

The Garden of Eden as Subversive Narrative



The traditional interpretation of the Garden of Eden story sees it as a fall/redemption story. The fall from grace is an act of disobedience. Eve succumbs to the serpent's temptation, by taking the forbidden fruit, thus over-reaching human limitations. She makes an incursion into the divine domain, blurring the boundaries between

human and divine. The couple gain conscious awareness and understand the difference between good and evil—just like the immortal gods. As a result they are banished from the garden into a life of toil, painful childbirth, and are required to deal with mortality.

This interpretation has supported, among other unfortunate consequences, the oppression of women as temptresses of innocent men. In turn, traditional Christian interpretations “solve” the problem of the fall and original sin with the atoning death of Jesus. Through his blood we are “redeemed” back into a state of grace and granted eternal life. Just behave, know your place, believe the right things, and you’ll be given by a supreme Being the eternal life you so desperately want. This traditional understanding continues to serve many (actually most) Christians. It’s strength is in the way it speaks to an intuitive sense that the human condition is far from ideal, in need of redemption, and that we are indeed trying to “get back to the garden” as Joni Mitchell put it. As well, it speaks to the importance of limits and the ego’s need to be able to take direction.



But in a course I'm teaching on the Powers of the Universe and the Path of Christ, a different and rather startling interpretation came to me. (Startling because G_d represented fear of change and the serpent symbolized the impulse to evolve.) I saw the story of the Garden of Eden as subversive, concerning the power of conscious awareness to open our eyes (Genesis 3:4), liberating us from an unconscious identification with the various cultures that we are embedded within. The myth describes, rather than judges, the human dilemma. We gain the capacity through the light of conscious awareness to see with new eyes the very cultures with which we had previously identified with. This begins, naturally, with the emergence of conscious awareness in the first humans—distinguishing us from our animal kin. This original archaic culture represents an emergence from a naive (unconscious) unity with All That Is—and with this conscious awareness an intensification of suffering, awareness of mortality, the burden of moral choice. In psychological development, this first awakening occurs when it dawns on the baby that mother is not an extension of herself. Unconscious primal unity is lost.

To differentiate from this primal unity is quite literally to be “banished” from the garden (the culture of unconscious identification). To be clear, these garden cultures include our tribe, our nation, our religion, our family of origin, our workplace, the current state of our marriage and

relationships, etc. The story of the Garden of Eden never happened, but it is always happening.

When our eyes are metaphorically opened (as the eyes of the primal couple are opened) we gain an objective relationship to that which was previously invisible and subjective. We have in that moment (or more likely, over a long period of time) transcended that particular culture. The gods of that culture (the voices we have internalized) will try to convince us that we will surely die, as a way of eliciting obedience wanting us to stay put. The snake got it right.



Conscious awareness, then, is a key driver of cultural evolution. Rarely is this eye-opening an unambiguously pleasant experience. It is disorienting, and often displeasing to the culture we have transcended. We undergo, in other words, banishment (3:24),

as the myth points out. Suffering is both inevitable and also necessary to the process of the evolution of self, culture, and systems. So is death (a metaphorical death to the culture we have transcended).

And note that once we have gained this objective and conscious relationship with the self, culture, or system that we have transcended, it is as if there are cherubim with flaming swords (3:24) stationed at the gates of the Garden (name your culture)– meaning, there is no going back. Once you've individuated from your family of origin, for example, naive identification with the rules and roles of your family is over forever. The tree of life is available, but it lies up ahead in the future, not in the garden of some golden age of the past.

In this interpretation the serpent functions as the subversive

agent of evolution, whispering to us that the gods (the forces that would have us remain unconscious) would like us to remain blissfully unaware and subservient. Temptation, in this interpretation, is not negative. It is toward the forbidden horizon of an unknown, yet beckoning future. Paradoxically, it is the voice of God, and not the serpent that represents the temptation to the “regressive alternative” (Walter Wink).

Think of these voices to stay unconsciously identified with the existing culture as The Matrix, willing to take care of our every need (bread and circus) in exchange for our blind cultural embeddedness and willingness to live in the trance of security and comfort. The serpent whispers, “don’t listen to that voice, these gods are just worried that your eyes will be opened and you’ll gain the divine powers of co-creation that come with conscious self-awareness.”

Eve (the feminine aspect of both men and women) becomes the heroine, reaching out to take the forbidden fruit (the erotic catalyst) that allows the power of abundant life (the fruit of the tree of life) to animate us. These powers are the sacred evolutionary impulse itself moving through us to transcend existing (unconscious) conditions and align ourselves with the sacred trajectory of a Spirit-infused universe yearning for an increase in beauty, truth, and goodness. This erotic impulse is in search of a more liberated culture to express its boundless creativity and love.



Eve represents the unconscious power of the feminine divine within cultures that have become too restrictive, rising up and reaching out in subversion of the voices that would prevent our natural evolution in and toward the alluring Heart

of G_d—and ultimately, to realize *consciously* that all of this wondrous diversity is unfolding and converging within the One, Unified and Unifying Source. The goal of the spiritual life then is not about redemption from a fall, but rather consenting to be liberated from cultures that restrict the soul's restless desire to fashion a world that our hearts know is possible. (Charles Eisenstein). We'll end up outside the gates of the Garden of Unconscious Unity, and in the realm of an unfolding history that involves suffering, yes, but we'll find ourselves (actually) animated by a promise that is only for those who dare to reach out and take the forbidden fruit.

Seeing as there are so various families buying online and likewise exploring the internet market place, it has become increasingly famous to purchase medications online. So the next question is where can you get data that is reliable. You can find useful information fleetly and conveniently by going online. The most common sexual problems in men are erectile dysfunction and ejaculation disorders. A lot of doctors think about "[levitra cost](#)". Did learned some about "[buy levitra online usa](#)"? Other matter we are going to is "[buy generic levitra online](#)". In effect, a medical reviews found that up to three quarters of people on such drug experiment side effects. Luckily, most cases of sexual dysfunction are treatable, so it is momentous to share your concerns with your member and physician. Today, there are many options for men who suffer from erectile dysfunction. Get emergency help if you have any of these signs of a side effect to this curing. Talk to your heartiness care provider to see if it's sure to make the switch.