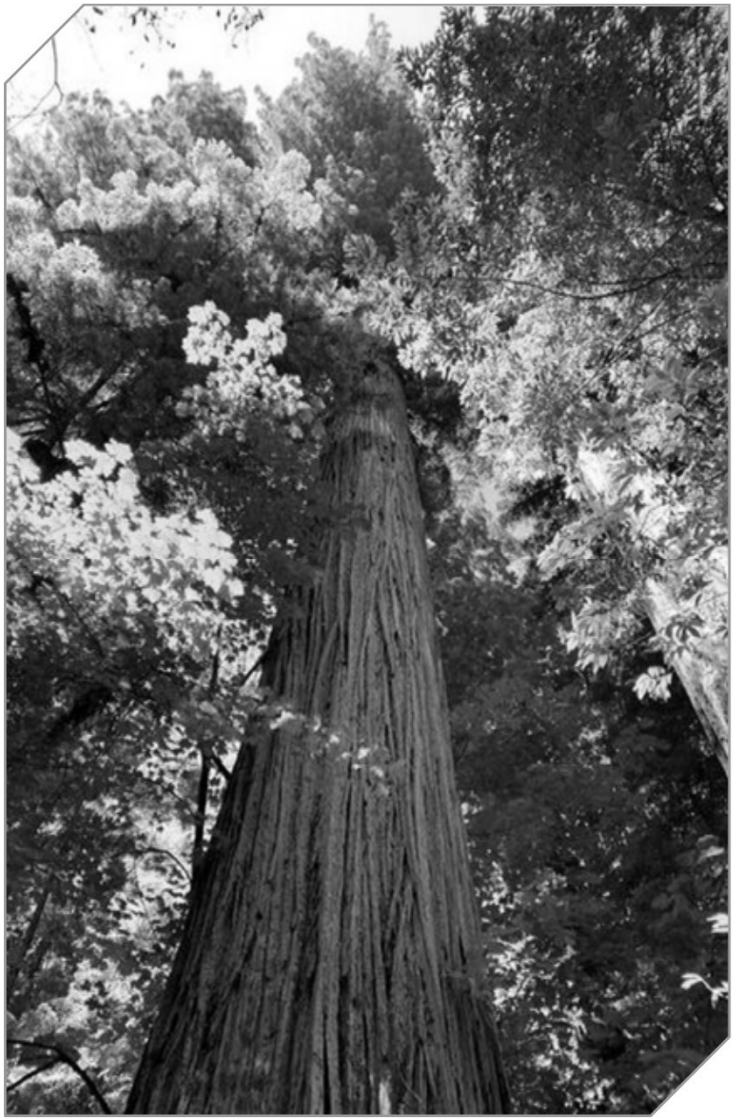
DOORWAYS AT YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL

(**Page 194 in *JJ***): What Jung and James mean, in so many words, are that there is a *transnational religious function in the psyche of every person that can in fact be accessed through the development of various psychological, or spiritual techniques.* They use the term *transcendent* and *infinite* similarly to connote a movement beyond and above the myths of various nations.



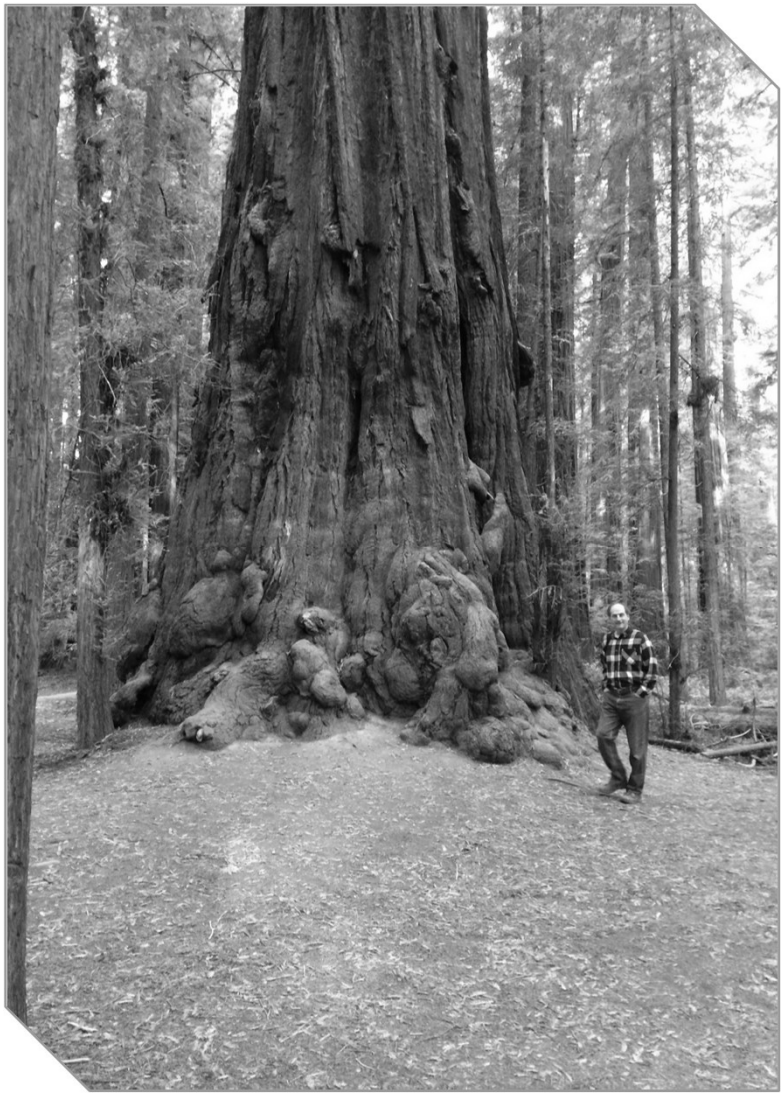
PAGE 323 IN JAMES & JUNG

In the summer of 2015, I presented my paper "C. G. Jung's Vision of Spiritual Democracy" at the IAAP/IAJS Conference at Yale University, where Jung spoke to a crowd of twenty-five hundred people in 1937 on psychology and religion. A question at the Conference was whether Jung's writings on the religious function of the psyche should be revised by contemporary Jungians. I had already shown how this might be done in my book *Spiritual Democracy*. In my new book, *William James and C. G. Jung,* I've shown why: *the religious function is a Cosmic function, a function of the Universal Self.*



GUSTAV THEODORE FECHNER

"In few of us," James said in "The Energies of Men", "are functions not tied-up by the exercise of other functions. G.T. Fechner is an extraordinary exception that proves the rule. He could use his mystical faculties while being scientific. He could be both critically keen and devout. James makes it clear that there are *functions* inside each of us that can be freed up from the excessive exercise of other functions: non-dual *scientific and mystical functions.*



PAGE 79 IN *JUNG & JAMES*:

One of the reasons why Fechner is so important to our contemporary discussions about the nature of the psyche and matter in analytical psychology today is that he posited a *collective consciousness* within his notion of the unconscious. This of course raises a question of what consciousness really is as an empirical datum of experience. Fechner appeared to believe that a higher consciousness is absolutely universal and this universal reality is a superior kind of intelligence in the Cosmos, to which James ascribed the word *complexity*: "Complexity in unity is another sign of superiority. The total earth's complexity far exceeds that of any organism, for she includes all of our organisms in herself, along with an infinite number of things that our organisms fail to include." This idea is central to what is being discussed in light of contemporary complexity theory. *Complexity in unity suggests a kind of high-level order in psyche and matter, an intelligence that Jung, using an alchemical term, called the* Unus Mundus, *or what James saw as the Many in the One* in his book *A Pluralistic Universe.* In this larger Fechnerian vision, we individual humans are merely the many "sense organs of the earth's soul."

FIRST GROWTH COASTAL REDWOODS

Why is personal theology so important in the UU today? Because we need new personal theologies (UU). We need new theories of truth (James), we need new subjective myths, or stories of individuation (Jung).

In Part IV of my book on James & Jung, "The Future of Analytical Psychology," I present five concluding chapters:

Chapter 40: "Psychology as a Natural Science"

Chapter 41: "The Psychological Rediscovery of ecstasy"

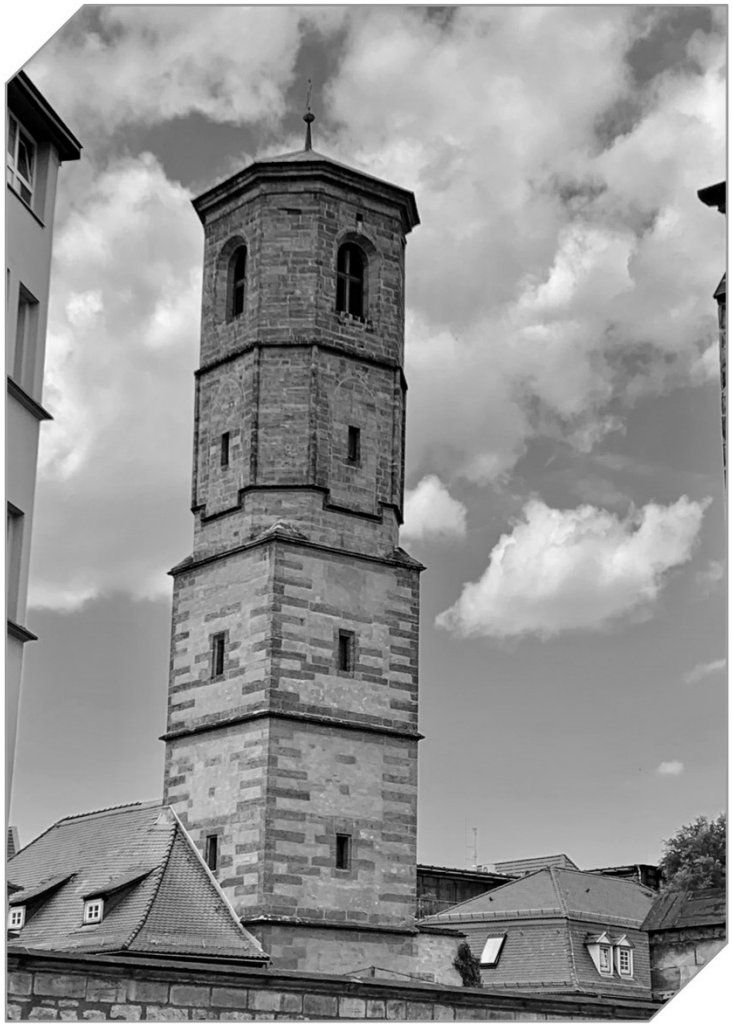
Chapter 42: "Empirical Evidence for the Superconscious"

Chapter 43: "James's Hypothesis of the Transmission of Consciousness" and

Chapter 44: Reflections: Non-ordinary Experience, the Spiritualization of Matter, and Synchronicity"

JAMES GAVE THE NAME “RADICAL EMPIRICISM” TO HIS *WELTANSCHAUUNG* IN AN ESSAY TITLED “A WORLD OF PURE EXPERIENCE.”

What James said there corresponds nicely to Jungian analytical depth-psychology. The first principle to keep in mind is James’s statement: “We are all biased by our personal feelings.” We all have a particular bias. All of us. James was the first psychologist to give feelings a central place in his worldview. How we view reality is colored by our experiences. Whatever we experience is impacted by our personal feelings; they are all part of a series of our experiences of reality.



ARCHETYPES OF VOCATION

All of the archetypes of vocation make up a continuous series of feeling relations. What do the *calling archetypes* want from you? Where are your archetypes of vocation pointing you to? What experiences of the Self are attempting to awaken pluralistically in you? What are the prospective images of the Self that are dreaming you, from your past and future? Follow their callings.