

Appendices

Appendix A

Crow

This writing is not just a story in allegorical mode but a story that connects to my practice, to all the other things I am doing. It shows me connecting up my different ways of knowing and the crossing-over between the personal and the political.

This is a messy text – making sense is often a messy process, iterative and hard to unravel. If you want the allegorical kernel then read part 2, but the other parts will tell you more about the workings of my sense-making process and the issues I was struggling with (personally and professionally) at the time.

Part 1. Introduces the issues I was working with as part of my PhD learning journey.

Part 2. Is the crow incident itself – and shows me working with allegory.

Part 3. Shows my contemporary reflections, me making sense of the allegorical material, connecting the personal to the wider political and my inquiry questions.

Part 4. Shows later reflections and ‘overwriting’ of my 2002 commentary (in green) onto my earlier writing – another layer of sense-making. I also refer to supervision sessions (via transcripts), showing me developing my inquiry.

Crow – written 1998.

Part 1. My contemporary introduction

In my April [1998] supervision session with Peter Reason I agreed to focus down on one area, and to make that the one of *identity*, having spent a while now looking at power, and knowing that I wouldn’t be likely to stop reading and thinking around power/powerlessness anyway.

The issues of identity are harder for me to voice; partly because they are, at this time particularly, very painful. I am needing to make considerable adjustments, not just to the idea that the disease is present, but to its potential to threaten my continued existence – something I have found myself in denial about at times, but confronted by recently as I read of others who have died of it.

On top of all this there is a decline in my mobility that makes me feel as if time is important, that redefines even the size of the space in which I can act. I

experience at times a panic, a sense of a closing of doors and options; it makes me focus down on the “critical” – what I really want to do. It runs the risk of making me hold on too tight , push too hard, do it for me, rather than seek a balance between me, us and them. I know it doesn't have to be this way. I know that I have lost a sense of my own power. **This piece is about a cycle or two in the process of re-establishing links to my own power, to write the future, to understand the messages written in the symbolism of the disease, to find the love in the loss.**

It is often the lack of my physical strength and abilities that frustrates my desire to do even mundane things (and taxes my ingenuity to find a way around my limitations). Also the debilitating fatigue that fells me, and that even I cannot argue with! What does that mean for *me*?... to have to accept the messages of my own body without question.

Or what does questioning them mean? So often I am told “You must listen to your body”. Must I? I understand that the speaker normally means “You must stop when it hurts, take a rest, or your body will punish you for not listening”. I am convinced that there is a more subtle listening that could be applied here. How do I learn to listen to the sub-text? Is it a meta message, or always one of small detail? I don't know where to start here.

So let's focus on what I **do** know.

I know that the fear and expectations of others can harm me. I know that I can let them invade me as surely as the virus that is superficially responsible for my condition invaded my spinal cord and caused the erosion of the myelin coatings on the bundles of nerve fibres. I know that I need to take charge of my own understanding of the situation. I need to accept that my fear and shock allowed me [initially] to give up responsibility for interpreting the world, for constructing my understanding of reality. Feeling afraid I looked to experts to tell me their realities, and I fell into believing that these were the only realities.

First I asked for diagnosis, then for prognosis. And what has been liberating has been the awareness of the process of myself being harmed by one of those externally applied prognoses, this heightened by the fear of the interpreter [their fear].

Perhaps I should explain this a bit. For various reasons I was recently referred to a physiotherapist. As far as I can see you don't get much more focused and one dimensional than a physiotherapist. I was solely a body, and a body that was letting me, and by implication her as a therapist, down by being likely to decline rather than improve.

And yet I think on reflection that I should count myself lucky that my physio appears to have been depressed, it meant that I began to see what was happening.

Her unrelenting sense of my inevitable decline first undermined me, drove me into minimising my needs and my disability, so that I was putting energy into reassuring her of my ability rather than seeking advice or support, defending myself against what felt like an attack. It then made me feel helpless, then angry.

She started our contact by taking me through a form of assessment, guided by a written questionnaire.

All her questions were framed within a set of expectations; “Have you had any problems with your eyes yet?”, “Have you had to stop working yet?”, “Can you still

and so on. I rapidly found myself getting lost in a fog of frightening expectations, losing contact with myself and only able to fight off what I now see as an attack by denying having any needs. I felt unheard and unseen, losing my identity in her expectations. And yet why was it so powerful? Sure she had some expert knowledge that I needed, but seeking the information, and being met by her sense of my inevitable decline, played into some projection of mine to do with seeking expert help/information. I was infantilised, (literally in terms of the reversal of the myelinisation, and my return to a dependant state, unable to communicate). This must have some relevance to my position in the world regarding power and powerlessness, my feelings and expectations about holders of expert power, and how they can affect the self-esteem/image of holders of expertise.

If I am to insightfully facilitate the meetings between the powerful and the powerless I need to understand the power of my own fear, in order to be liberated through meeting it.

This is why I think this meander into the present-personal to do with identity means something in terms of my inquiry. It may not get into the final writing but I am asking you to bear with me as I seek for other images of myself, and for an understanding of the, often symbolic, routes I can take to understand who I am, and what my realities are.

I am embarking on ways of reframing the facts so as to identify some other realities. I cannot exist within a future solely defined by the prognosis of others. So at least part of my inquiry around identity unfolds around the search for other ways to describe the “state I am in”, ones that enable me, rather than those that disable me.

In our tutorial group in May [CARPP3, 1998] we talked of my search for names; for the work I do, for how I do it, and for what I am (my identity) – Although I don’t think I phrased it quite that way then, but you helped me to clarify the question.

You posed some strong questions between you [my tutorial group], including;

- can I name what I do (have I given up calling it facilitation yet)?
- what do I do to facilitate myself, as a developmental process?
- can I allow myself to be playful about it? Trying on different clothes to see how they feel.

Since then it’s been my internal life that has been taking my energy and attention. It has been a difficult time, with a lot of processing going on.

“Whoever survives a test, whatever it may be, must tell the story”
Elie Weisel quoted in Matthew Fox, *Confessions*.

I would like to relate the story of one incident, and through it how I'm trying on some names and roles for size.

Part 2. The crow incident

The crow first came the week I was on holiday.

I suppose it was the change in routine that meant that I was around the house more and awake earlier in the mornings.

My journal tells me that it first happened on 21.5.98 as I was about to leave the house for a meeting. In fact I remember relating the story to explain my lateness.

It started as I was in the bathroom, a loud knock on the kitchen window below, then another.

I thought, with some irritation that it might be an intruder, as we had been burgled for the second time in a year only weeks before. Could anyone really have the audacity to break the kitchen window, in broad daylight and without checking if anyone was at home?

Irritated I looked out of the window, and below me, still standing on the windowsill was a large crow. Another gazed at me from the wire stringer holding up the pole delivering our electricity that stands in the field next to the house. I suppose that I must have moved and they took flight across the field, and landed, rapidly becoming indistinguishable from the other crows strolling about, stabbing the grass in search of insects. I was surprised but put it down to a lack of flying skills, not that unusual in young birds at this time of year.

Already I was reminded of an incident a few years ago, I thought two or three but Glenn says more like four or five, when a young crow had ventured into our hen house while the hens were free in the garden and had been attacked by the hens, always on-guard against egg thieves. I had crawled into the house to rescue the bedraggled and bloody bird, braving the sharp beak, only to find that it locked its claws around my fingers. As I carefully prised them off my hand they contracted into small balls, knotted in an anguished tangle that disabled the bird who was now unable to walk or fly.

I know that Glenn must be right about the length of time, it must have been that long ago as it was before I lost some of the feeling in my hands. Because when I woke up in the mornings and they were clawed and stiff, and I had to smooth them out, I remembered the crow's claws.

The crow had also been badly pecked about the eyes by the hens.

Strange that we use the term "hen" as one of affection when you consider how ruthless and fierce they can be, but then the crow had not called by for a chat, he had been raiding the hen-house for eggs.

Altogether the damage looked pretty grim, and I wondered whether the vet would advise putting him down. What I hadn't expected was the vet's willingness to see the crow, and to treat him seriously, as any other animal with a right to the best life possible. So one injection and an examination later Edgar,

as the crow was inevitably named after E. Alan Poe, returned home with me to convalesce.

This is how we came to give flying lessons to a crow, feeding him on cat food and keeping him outside in a disused chicken ark for safety until his eyes healed and he gained more competence at flying.

Then one day during flying lessons, inevitably, he just kept on flying. I worried about his safety but he hung around our end of the field for a bit, and on the next day returned to sit on the same wire stringer on the electricity pole, cawing to be noticed, then taking off to join a larger group of crows making for the wood.

I've always thought he just called by to let us know he was OK.

When I got back from my meeting I checked the kitchen window for anything that could have attracted the crow. Hanging from the frame was a clear glass disc, impressed with an image of the sun. Maybe the crow had been attracted by the glitter of sunlight in the glass? Perhaps he was pecking his own reflection?

I was awoken very early the next morning by tapping on a window pane. It was followed by four loud caws. Then the tapping again. I got up and looked down from the landing window. This time the crow did not notice me. It tapped again on the kitchen window, I saw it standing on the window ledge waiting and tapping. Then it must have sensed me or something else disturbed it, and it was off.

Later that day it was the sitting room window the crow was tapping at, no shiny glass suns there, and at a time of day when the sun itself was behind the house and so not reflecting in the glass.

Part 3. My reflections

I kept asking 'why?'

I re-read my journal and find the entry for 23.5.98;

"I keep asking myself, and them [the crows], why? And am resolved to keep the question open, to just keep asking.

But I know they have come to me, and I'm very moved, and somehow reassured that it reinforces my sense of my spirit life".

Since then I have noticed the tapping perhaps one day in three, although I have a sense that they come each day but sometimes I don't hear them...

Then yesterday (23.6.98) I came across a passage in Kenneth Meadows' book "Shamanic Experience" that described the crow as power animal, he describes them as; *shape shifters*

crow medicine; bringing about desired changes in accordance with the will

let the past be your teacher – look into it and recognise beliefs that caused suffering and discard them – the present is the only true reality, it is now that the future is created, change your thoughts and you change your future

make more effective use of the present moment, and let the future be an inspiration

signifies the need to find proper balance between ideals and practical reality, reveals the ability to create the kind of future you want – if you apply your will to it.

Sounds like enabling transformations³⁰⁶ to me, so I am trying on the crow form as a power animal, and leaving signs to those who have been calling that I have heard them. “Transformations” remind me of both the large group processes I’ve been working with³⁰⁷, I felt it could be the description of the nature of the facilitation work that I do within them, also part of the personal process stuff, what it says about possessing the future.

One of the differences I notice in myself over the last seven years or so is that my sense of my spirit life has declined. It’s not that I don’t believe anymore, it’s that I don’t have that sense of **felt knowing** that I did³⁰⁸. Or it’s been obscured,

³⁰⁶ By this I mean the process of enabling something to transform. In this case this applies on two levels: the personal transformation to inhabit my power, story my future, which includes accessing and finding a way to speak of using the witchy part of my noticing practice. And is also a reference to what happens within a piece of facilitation – supported by the design of the process and also by mindful facilitation. A transformation that I can feel as a facilitator, like a seismic shift where I feel we are all suddenly moving, dropping into another space – and I am holding the boundaries of that to keep the discomforts and the excitements bearable in order to maximise the learning in the group.

³⁰⁷ Large group events, and the skill that’s in the detail of the facilitating them – subtle, detailed, not broad principles, requiring moment to moment observation.

308 What the crow told me

In our 1998 supervision session discussing ‘Crow’ Peter Reason asked me ‘What is the crow telling you?’:

[Extract from supervision session]

‘It reminds me of going to Cadbury for the dawn one solstice with some friends. It was incredibly misty. We did all sorts of small rituals, as you do for solstice, which included spending time each of us on our own.

Separate from the others I heard sounds, initially I thought maybe it was farm machinery or something...which considering the early hour was unlikely, then as the morning went on and the mist lifted I saw that there was still no-one else about on this midsummer dawn, and no buildings anywhere close to us, and I realised what I had heard was the past, which I suppose I’d known all the time, but I wanted to brush it away, normalise it – But I can’t deny it I was connected enough to hear and experience it, the

noise of battle; cries, shouting, din. And with it an uneasy and very sad sense.

I'm not claiming this ability as unusual, and I'm not in-touch with it all the time, which is right and proper, otherwise I'd just be bombarded with it. Most of it is not useful, but the crow reminds me that I have got access to it, if I want to be beyond or outside myself and in that way connected then I can be. But if I'm not conscious or choiceful about it then I either get bombarded by it and don't understand it and run the risk of not knowing whether I'm *here* or *there*, (which is what used to happen when I was much younger), or I just lose it all together, like if you don't exercise you lose the ability to lift chunky weights about.

That's what the Crow incident reconnected me with, that I *could* think that this is more than just a crow come to look at itself in the glass, I could think that it had come for me, that there was a message. I can have the faith and confidence to think that there is something else here for me as well as what is happening in another, more "ordinary" layer of reality. And somehow that's meaningful and also incredibly difficult to say, to make a claim to knowing.

And as I've found when you go into an organisation its very easy to lose that. I gave it up when I went to work in the NHS, and I can feel the pressures to block it out now working with 'conventional' clients. Power systems in organisations militate against other ways of knowing, other senses or power; the failure to recognise types of power other than position power, power over -it crushes this using of ones whole self and senses'.

2002: There is an analogy here with types of knowing and expert (predominantly scientific/logic based knowledge), direct analogy with women's ways of knowing being devalued, with community knowledge dismissed, with my work with scientists in the LGA to support them working with social issues and social processes. And organisational cultures that disempower staff through imposing a culture that denies these wider aspects of their lives, insisting on defining a particular 'reality' and way of being.

'There's something about being able to access those places where we are not individually constrained within ourselves - the witchiness is about a place of connection (with others, and with the more than human world).'

What it means for my in-the-moment facilitation practice

[Extract from 1998 supervision session]

'For me this access is also about voice, when I'm working I find my voice, not when I'm singing to the pigs but when I'm working well, and its part of

I have to struggle for it, or to stumble over it. I no longer actively hold myself open. Or I didn't. In parallel with the stories I am telling here I have been focusing more on these aspects of my life, and seeking out contacts to support me in deepening my practice to reconnect me with my spiritual "senses". Is it coincidence that I have lost just these connections during the period when I have actively and knowingly sought access to power and influence through

that feeling of working with what people have said/brought (into a group I'm facilitating). There comes a stage when things go well where I find I can start to draw pictures in the stuff that they have put in the space, to move it around. It's what I call flying facilitation, I know then that I'm working well, whatever that means, I'm not on the ground, I'm not particularly *in me* - there's a bit of me in me, but I'm out there in the middle of what I'm doing. I'm way beyond myself.

It's what John Heron describes as charismatic presence; he's talking about presence, about occupying the whole room. Here's a link - back to my sense of the subtlety, and the need for writing, describing, drawing on what it is to be in those sorts of places. Matthew Fox also talks about something similar in his book *Confessions* when he writes about being out of his body. I'm outside myself yet also fully present.

I know what it looks like, I've had it reflected back by colleagues and occasionally participants. The drawing together, the knitting together. It's not thought - thinking "that connects with that", it's like shaping out of something in the air. It's easy if you're with it.

[I don't want to make big claim in saying this. PR: no, you're not]

But in order to be with it you have to be talking to the crows, if you stop talking to the crows you just get into being more one dimensional. If I did it one dimensionally I'd be thinking it, and thought wouldn't be enough, it's not just having a broad picture of the subject I'm working with and making connections that participants may not have a broad enough picture to make. That would be *thinking*. I know when I'm doing that. It's not that, it's like drawing pictures in the air with their material. It's as if they (the participants) put a substance into the air/ the space we are working in and all I'm doing is, it's almost like moving my hands around in it, and it draws another picture. I want to see what's there that can't be seen, the image I've been using is wanting to take something like soot or flour and to throw it over the unseen, to make it appear, it exists but it's invisible. What they do is they provide that material, as well as what's actually manifesting. I don't know what's manifesting maybe it's the opportunity, it's like moving that stuff in a fluid state, and it's just flying.

I suppose I do the making it manifest.'

position power³⁰⁹? It is as if in order to gain “temporal power” I have felt that I must deny my “spiritual power”. And yet one of the exciting things is that I am now reframing my political work as facilitator through my spiritual understanding³¹⁰.

The crow has come to stand for a reminder to include that part of myself, the intuitive, witchy part that performs facilitation in a space of connectedness with the group I am working with. I am reminded of Matthew Fox describing the experience of being out of his body, seeing himself working with a group. I am now working to find words to describe that almost ecstatic state/place.

Let me say a bit more about that.....

³⁰⁹ Here I'm referring to my career primarily. Although reading it now I can also see the connection to the power of the facilitator.

³¹⁰ Claiming a ground for the spiritual in my political practice

The writing of Crow moved me to be more confident about the connections I felt between the spiritual and political aspects of my practice, and pleased with this experiment in telling stories about it – both the writing and the subsequent discussion:

[Extract from 1998 supervision session]

PR: About your writing - you must be careful to unpack some of these pieces, there's a lot potentially in this if you allow yourself to have it. And we can still be talking about facilitating communities in relationship to power. You don't have to go off to talk to crows all the time. You can keep the social empowering side of you. It's very interesting to be putting it together with this more shamanic, transformative consciousness.

SP: I feel that it's quite hard to think that I can draw them together in the same place, **to think it out loud**. The extended therapy movement used to drive me quite mad because it seemed that it could not accommodate the political. I remember having conversations over the years about the pointlessness of therapeutic perspectives/ theories that did not acknowledge politics.

PR: “We can create our own reality!”

SP: What this is doing is making the connection between the two. I am claiming a ground for maintaining/holding the sense of the spiritual in my practice, which is also political.

I notice that I'm telling stories well here, allowing myself the space to tell the story, the details about it.

PR: I can almost see its curled up hands, and then your curled up hands.

SP: That's because I'm getting a felt connectedness, so you can hear/connect with what's behind it.'

Just last week I found myself talking with a close friend about voice – the fact that I find that when I want to sing, as I do to my pigs, I find that I have lost my voice. The range is limited as is the volume. But when I am facilitating I have one of the most powerful voices I know, I can be heard in acoustically difficult spaces when others struggle.

I am also aware, when the facilitation is going well, of being outside myself, yet fully “present”. Of being connected with the group, and in practical terms what it has said/produced, in a place where we are all connected, a place where I and the participants are one.

Is this being fully embodied?

How does this claim sit with true humility? I’m not suggesting that this is unusual, only perhaps that is an unusual framing in some of the worlds in which I work.

And the transformative element – is this where facilitation, via the skill of the facilitator or the transformative processes used, enables participants to meet/come together in the place where we are all one? To overcome our separateness and experience “is-ness”.

I should say that my friend is prepared to act as an enemy for me (Torbert), and she didn’t hesitate to challenge me in the act of holding to myself this insight. It leaves me with a question, prompted by my friend’s questions, about how effective, and authentic, is it to work in this way without sharing this perspective with participants? And this links to the issue I have raised before of how participants are supported after the experience, how they use the experience and the learning when returning to their parent organisations, and for their own development³¹¹. Would somehow being able to share this way of understanding how our goals/visions/purposes are conjoined help the individual’s personal development in a way that would support them in sustaining collaborative behaviours/intent on their return to their organisation?

Tony Gibson writes about the shared fear that focuses groups, the shared purpose and vision that can overcome resistance to collaboration – is there some evidence of an underlying democratic/ co-operative commitment that is unearthed by crises such as war?

Is he just reframing the sensation and motivation activated by transportation to the shared place of oneness that I have described being achieved through processes such as Future Search?

³¹¹ 2002 – I’d say reading this now they are both situations in which I’m looking to support learning; in the individual and the system.

There is also a question for me of the affects on us as facilitators³¹². How do we

³¹² Fear and confidence

In the same session I went on to discuss further facilitation, particularly issues of fear and confidence:

[Extract from 1998 supervision session]

'I'm sure that we all do it, its just what we name it as. Is it a good day or a bad day? Why is it so scary sometimes? And how do we work with it being scary

There are some start conditions that can help, knowing each other, being able to move around each other in the workshop facilitation.

Maybe part of the fear is the shift between that ordinary reality and that kind of space that you can get into and, I know for some people its about wondering whether you are going to make the leap, and maybe I'm in the place where I'm naive enough to believe that I can't control that, so that it either happens or it doesn't . And if it doesn't I'll do my best with the bit of me that's got the big practical picture. And if it happens I can go with it now rather than get frightened by it.

I see other people that I work with get very anxious, and although they may work really well I think they are scaring themselves seriously, in that way it's dangerous - for the facilitator. There's nothing wrong with a bit of fear but I think maybe it's not necessary to be that frightened.

[PR: for me the fear is not knowing beforehand whether I'm going to get there, and afterwards being so whacked out].

There is something here about gaining confidence, the crow gives me the confidence to reclaim stake a claim for knowing in a way I'd separated myself from, so I know on another level the way of describing the reality of that connected place. I think that's the place where I'm working when I'm facilitating well, the space in which we are not separated, a connected place.

Confidence is a theme.

When I was feeling disempowered by the diagnosis and looking outside myself for reassurance and structure and an interpretation of reality Glenn was going away to the States for a couple of weeks and it was really hard to help him feel confident enough to go away. But he's in Ireland this week and its not been difficult and that's about me taking charge. So if I'm more confident then he's more confident there's an aspect of if I'm more comfortable within my power then it communicates itself. There's an aspect of that

relevant to facilitating; when I'm working with colleagues who are frightened, not in an 'easy' sense but are frightened outside themselves to the point of being disconnected (because there's a communication to the group whether you wish there to be or not, that you are not with them but with the part of yourself that is frightened - it disconnects you because at that point its only your stuff, not theirs too).

And that's why we need to have a reflective cycle, a sense of collecting ourselves through that reflective process.

Drawing it together, and the need to tease it apart

[Extract from 1998 supervision session]

PR: What is interesting is that you talked about the encounter with the crow, which in one way is just a crow on your windowsill and in another way is a meeting, and then you build/use on that to discuss a world view/theory of facilitation, the drawing pictures in their material - a piece of propositional knowing moving from a kind of shamanic encounter to working with people, and that goes into your practice.

SP: That's what I like about this, it is connected, it says its continuous, it keeps poking through everything.

PR: Glad we got into this page, I find it fascinating, this needs expanding a few chapters, we are drawing out the links/connections between your personal facilitation and the power/community stuff in ways that are actually very illuminating.

SP: And I think its very helpful because sometimes I've just rolled them up and they become assumed and not explicit, and at other times I don't see how they reflect each other, like a set of mirrored boxes in which the reflections go on forever'.

PR: So I hear something which is linking the spiritual with the political, in this spiritual witch like, presence sense.

And the political links to notion of facilitation with that kind of presence which is connected with your sense of empowerment which is connected with other people's sense of empowerment, which comes back to the more formal agenda of how you facilitate communities in relationship, the explicit agenda you came in with.

SP: And I want to add telling the stories and noticing, helping to speak some of the subtle things that are going on, e.g. my description of drawing patterns in the material from the group.

PR: Can you give a description of what's going on for you when that happens what you think the consequences are, can you do a piece of

facilitate our own need for self reflection in the moment, through Torbert's reflective cycle or in some other ways. I am currently finding at least one of my colleagues so affected by the experience that his need for security/ safety is enormously demanding on those facilitating alongside him. These processes are powerful, and as facilitators we need to be able to choose whether or not to be fully present **and** able to be reflective. Or we run the risk that we cut-off in order to manage the intensity of the experience, or are overwhelmed by it.

Alongside the other aspects of this whole inquiry I am now interested in setting up a co-operative inquiry with other facilitators to reflect on this aspect³¹³. In this way I will feel at least this aspect of my own process will be better facilitated. I have questions about whether to link this to the question of leadership – facilitative models of leadership that offer sustainable solutions. I am uncomfortable with, what feel like old paradigm models of leadership currently fashionable such as social entrepreneurs. It is for me about the responsible uses of power through offering facilitation for shared action.

30.6.98.

I find myself speaking of wanting to, no, having decided to "write my own future³¹⁴". What I mean is that I want to take charge, at least of the part of my life that is about my "condition". I don't want to find myself going to the neurologist asking him what the future for me will be. I can choose to be more in control, to listen to myself rather than to give that power away to some "powerful other", that is really only a projection, he has less power than I in this situation, and only **one** type of information. That of disease prognoses. I also find that the term "condition" is a comfortable one, in the way that illness and disease were not. It is, if you like, the state I am in; my condition.

So last Friday I agreed with the clinic that at present there is no point in my continuing to see them, but that I can re-refer myself if I wish. (A significant step for me in terms of personal process, noticing that I am allowing myself to take power without cutting myself off from those who hold a different type of power, without needing to take enemy positions in order to assert my own power³¹⁵).

action inquiry on that? So you can be following your own presence when you do that.

³¹³ 2002 – and no I didn't set up the co-operative inquiry group.

³¹⁴ 2002 – it's really interesting to see this appear here. At this time I was only just beginning to formulate ideas about writing a new future, which I can see now more fully present in my use of writing – see Methodology Paper for discussion.

³¹⁵ 2002 – and without cutting myself off from those who could offer support. Asserting control that does not cut off the source of nourishment. A change for me, which is reflected in my work – both what and how I do it; a great deal of my work at this time was fuelled/linked with anger, asserting control and taking power, linked to reaction and anger. This was an example of mutual assertion, rather than self assertion. I wrote from the tape of my conversation with Peter Reason at the time [1998] that the consultant and I had

"Taken a decision together not to waste each others time, and setting criteria together about when it could be useful to go back, e.g. to discuss Beta interferon.

I also sought the help of a cranial osteopath. Not that I had thought I needed someone of that particular discipline, but I had asked a friend to recommend someone who might be appropriate, who could see me as a whole and help me to see the whole. One of the distressing things about seeing the physiotherapist, and to a lesser degree the consultant, is that they see only part of me, and in addition have their visions of the future that I don't want to buy into.

(How hard it is to know whether I'm just indulging in denial, except that I think I can rely on my therapist to point out to me if I was. It is so easy to lose faith in the return to a felt sense of my own power.)

He felt a separation between my head and my body. An absence of what would be a normal connection between head and body through

Mutual negotiation, avoiding getting to the point of being frustrated by each others ability or inability to help or be helped.

I went knowing what I wanted, but able to negotiate.

Our initial contact was for diagnosis, which was initially liberating, but then became the opposite. I then found myself wanting him to give me visions of the future. But then a couple of months ago I thought this is really scary, I keep looking to other people for the future, it was the physiotherapist that focused it for me.

PR: she did you a turn, the medicine wheel people talk about tyrants, tyrant is a teaching/er.

Me: I was liberated the second time I saw her through getting really angry, I had to get really angry to realise she doesn't write the future, that's mine, if I want it, if I want to possess it. Its about power, you can't give power you can only take it

[And I ask myself does this mean that adversarial, enemy position-taking is the organisational equivalent of getting angry, when it happens in the groups I know regarding partnership power issues? E.g. LPT]

She was taking power away from me and I needed to take power back, *and* I needed to take/share power with, with consultant.

A good example of power sharing is working with the cranial osteopath, where he acts like ears/eyes through his hands, he can feel something that I experience in a different way but we are both talking about the same thing.

The interesting parallel is the contexting of this, wider situation in which I am disempowered by the virus invasion and have had to be dependant, and then I notice I become too dependent and so there is this whole context in relationship to me, my body my life, my spirit, the medical system. Then within that there is this woman (the physiotherapist) who behaves in a particular way that is disempowering which paradoxically helps me to re-empower myself. If you took any one of these things in their own right you'd think that woman is behaving in an incredibly disempowering way and she ought to sort her own stuff out, but one can't understand that micro piece of power outside the whole system of what's going on. There's mirroring going on here on a systemic level.

And if you look at empowering people in a local context you've got exactly the same sort of thing going on. Some long term trends about what should be happening, what shouldn't be happening, what people want to happen, but now depending on the robustness and sophistication of the relationship and whether it is or isn't able to learn/recover from those different sorts of situations".

the spinal column. It is a disconnectedness that I have been living for as long as I can remember. He also found a lack of what he described as the natural pulse or movement in the fluid that bathes my spinal cord, brain, nerves etc.

I don't know what this means technically but it at least mirrors what I feel. I have always felt disconnected from my body, and the symptoms I have now are often only extremes of the way I always remember myself; poor balance etc. But most powerfully I also feel that I can work with the image of getting this system to breath again. I don't know where this will lead, I don't want to replace one interpreter of the future with yet another. But I do feel I need someone who can see some things for me, to give me some pictures to work with. Someone who can work with me to build a picture or pictures of the past and the present in order that I can feel that I can create my future.

“Symptoms of disease are nothing but a disguised manifestation of the power of love; and all disease is only love transformed”.
Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (quoted in Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*).

Part 4. Later reflections and 'overwriting' of my commentary (in green) – another layer of sense-making

2002.

Reflections on where I was at the time of writing Crow – an important connecting up point, linking the spiritual with the political.

I have the notes from a taped supervision session with Peter Reason to which I took this paper, which gives me a measure of where I was in relation to the writing and through it introducing another part of me into the academy. I can hear from my tone of voice a real delight in coming into this aspect of myself, claiming a space for it, for me. And solid encouragement from Peter to see this part of me as legitimate. But it doesn't stick, there's not enough of something there to get me through the door, feels like I'm still out there hovering at the window. I connect while I'm face to face with Peter or my CARPP group, but somehow the connection is not strong enough to survive a separation – somehow the bonding is not strong enough³¹⁶. It doesn't at this time overcome the tentativeness – its there in the text and the transcripts, I repeatedly say 'I don't want to make a big claim in saying this' and in one way its true –

³¹⁶ And how that resonates with my personal experience as a small child, with a very slight bond with my mother. Which did not survive being left by her when she left the room, let alone left with extended family when she went into hospital.

this is stuff which I believe we can all access – but what I hear myself saying is that I'm not sure about exposing myself.

I came to the 1998 supervision session with a clear question as to whether this writing, and the me it captures, is legitimate, or as I quite often put it 'useful' – meaning is it good and useful in other peoples terms – 'for them'. This question related to both the content:

- the very personal material about my experience of MS
- the witchy nature of the Crow piece and the link to the shamanic, power animal associations

and the style of the writing

- drawn from my journal
- working with the symbolic.

What I could not affirm for myself, but needed encouragement to do was the importance (for my thesis) of the links the piece made between power / facilitation / who I am – identity /seeing power through my own eyes. Making direct connections regarding empowerment, and introducing the symbolic. Writing and thinking which is linking the spiritual with the political, in this spiritual witch like, 'presence' sense³¹⁷. And the political links to the notion of facilitation with that kind of presence, which is connected with my sense of empowerment, which is connected with other people's sense of empowerment, which comes back to the more formal agenda of how I facilitate communities in relationship, the explicit agenda I came to Bath with.

And I want to add writing that is telling the stories and noticing and finding a way to speak some of the subtle things that are going on in my practice, e.g. my description of drawing patterns in the material from the group.

I have included as endnotes pieces drawn from the discussion of the Crow in which Peter's persistence has drawn out of me descriptions of my facilitation process, what I notice happening in the moment, and issues about fear and confidence while facilitating in this way. I think they are useful information of 'what I do and how I do it' that are not otherwise present, but very much belong to the connections made in Crow.

317 Matthew Fox uses the term 'presence', referring to God in all of us in his framing the immanent, many similarities to Starhawk (Dreaming the Dark).