

The Splendid and the Savage: The Dance of the Opposites in Indigenous Andean Thought

Lo Espléndido y lo Salvaje: La Danza de los Contrarios
en el Pensamiento Indígena Andino

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Abstract

One of the most well-known and defining characteristics of indigenous Andean thought is its adherence to a “complementary dualism” in which the “opposites” of existence are viewed as interdependent parts of a harmonious whole. This is in many ways in stark contrast to Western philosophical models, which have historically tended towards an “antagonistic dualism,” the view that the opposites are engaged in an eternal struggle for dominance. This paper considers how a culture’s relationship to the opposites—whether seen as a “war” or a “dance”—influences the way an individual creates psychological meaning. The results of this research into Andean complementary dualism are first presented. It is then considered how this cultural-philosophical worldview compares to other complementary models, specifically that of G.W. Hegel and C. G. Jung. The paper concludes with a consideration of how the similar ideals of these complementary worldviews might inform the work of transpersonal researchers and practitioners.

Key words: andean, dualism, polarity, shamanism, yanantin

Resumen

Una de las definitorias características y de las más conocidas del pensamiento indígena Andino es su fidelidad a un “dualismo complementario” en el cual los “opuestos” de la existencia son entendidos como partes interdependientes de un todo armonioso. Esto está en muchos sentidos en completa contradicción con los modelos filosóficos occidentales, los cuales han tendido históricamente hacia un “dualismo antagónico” donde los opuestos son entendidos como enfrentados en una eterna lucha por el dominio. Este trabajo analiza cómo la relación de los contrarios en una cultura (vista como una guerra o como un baile) influencia la forma en la que un individuo crea su significado psicológico. Además se compara cómo esta forma filosófica-cultural de entender la vida con otros modelos complementarios, específicamente con los de G.W. Hegel y C.G. Jung. Tras presentar los resultados de esta investigación sobre el dualismo complementario Andino, este trabajo concluye con una reflexión sobre cómo las parecidas ideas de estos modelos complementarios podrían ayudar al trabajo de investigadores transpersonales y demás profesionales.

Palabras clave: andino, dualismo, polaridad, chamanismo, yanantin

Received: 18th September 2012

Accepted: 28th December 2012

Introduction

It has been argued (Lévi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1989; Needham, 1973) that all cultures across time and space identify and make meaning of the world through binary oppositions—dyads of either *opposed* or *complementary* elements such as male-female, good-evil, spirit-flesh, sky-earth, and so on. It has also been suggested (Webb, 2012) that the way in which a given culture relates to the polarities—seeing them as engaging in either a “battle” or a “dance”—has a significant impact on the psychological life of the individual existing within that culture. In my work as a psychological anthropologist, I have developed a personal and professional interest in exploring the ways in which a culture’s relationship to the polarities affects an individual as cultural participant’s sense of self, as well as his or her overall relationship to the world. My particular approach to the exploration of the relationship between a culture’s basic ontological approach to the opposites and the effect that this has upon the psychology of the individual is informed by the concerns and research methodologies of transpersonal anthropology, a field that has been defined as “the investigation of the relationship between consciousness and culture, altered states of mind research, and the inquiry into the integration of mind, culture and personality” (Campbell & Staniford, p. 28). It is on this that the following article focuses.

Between 2007 and 2009, while conducting my doctoral research in psychology at Saybrook University, I had the experience of bouncing back and forth between two very different cultural models, each with a distinct relationship to the polarities. Over the course of these two years, I spent long periods of time doing autoethnographic fieldwork in Peru with the intent of shedding light on the concept of *yanantin* or “complementary opposites” as the philosophical basis of the indigenous Andean worldview. During this time, I had the opportunity to work with a group of indigenous Peruvians (primarily shamans and scholars) living in or near the city of Cusco. These research participants generously offered valuable time, perspective, and insight regarding their particular complementary worldview, resulting in a study that not only yielded fascinating intellectual-observational data through which I was able to come to understand the ways in which this complementary worldview is understood and psychologically integrated by the cultural participants, but which also gave me the opportunity to engage with this concept on a personal-experiential level. In doing so, I was able to achieve a deeper, more tacit sense of how the way in which an individual views the opposites of existence—whether as engaging in a “dance” or a “battle”—can significantly influence his or her inner experience of the world.

In this paper, I will present some of the results of this research as a means of exploring the connection between a culture’s basic ontological model—in particular, its relationship to the polarities—and how this model influences the way in which the individual as cultural participant creates psychological meaning. The paper begins with an overview of the two philosophical models I will be discussing, providing the general distinction between an “antagonistic dualism” and a “complementary dualism.” I will make the case that whichever a culture chooses as its primary metaphor—whether the view that existence is a “battle” or a “dance” of opposing energies—greatly influences the relationship that the individuals within that culture have to the world around them and, in particular, to the content of their own psyches. Having laid that foundation, I will turn to the results of my research, exploring the Andean concept of *yanantin* and its correlate term, *masintin*. Because it is believed that the opposites must be “pared” in order to move out of their initial power struggle and into a state of complementarity, I will focus on what I refer to as the “4Ts”—stages that, according to my research participants, reflect the steps of the dance that a *yanantin* pair must move through in order to establish themselves as interrelated and interdependent energies. Having done this, I will then offer a short recounting of my own personal experience with the concept of *yanantin*, offering the argument that making a shift between models, from antagonism to complementarity, can lead to a state of greater psychological ease and health. I then consider how this cultural-philosophical worldview and four-stage “dance” relates to other complementary models, specifically Idealist philosopher G.W. Hegel’s (1977b) dialectical model as the means by which individual and Absolute consciousness arise concurrently and Carl

Jung's (1989) Individuation process in which the Self is revealed through the interaction of conscious and unconscious forces. The article concludes with a look at some of the similar precepts espoused by these three complementary worldviews, considering how these similarities might inform the work of transpersonally inspired researchers and practitioners.

Is Existence a “Battle” or a “Dance”?

As part of philosophical discourse, the term “dualism” (from the Latin *dualis*, meaning “containing two”) refers to an ontological system¹ or set of beliefs in which existence is understood to consist of two equally real and essential substances (such as mind and matter) and/or categories (such as “being” and “nonbeing,” “good” and “bad,” “subject” and “object”). When applied to the field of religious studies, “dualism” is most widely used in response to belief systems that conceive of two supreme and opposing principles (such as “God” and “Devil”). “Dualism” is also used as a means of distinguishing those things a given culture considers to be an aspect of the “profane” (the world of forms and day-to-day physical existence) and that which is attributable to the realm of the “sacred” (an intangible, transcendent, and—in some cases—more “true” or “essential” reality). Within the field of anthropology, the term “dualism” is often applied to cultures in which primary social structures and/or symbol systems are organized according to sets of twos, creating what has been called “dialectical societies” and/or “dual organizations” (Levi-Strauss, 1963; Maybury-Lewis, 1989; Needham, 1973; Webb, 2009). While these oppositions may be viewed and mediated in different ways according to the varying dictates of the culture and/or domain in which they appear, the case has been made that every human society recognizes and attaches some importance to polarities, constituting a “universal tendency to think in twos” (Needham, 1987, p. 229).² Presuming this to be true, it can be argued that whether a culture’s underlying ontological model emphasizes the antagonistic relationship of the opposites or whether it looks beyond the initial tension towards their interrelationship within a complementary unity is one of its most significant and distinctive features and offers much insight into a culture’s—and, therefore, the individuals living within the culture—basic relationship to existence.

An “antithetical dualism” is one in which the opposites of existence are viewed as either being entirely independent of one another or as being eternal enemies that relate only through their desire to overthrow one another. For example, within ditheistic religious traditions, one side of the pair is often seen as being responsible for the creation and preservation of the cosmos and is therefore considered morally superior and entirely “good,” while its opposite aspect is attributed with destruction and human suffering is considered entirely “negative” or “evil.”³ Within the context of philosophical systems based on an antagonistic model, these dual energies tend to be two “substances”—i.e. the Cartesian split between mind and matter—with the ultimate goal being to determine which substance is the most true and real and which is either illusory or an epiphenomenon of the other in order to identify the *prima materia* of existence. Within models that exhibit an extreme form of antithetical dualism (as opposed to those that tend to be more moderate in their approach; (see footnote 3) the core drama becomes the continuing confrontation between separate and opposing principles. Any interaction between the two that appears to be logically contradictory is considered to be either a symptom of misinformation (in the case of philosophy’s “law of noncontradiction”) or a spiritual perversion (as in the infamous “Problem of Evil”). Occasions of paradox, here defined as “a seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true” (“Paradox,” *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2001, p. 612), thus are treated as crises, something to be solved and resolved until the contradiction no longer exists and existence is reduced to one identifiable and enduring feature.

But while an ontological model based on a dualism of antithetical terms accentuates the struggle and antagonism between the opposites and the ultimate desire for reduction, other systems of thought perceive the polarities—and the paradoxes that result from their interactions—as being *complementary* in nature. Philosophical models in which a form of complementary dualism is present maintain that everything has a counterpart without which it cannot exist and that all things are dependent upon the tension and balanced

interchange between them. Because they are interdependent and mutually supportive, resolutions or disturbances occurring in one evoke a sympathetic response in the other. Therefore, if one side is destroyed or denied, the other will suffer to an equal degree (Hertz, 1973; Maybury-Lewis, 1979, 1989; Needham, 1973; Tuzin, 1989). Instead of trying to uphold one side of the polarity and overthrow the other, cultures oriented towards a complementary perspective are marked by their dedication to maintaining an equilibrium and harmony between the opposites, both in spiritual and secular domains⁴.

Writes Maybury-Lewis (1989),

People in such societies are keenly aware that the conflicting principles that maintain the harmony of the universe in the long run can unbalance their individual and social lives in the short-run. They therefore see their binary systems as involving them in a constant effort to harmonize with these forces and to hold them in dynamic tension. (p. 11)

Andean Complementary Dualism

While a number of cultures throughout the world have been identified as upholding a philosophical worldview based in a complementary dualism, one of the most well-known is that of the indigenous people of the South American Andean region. Geographically speaking, “the Andes” constitutes a vast mountain region that extends through the greater part of South America through Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. Although the Andes consists of a number of contrasting regions (dry, coastal desert and high, looming mountains) and of distinct culture-sharing peoples that inhabit it, there is nevertheless a general acceptance amongst scholars and others (Andrien, 2001; Astvaldsson, 2000; Isbell, 1978; Mannheim, 1991; Murra & Watchel; Silverblatt, 1987; Stone-Miller, 2002; Urton, 1981; Webb, 2012) that the people of this region share enough of a common history, linguistic lineage, and ideological outlook to constitute being categorized as a single ontology-sharing group⁵. Despite the Spanish conquest of the area in the 16th century, during which the Spanish priests worked to alter the native peoples conception of the cosmos (most significant of all being the attempt to implant an absolute dualism upon the ideological framework by introducing the concept of “sin” as a means of dividing the world into opposing forces of “good” and “evil”)⁶, it is widely agreed (Barnes, 1992; Harrison, 1989; Joralemon & Sharon, 1993; Silverblatt, 1987; Webb, 2012) that the Andean allegiance to complementary dualism as the underlying philosophical construct remains intact. Rather than representing a conversion to Western antithetical dualism, contemporary Andean models of consciousness reveal “an adaptation to—not an adoption of—the [Western] ethos” (Joralemon & Sharon, 1993).

Or, as Palomino (1971) wrote,

The Andean man ... continues to live within the structural model of his remote ancestors, but with a new symbolic and actual reality founded on historical events. It is possible that he may be on the brink of a radical change in his main characteristics, but *his dualism goes onto processed even under new conditions* [emphasis added].” (p. 86)

The Roots of the Research

The two most central terms underlying this philosophical legacy and enduring framework of Andean complementary dualism are *yanantin* and its correlate term, *masintin*. The first time I heard the term *yanantin* was back in 2000, when I accompanied a group of spiritual seekers to Peru to learn about the indigenous philosophies and practices of this land. We were sitting in the ruins of an ancient temple, watching an old *kuraq akulleq*⁷ (shaman) conduct a *despacho*—a ceremonial offering to the spirits of the earth. On a large,

white piece of paper, he created a kind of mandala made from a variety of objects, each of which carried with it a specific intent for the health of individual, community, and planet. One of the first symbols to be included within the offering was a small figurine in the form of a human being. The figure was split down the middle, with one half of it colored yellow, the other half, pink.

“This is *yanantin*,” he told us. “Complementary opposites.”

The phrase *complementary opposites* struck me immediately. Perhaps this was because on some level I recognized that it reflected a worldview that was significantly different than that of the culture in which I was raised, one that has, historically and on both conscious and unconscious levels, consistently viewed the polarities as being incompatible with one another and therefore as engaged in an eternal antagonism and struggle for dominance. This antagonistic split shows up in much of Western religious dichotomies of sacred versus profane, spirit versus flesh, Absolute Good versus Absolute Evil, and so on. It also plays a major role in our philosophical systems, the most obvious of these being the debates over the primacy of mind/spirit versus the primacy of the physical body, resulting in the mind-body “problem.”

Psychologically speaking, this devotion to what Jung (1956) referred to as “neurotic one-sidedness” (p. 42) is evident in a certain intolerance of the complexity of the psyche, one that often results in a compulsion to eliminate all paradoxes and seeming contradictions of the human condition. A recent *Time* magazine article entitled, “What Makes Us Moral,” exemplifies this desire reduce the psyche to a singular characteristic and/or condition.

The article opens with the following sentiment:

If the entire human species were a single individual, that person would long ago have been declared mad. The insanity would not lie in the anger and darkness of the human mind—though it can be a black and raging place indeed. And certainly it wouldn’t lie in the transcendent goodness of that mind—one so sublime, we fold it into a larger Soul. The madness would lie instead in the fact that both of those qualities, the savage and the splendid, can exist in one creature, one person, often in one instant. (Kluger, 2007, p. 54)

According to this article, it does not matter which aspect of the psyche we choose—either the “splendid” or the “savage”—as long as we align ourselves thoroughly and completely with that one side without deviation. Only then can we be considered healthy and sane.

It was my dismay over my culture of origin’s “one-sidedness” and even outright fear of the complexity of lived experience that prompted me to devote my doctoral work to the study of how *yanantin* influences the psychological lives of indigenous Andeans. When I arrived for my first fieldwork trip in the spring of 2007, I began by walking the streets and through the markets, asking whomever I could to share with me their understanding of *yanantin*. My questions were met with stares and puzzled looks. Later, I would realize that going up to random individuals on the street and asking them about *yanantin* was not unlike how it would be for someone to enter a Western mall or urban center and start asking passersby what their relationship is to The Trinity. While some people may have a vague idea of what it means and what it stands for as a symbol, how many of us would be able to articulate how it relates to our daily life?

Having learned that first lesson, I changed my research strategy, working instead with indigenous shamans and scholars as my research participants⁸. These are individuals for whom this kind of philosophical understanding is part of their professional lives, and who are therefore able to articulate their influence on the daily life of the individual. Also, while the study began as a fairly straight-forward, traditional ethnography—full of facts and figures about how the philosophical ideal of *yanantin* influence the lives of indigenous Andeans—as I will discuss in more detail later in this paper, my research participants were insistent that I have my own experience of *yanantin*. As a result, I decided to incorporate the methods of “autoethnography” within my research methodology.

Autoethnography methodology

As the latter half of its name implies, autoethnography is similar to a traditional ethnography in that its aim is to describe and interpret the behaviors and customs of a culture-sharing group through the researcher's immersion in their lives. But while within a traditional ethnography the inner experience of the researcher is alluded to but not focused on, in an autoethnography, throughout the research process the researcher makes continual comparisons between the "objective" characteristics of the phenomenon as lived by the cultural participants and the researcher's own "bodily, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual experience" (Ellis, 2004, p. 30). What results from this inner-outer dialectic came a highly personalized, revealing text in which my own lived experiences of this cultural phenomenon were paired with that of my research participants, thus relating the personal to the cultural and the cultural to the personal.

Yanantin and Masintin

In describing the Andean worldview, Fernandez (1998) wrote,

Here nothing remains static. This is why a theory of the world or a methodology does not belong here. Here the only thing that belongs is an open and continuous conversation, with the active participation of all those of us who are the Andean world. . . . [H]ere there is no room for fundamentalism or essentialism. We are the world of love and nurturance, of exuberance, of voluptuousness, of exultation. There is here no manner of substratum that would sustain any intellectualism or dogmatism. This is no context for moralism or Puritanism. Here the one truth cannot live. (p. 141)

"*Here the one truth cannot live*". As I would learn at the very beginning of my fieldwork, absolute definitions go against the fluid nature of the complementary worldview. When I first met with Amado, a young shaman who would become my primary research participant throughout the project, I asked him to define the word *yanantin* for me. To this he responded, "Out of respect I do not define *yanantin*. . . . May I suggest that you download the information from the cosmos instead?"

The story of this eventual "download" will be described later in this paper. What is pertinent to this current discussion is that while Amado did eventually provide me with some loose definitions of the term, he was careful to impress upon me that I should not get attached to any one explanation or perspective. Concrete, unchanging definitions are, to a degree at least, a very Western conception and was shown to me to be in opposition to the very fluid, circumstance-dependent perspective underlying the worldview of my research participants. Personal experience, rather than transmitted definitions is valued much more highly as a means of coming to understand the nuances of this concept.

That said, given the nature of this article and that some sort of common understanding must be built in order to properly discuss these ideas, I will give some loose definitions of "yanantin" and "masintin," the central terms underlying this complementary framework.

Yanantin

The closest one-to-one translation that I was given for the Quechua word *yanantin* is the Spanish word *pareja* or "pair." Etymologically, the prefix *yana-* means "help" while its suffix *-ntin* means "inclusive in nature, with implications of totality, spatial inclusion of one thing in another, or identification of two elements as members of the same category" (Platt, 1986, p. 245). Some scholars (Urton, 1981) break down the word slightly differently, translating *yana-* as "black" in the sense of "dark" or "obscure," and contrast it to "light" (rather than in the sense of "black" as opposed to "white"). Generally speaking, the term *yanantin* is used to signify the relationship/alliance/meeting/unity between two entities; not necessarily absolute

opposites (as in the case of dark-light, inner-outer, male-female, and so on) but refers to any collision and/or collusion of energies (for example, self-other or Buber's I-Thou).

In some of the current literature surrounding the topic (Wilcox, 1999, p. 46), *yanantin* is translated as, "the complement of difference" However, Amado, my primary research participant, disagreed with this assessment, stating,

For us, *yanantin* doesn't focus on the differences between two beings. That is what disconnects them. Instead, we focus on the qualities that brought them together. ... One on its own can't hold everything, can't take care of everything. Not only are they great together, but they *need* to be together. ... When there is another, it represents extra strength for both. (Webb, 2012, p. 24)

The word *yanantin* contrasts with *chhulla*, which refers to something that is unequal or odd—"one of things which should be twice" (Platt, 1986, p. 245). According to Vasquez (1998), the Quechua speakers of Cajamarca say that something that is incomplete is referred to as *chuya*, meaning "the one who is missing its other" (p. 100). He reflected that within this cultural group it is believed that, "In order to be whole, one has to pair up" (p. 100). Harrison (1989) noted that, "Quechua speakers persistently distinguish objects which are not well matched or 'equal'" (p. 49). In fact, the survival of the community is therefore seen as dependent upon the balanced union of the conjugal pair (Harris, 1986).

Reflecting this, several of the Peruvians with whom I worked felt very strongly that, in order to be whole, one must establish a relationship with their *yanantin* (a connection that they say may be either in person or at an energetic level). When I told one of my research participants about the shocked response that a female anthropologist friend gets when she tells the Q'ero (a tribal group of Andean mountain dwellers) that she has no husband or partner, he laughed and said,

They must say, 'How do you handle everything?' It's a big surprise, because, for them, without that partnership, life would not be possible. ... They say that when you don't have a partner, you are only half of a being. Alone, you are precious, you are unique, but you are only *part*. You are not whole yet. This is because when you are by yourself, you are either accumulating so much that it is overwhelming or you are draining yourself so much that you become weak. Because of that, you will feel fear or confused or lost. ... That's why they say in the communities that if you don't have a partner, you can't handle life. That's why they get surprised. Because given the ways they live, one cannot handle life in the community without a partner. Only when a person is paired can they truly serve the community. That's why the communities don't see you as the whole until you are together. I was in Chincheros the other day and I was telling all the single boys, "You are only half men!" (Webb, 2012, pp. 139-140)

Masintin

Thus, whether something is paired or unpaired is an important distinction within the Andean cosmivision. But simply bringing together two entities or energies is not enough to constitute a *yanantin* pair. According to Platt (1986) *yanantin* includes the act of rendering equal two things that were once unequal—what he calls, "the correction of inequalities" (p. 251). In order for a *yanantin* relationship to be achieved, the two energies are brought into harmony. As Platt explains, "[t]he elements to be paired must first be 'pared' to achieve the 'perfect fit.' Here the crucial notion is that of the *sharing of boundaries* in order to create a harmonious co-existence [emphasis in original text]" (p. 251).

This "pareing" or "sharing of boundaries" is an essential concept within the *yanantin-masintin* framework. If *yanantin* is the "noun"—that is, the complementary pair in and of itself—then *masintin* is the "verb," meaning that it is the active process by which the *yanantin* pair becomes "pared" and thus moves from a state of antagonism and separateness to one of complementarity and interdependence.

I was told,

This is where both of these beings come together in absolute service, in absolute mission together. *Masintin* is where the power of the two become the force that will allow whatever that these *yanantin* are dreaming to manifest. ... *Being* is *yanantin*. *Masintin* is the *experience*. *Yanantin* exists already. Only with *masintin* can you get through the process. (Webb, 2012, p. 37)

The four stages

According to several of my research participants, this movement towards complementarity and interdependence is a four-stage process of boundary exploration. The four stages are as follows:

- Tupay (The Meeting)
- Tinkuy (Testing of Boundaries)
- Taqe (The Union)
- Trujiy (The Separation)

I will go through each phase, giving a brief overview of how each one was explained to me and each one's importance within the "pareing" process.

1.- Tupay

The first stage, *tupay*, is "the meeting"—the initial encounter between the *yanantin* pair. It was described to me like this,

Whenever you meet a person [or other entity/energy], *tupay* is that encounter. ... In partnership, in wife to husband relationship, *tupay* is very, very powerful. [In Peru] there are ceremonies each year that are specifically celebrated for having this encounter. Nowadays, a lot of people get married during this first level of meeting. A lot of people say, 'Oh, wow, it is so powerful, it is so strong.' And they go for that relationship right away." (Webb, 2012, p. 70)

2.- Tinkuy

The second stage, *tinkuy*, is the phase of greatest tension between the pair. And by "tension" what is meant is not just tension in a negative, anxiety-producing sense (although that aspect is undeniably part of it), but also the tension occurring from passion and intimate connection. It is in this stage that a testing of boundaries occurs between the *yanantin* pair. It is here that we discover where I end and you begin. Points of similarity and difference reveal themselves.

It is within this stage that we come face-to-face with the reality and understanding that a complementary worldview does not imply a Utopian state of existence. Not at all. In fact, within a complementary perspective, this tension (both the ecstatic and the painful) is understood to be not only natural and unavoidable, but also *necessary* to upholding the cosmic dance. While challenging, this tension is not considered a negative thing, but rather an essential aspect of forging a relationship between the *yanantin* pair.

An extreme example of this can be seen in the yearly *tinkuy* battles held in certain mountain-dwelling communities the Andes. During this week-long ritual, opposing groups (often groups of men but sometimes groups of women) meet and engage in brutal combat with one another. These violent *tinkuy* battles have been described as the physical, ritualized enactment of the collision of opposing forces taking place within the

cosmos. While bloody and even sometimes deadly, they are said to promote fertility, moral equilibrium, and are a means by which points of tension between individuals are released and harmony can be achieved (Allen, 1988, 2002; Bastien, 1992; Harrison, 1989).

As one of my research participants reflected,

This is the time in the year when all of them can solve their problems and their anger and all of it can come out in a fight. They don't just say, 'Okay, there is a way of resolving this that can be peaceful so don't worry, just swallow your anger.' They prepare a whole year ahead of time for the moment that they will be able to bring all this anger out. It's one way of moving the *hucha* out of the system, out of the community. (Webb, 2012, p. 66)

As Allen (2002) noted, "Rivals in battle, like lovers, are *yanantin* (a matched pair; helpmates). . . . Any release of energy—whether constructive or destructive—calls for collaboration" (p. 160).

Similarly, some Andean healers describe their work—the purpose of which is to harmonize the energies of an individual or communal system and, in doing so, return it to a state of health and wholeness—as engaging in a *tinkuy* battle between heavy and light energies. The mixing of ingredients in medicine or cooking is sometimes referred to as *tinkuy* (Allen, 2002, p. 177). In the highland Andes, *solteros* (single people) from each of the rural villages meet once a year in order to dance and flirt in order to establish partnerships. This, too, is referred to as *tinkuy*. All these examples—the battling, the flirting, the spices mixing—shows the various guises that the *tinkuy* phase takes.

3.- *Taqe*

The third stage is *taqe*, "the union." While the *tinkuy* phase is noted as being the place of greatest tension, *taqe* is the phase in which the antagonism recedes in favor of an initial state of complementarity. In this phase, the power struggle has ceased. This is the stage in which, as Allen (1988) noted, "Cosmos, community, household and individual are felt to attain existence through the fusion of opposites like the *warmi* [woman] and *qhari* [man], each of which contains the other" (p. 208).

As one of my research participants described it, once you reach the *taqe* level, "you are no longer two people, but one. . . . That other partner, that soul mate, not only is the complement, but she becomes the very foundation of my being. (Webb, 2012, p. 71)

He told me,

The *taqe* level represents absolute strength—for the family, for the community, and definitely for the planet. . . . A lot of couples feel that they have arrived at the *taqe* level, but they really haven't because there is always one partner who wants to be in control. If there is a winner or a loser, then you are still in that *tinkuy* mentality, right? There is still that competition. Only when partners come into absolute cooperation, do they reach the *taqe* level." (Webb, 2012, p. 142)

4.- *Trujiy*

The final phase, *trujiy*, is the most difficult to describe, as it tends to be the most esoteric and even "mystical" of the four stages. Here, total complementarity is achieved. *Trujiy* has been described (Webb, 2012) as "loving at the level of the soul." It is also called "the separation." While these two phrases may seem contradictory—for how can something be both a separation and an Ultimate Union?—they are not. One of my participants described it to me as *illawi*—"cosmic weaving." (Webb, 2012, p. 155)

He said,

[You arrive at the *trujiy* stage] when you have completed everything and you and your *yanantin* have become a oneness. Because once you reach the *taje* level, you are no longer two people, but one. *Trujiy* is then the point at which your *yanantin* departs or when you depart from your *yanantin*. ... That separation is only the start of another, much higher level of union...*Trujiy* represents the capacity to be yourself again once you have experienced that *yanantin* union. After that, you become one single person again. But in that singleness you are no longer just yourself. You are One—with the *yanantin*, with God, with the essence. No matter what happens, you are One with all of that. Always. (Webb, 2012, p. 152)

Earlier in this paper I mentioned that although I had begun this research with the intent of conducting a tradition ethnography in which I would investigate the influence of *yanantin* on the lives of my research participants, very early on in the process I was told that if I was to truly understand *yanantin*, at any level, I would have to have my own personal experience of it.

One of the “techniques of ecstasy” used by shamanic cultures across the world is psychedelic plant medicines. In the case of several of the research participants with whom I worked, the San Pedro cactus is a primary tool for healing and insight. San Pedro is typically prepared as a liquid, with the meat of the cactus boiled with water into a thick liquid so that the mescaline content—the vision-inducing ingredient—is highly concentrated.

Sharon (1972) wrote,

[The] San Pedro cactus is experienced as the catalyst that enables the curandero to transcend the limitations placed on ordinary mortals, to activate all his senses; project his spirit or soul; ascend and descend into the supernatural realms . . . [to] “jump over” barriers of time, space, and matter; divine the past, present, and future—in short, to attain vision, “to see.” (p. 130)

It was suggested to me at the beginning of my research that the best way for me to understand and integrate this concept of *yanantin* was for me to “download” it—that is, to go into ceremony with the San Pedro cactus. While a complete description of the more personal, experiential aspect of the research is available elsewhere (Webb, 2012), given its esoteric and intangible nature, it feels appropriate to here offer some description of my own experience of *trujiy*.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, my two primary participants, Amado and Juan Luis, brought me into a San Pedro ceremony; a ceremony that was specifically designed for me to have an experience of *trujiy*. As this would be my final fieldwork trip for this particular project, I hoped that this ceremony would result in some grand insight in which I would then understand *yanantin*, wholly and completely.

As I sat there, I could feel the effects of the Medicine deepening. My senses began to wake up all the way, and then it was as if the world around me had just had an exclamation point added onto it. Everything seemed to have taken another dimension onto itself, as if even the most infinitesimal qualia that make up creation had chosen to reveal their true character. The blue and green tones hidden in the rusty red of the stone masses leapt out, competing for attention with the bright pinks hidden within the yellow-green of the scrubby canyon grass—a grass that doubled its own sense of presence by rubbing its blades together, rustling in the wind like people softly whispering. Not to be outdone, the canyon walls vibrated against the wind with a long, low “huuuuuuusssshhhh!”

But along with these calming sensations came unpleasant ones as well. The young man had moved his sheep closer, and, little by little, the sweet rustling of the grass and the low humming of the

canyon walls was overtaken by the ugly cacophony of the high-pitched whining of the sheep, punctuated every now and then by the low, lunatic bleat of the ram. The sound bounced off the canyon walls and filled the air, amplifying it to a maddening pitch. I tried to block it out of my mind by focusing on the wind, on the *illawi* stone in front of me. When that did not work, I tried to embrace it as part of the landscape of which I was trying to be a part, rather than give in to the belief that this sound was getting in the way of whatever Revelation might be waiting for me. The sound was beyond irritating. I found myself growing physically nauseous.

And then, for whatever reason, just as I thought I might lose it all together, all the sounds—the shrieking of the sheep, the whispering of the grass, and the humming of the canyon walls—all began to merge together into one. And then, even that oneness disappeared and there was nothing but a frozen silence, a big emptiness, as if I had gone temporarily deaf.

Before I had time to be alarmed by this, some wheel within my consciousness began turning backwards. It started slowly and then picked up speed, as if time itself were moving in reverse. If this were a movie, it would be at this point that all the action on the screen would stop, frozen in motion for 2 or 3 seconds, and then begin moving backwards.

Flashes of memory from the last two years flooded my psyche.

Barack Obama . . . He is a Trujy.

Men and women as time and space.

Ferns and fractals.

Trickster apus. Visions of life and death.

The Chavín faces. The Lanzón. (My god, The Lanzón!)

The stars moving and not moving. Schrödinger's Cat.

Self and other. Tinkuy battles. I think, therefore, I think it over.

The prophecy stone. The Eagle and the Condor.

Meeting Juan Luis for the first time in the Plaza. Laughter. Followed by more laughter.

Amado. Laughter and tears.

Stepping off the plane. Out of the airport and into that fugue state.

Beginnings.

Suddenly, in my mind, I was back to the place where I had started. Back again to that point at which it all began. It was then that I had the utterly joyful and, at the same time, absolutely horrifying realization that none of it really mattered. None of it. The struggles, all the searching, everything that I had experienced over the last two years meant nothing because, in the end, all it did was lead back to this deep, glorious, heart-wrenching silence. And in that silence, meaning was irrelevant. Whether there were shapes in the rock or were not shapes in the rock did not matter a bit. It is all the same, one way or another. If the stars are moving or not moving . . . who cared, when trying to figure that out was a ridiculous attempt? In that silence, I was relieved of the obsessive urging to make meaning, for there was no meaning to anything. And that flash of insight was both blissful and painful. I had never before understood the strangely addictive power of the *tinkuy*, of the ecstatic friction that results from the antagonism of the polarities grappling with one another. While we might hate the struggle, or love the struggle, what does one do when the struggle stops? A loop is created in our minds that catches us and will not let go. Or, rather, we will not let go.

In that space nothingness, there was no choice but to cease trying to make meaning of anything. In that oiled-up condition of the psyche, the urge to struggle had nothing to grip onto, nothing to give it traction and impetus and *purpose*. In that space, everything just was *being*. If there was more to know, to learn, it did not matter because, for better and for worse, in the end there is just silence. And in that silence we can stop.

For the first time in years, I felt the mad urging for answers leave me. And while on the one hand that was a glorious release, a deep pain came with it as well. Was this what it all came to in the end? After all the years of research, of experience . . . was it really to end this way? Not with a glorious flash of Revelation that would make the world make sense but with just this dull silence? Some strange nothingness? A part of me tried to fight that nothingness, but in the end I had no choice but to give into it. It was all I could do. I was tired. It had been a long two years. I took a drunken step forward and felt my legs buckle underneath. I sat down, exhausted, onto the ground, my head falling into my hands. (Webb, 2012, pp.156-159)

A few days later, I described my experience to Amado. At the time I told him, I felt that my experience had not amounted too much, for I had not received the Grand Revelation or Great Insight that I had hoped for—something that would make *yanantin* understandable once and for all. Instead, I told him, the experience felt so quiet that it was almost disappointing.

“But that’s the Revelation!” Amado exclaimed throwing his arms open.

“What do you mean?”

“What you experienced. That silence . . . *that* is the essence of [trujiy]. . . . Absolute peace. Absolute harmony with everything that there is and everything that there isn’t. That’s very powerful. It puts your mind completely busy and at the same time completely blank. . . . [T]hat’s exactly what *trujiy* is about. At that point, you go to a whole other dimension of experience. That’s what so many people look for. And like you say, they find it in the very place that they began. It is at that point that the *Trujiy*, the pilgrim, arrives to inner peace, to inner absoluteness, and also to absolute nothingness. That’s it! That is it. That which is almost disappointing—maybe because it *is* so simple—is exactly the essence that we can find in *trujiy*. At that point, there is just that natural flow of not thinking before you do. It’s like thought can come still, but first there’s that peace, that silence, that natural instinct to act, to serve, to do. In the process of the *tupay* and *tinkuy* and *taqe*, there’s so much happening all the time. There’s full actions; full dynamics. The level of *trujiy* is exactly what you experienced. It’s just that pure silence, when one aligns with that absolute everything and absolute nothing. That’s it. That’s *trujiy*. Those are the cosmic seeds. . . .” (Webb, 2012, pp. 159-160)

Other Complementary Systems

Having just outlined the distinction between antithetical and complementary ontological systems; having offered some tentative insight into *yanantin* and *masintin* and how these terms are experienced by my research participants (and, to a degree, how I myself experienced them), the remainder of this paper will consider how the Andean worldview intersects with other “complementary” philosophies and what the similarities between these systems have to offer us as transpersonal researchers and practitioners. In this next section, I will give an overview of two other complementary models: Idealist philosopher G.W. Hegel’s “dialectic” as a means by which humanity’s consciousness expands and, thus, the Absolute comes to know itself, and C.G. Jung’s Individuation process through which the collision of conscious and unconscious processes leads to the wholeness of the individual “Self.” These two complementary models—one representing the microcosm of the individual self and the other offering a “macrocosmic” perspective of the unfolding of existences as a whole—when brought together with the Andean perspective on self-other relationships offers us a multi-layered perceptual model through which we can view the basic understandings of the complementary perspective.

G.W. Hegel's Dialectical Dance

G.W. Hegel is one of several 19th century German Idealist philosophers who set out to resolve the dilemma posed by Immanuel Kant, who stated that the world consists of irresolvable antinomies—statements that individually seem equally reasonable but which together are contradictory and which demonstrate the absolute impossibility of knowledge (Kant, 2008). Hegel disputed this idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself, accusing Kant of creating an epistemological crisis in which *knowing* (something's appearance) and *being* (its true essence) are irreconcilably estranged. He rejected Kant's (2008) assumption that contradictions⁹ are products of a "natural and unavoidable illusion" (p. 211), instead regarding the interplay of opposites as proof of an Infinite Truth—what he called the Absolute. Hegel believed that the opposites should thus be looked at from the context of their relationship within a higher unity, for, as he wrote, "Neither of these determinations taken alone, has truth. This belongs only to their unity" (in Priest, 1987, p. 92). He therefore sought to lead "natural consciousness" to a new way of thinking in which opposing forces found the "harmony in the heart of discord" (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 90) and through which one could chart the progressive unfolding of the Absolute within Creation and heal the epistemological schism that Kant described. Hegel (1977a) wrote, "[it is the] task of philosophy [and hence of reason]. . . To unite. . . Finitude and infinity. . . [and] to construct the absolute for consciousness" (pp. 93-94).

While traditional logic states that if one thesis is true, then its opposite is not true, Hegel's "dialectic" outlined the way in which two apparently opposed ideas—*because of their strife and not despite it*—become first reconciled and then unified, leading to the evolution of human consciousness. This philosophical model became Hegel's template through which one could chart humanity's progressive unfolding from lower to higher levels of consciousness.

The unfolding of the dialectic has been explained (Berthold-Bond, 1989; Singer, 1983) by illustrating the relationship between a *thesis*, its *antithesis*, and their eventual *synthesis* in a higher unity.¹⁰

It goes something like this:

In the beginning, a consciousness emerges. This is the original *thesis*—a singular, undifferentiated consciousness or wholeness. It is a singularity, and as such it is alone, undifferentiated, unchallenged, unmet. But life has an impulse for self-identity and self-knowledge, something that it cannot attain by itself. In order to become *self-conscious*, consciousness needs a non-self "other"—an *antithesis*—to interact with and thus distinguish itself from.

Singer (1983) explained it this way:

"[T]o see oneself, one needs a mirror. To be aware of oneself as a self-conscious being, one needs to be able to observe another self-conscious being, to see what self-consciousness is like." (p. 77)

The *thesis* yearns to know itself, and this desire for self-knowledge gives rise to another consciousness, an *antithesis*, whose very presence contradicts the *thesis*'s singularity. But while the appearance of the *antithesis* fulfills the *thesis*'s yearning for self-awareness, at the same time the *thesis* feels threatened by this opposing consciousness, which it now considers to be a threat to its self-identity. The *thesis* is thus left strung up between two opposing desires—on the one hand a desperate need for differentiation through the mirroring of another and, on the other, an equally intense loathing of the other's existence, which threatens its control over the world.

Singer (1983) wrote,

Although self-consciousness needs an object outside itself, this external object is also something foreign to it, and a form of opposition to it. There is therefore a peculiar kind of love-hate relationship between self-consciousness and the external object. This relationship, in the best tradition of love-hate relationships, comes to the surface in the form of desire. To desire something is to wish to possess it and thus not to destroy it all together—but also to transform it into something that is yours, and thus to strip it of its foreignness. . . . [However] if the object of desire is done away with as an

independent object, self-consciousness will have destroyed what it needed for its own existence. (p. 76)

Eventually the *thesis* and *antithesis* begin to see the other as an obstacle. Each demands recognition of its superiority from the other and neither is willing to relinquish control. A power-struggle results as each tries to overwhelm the other. A battle ensues. Eventually, one overcomes the other and forces it to bend to its will. The one that submits becomes the Slave; the victor, the Master.

As the Slave is put to work creating the world according to the Master's bidding, the Master goes about his life within a world that the Slave has made. While this seems at first to be an ideal situation for the Master, over time a shift begins to occur. Despite his subservience, the sweat that mixed with the mortar of the world is the Slave's own, making the world a reflection of him. As the Slave comes to realize this, he earns self-respect and identity. While the Slave is establishing self-identity, the Master—who is a passive consumer of the Slave's creation—starts to *lose* self-identity, for not only is the world no longer a reflection of himself, but because the Slave has been subjugated, the Slave is no longer a viable counterpart against which the Master can come to know himself. Because of this shift in identity, the two of them eventually trade positions: The Slave becomes the Master and the Master now the Slave. The dialectic thus begins anew, with the *thesis* and *antithesis* flip-flopping back and forth, continually switching roles. As the power struggle continues, however, an interesting thing occurs. A *synthesis* is revealed; a “third thing” that both contains and transcends the *thesis* and its *antithesis*, constituting a higher form of consciousness than either of the original two created separately. Hegel maintained that the *synthesis* does not just appear out of thin air, like some long-awaited messiah who has finally appeared upon the scene, but rather “shows itself only in the end, but in such a way that this end reveals that [it] has also been there from the beginning” (Hegel, 1956, p. 157). Hegel reminds us that for all their apparent antagonism, the *thesis* and *antithesis* are the parents of the *synthesis*, which as a child of this union both contains and supersedes the original two¹¹. But while the emergence of the *synthesis* resolves things for a time, eventually the *synthesis* becomes a new *thesis*—a crystallized truth which must then be confronted by an *antithesis*. The dialectic begins again, with confrontation after confrontation, each leading to a new *synthesis* and higher forms of knowledge. In this way, “spirit is eternally preparing for itself its funeral pyre and consuming itself upon it, but so that from its ashes is produced a new, revitalized, fresh life” (Hegel, 1956, p. 73).

Explained Berthold-Bond (1989),

[This] is the principle by which thought disrupts its instinctive or immediate certainty, or by which thought becomes ‘split up’ or ‘divided’ into an opposition of consciousness to a specific object. Dialectic is thus the very process of thinking, where thought ‘loses itself in’ and becomes ‘entangled in the contradiction’ of its nonidentity with its object, and yet where this very negativity urges thought to ‘persevere,’ to ‘work out in itself the solution to its own contradiction.’ It is ... ‘a series of successive “conversions” whereby the relation of consciousness to the world is progressively transformed. (p. 84-85)

Hegel (1977b) believed that the only way to stop this dialectic from repeating over and over again *ad infinitum* was for thesis and antithesis to recognize their interdependence and necessity to one another's existence. The recognition of their equal participation in the world would then lead to a final synthesis, in which the Absolute (Universal Mind/Spirit) would attain complete self-knowledge and wholeness. The Absolute, Hegel wrote, “is accomplished in the world, and not in a heavenly kingdom that is ‘beyond’” (p. 21). He believed that as the collective consciousness of humankind evolves through this dialectic process, so too does the Absolute attain self-consciousness and, thus, ultimate knowledge.

C.G. Jung's Dialectic of Individuation

In much the same way that Hegel asserted that the tension of opposites within the finite world was necessary to the evolution of human consciousness and the realization of the Absolute, C. G. Jung believed that the psychological life of the individual was in a constant process of unfolding into greater self-awareness through an interplay of opposing forces within the psyche. In the case of Jung, these opposing forces were the conscious and unconscious elements of the psyche.

The *conscious* aspects are those elements that are accessible to us on a day-to-day basis. Within this realm, Jung included the ego, which, amongst other things, is responsible for upholding an individual's self-image and individuality, distinguishing all that is "I" from everything that is "not-I."

"The essence of the conscious mind is discrimination," Jung (1995) wrote, "it must, if it is to be aware of things, separate the opposites" (pp. 31-32).

In contrast, the *unconscious* includes those aspects of the personality that are disavowed and/or denied by the ego, what Jung referred to as the "shadow." While those "heroic" qualities of which we are most proud tend to pass through the filter of the ego and into an individual's conscious self-construction, those characteristics that we consider "shameful" or in any way antithetical to the ego's vision of itself are denied; hidden away within the unconscious. However, as Jung (1989) wrote, "everything in the unconscious seeks outward manifestation" (p. 3) and all the repressed elements of the psyche eventually make their way to consciousness. As with Hegel's vision of the relationship between *thesis* and *antithesis*, Jung (1966) argued that neither conscious nor unconscious aspects of the psyche are, by themselves, complete. In fact, he believed that all psychological imbalances represent a "self-division" (Volume 7, paragraph 18) or state of disunity due to the antagonism and estrangement of consciousness and unconscious processes. Unlike his mentor, Freud (who saw this division as eternal and uncompromising), Jung insisted that not only it is *possible* to explore the depths of the unconscious, but that the neuroses resulting from this relationship of opposing forces was a positive thing, reflecting the psyche's attempt to come into balance by bringing to light the hidden elements of one's true (or whole) personality. Every neurosis, hallucination, or paranoid idea therefore "contain a germ of meaning" (Jung, 1989, p. 127) that, if followed through to its essence, could result in a greater harmony and—to use Hegelian terms—a *synthesis* or a "reconciling third" which unites the psychic forces of the individual—what Jung called the "Self."

The Self is the psyche in its full authenticity, in which all conscious and unconscious processes are first united and then transcended. It is both the regulating force and the sum totality of the psyche. The Self, Jung (1966) wrote, is the dialectical unity of "both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It is the uniting symbol which epitomizes the whole union of opposites" (Volume 16, paragraph 474). A healthy psyche, he asserted, depends on a tension and interplay between opposite poles in order to function properly. If one side of a pair of opposites becomes excessively predominant in the personality, it is likely to turn into its contrary.

[While] the tendency to separate the opposites as much as possible and to strive for singleness of meaning is absolutely necessary for clarity of consciousness ... when the separation is carried so far that the complementary opposite is lost sight of ... the result is one-sidedness ... which in consequence must become more and more fanatical until it brings about a catastrophic enantidromia. (pp. 333-334)

Jung (1966) argued that much of Western religious and scientific thought is aimed at repressing or dissociating from the opposites within the psyche, and that such dualistic ideologies were psychologically harmful to the individual and ultimately led to a sickness in society as a whole, stating, "Unfortunately, our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even name, for the *union of opposites through the middle path*, that most fundamental item of inward experience ..." (Volume 7, paragraph 327.)

Discussion

Brought together, these three models offer us a multi-dimensional view of how a complementary perspective appears through the lens of the “macro” (Hegel’s vision of the unfolding connection between individual consciousness and Absolute consciousness), the “micro” (Jung’s consideration of how opposing forces within the psyche lead the individual to the wholeness of the Self), and the way in which the dance between self, other, and world unfolds within the daily social and spiritual lives of my Andean research participants. While each focuses on a slightly different aspect of existence, several recurring patterns appear that offer us clues as to how an individual might initiate a shift from an antagonistic relationship to existence to one of complementarity.

Before getting to these similarities, an obvious question to ask at this point is: Why would one want to make this shift? What specifically are the results of engaging in such a psychological transformation? Elsewhere (Webb, 2012) I have described the details of how this complementary perspectives influences the psychological lives of my Andean research participants as well as my own psychological shift, one which lead to a sense of greater existential ease. In the time since my study was published, I have focused my attention on how these ideas influence the lives of Westerners who have read the book, who hear my talks, or who attend my workshops. While this research endeavor is, at the time of this writing, still fairly new, several comments and reflections that readers and audience members have shared with me give a hint as to the benefits of making a shift from a worldview based in antagonism to one of complementarity.

For example: “The concept of complementary dualism is helping my husband and I through some challenging times in our personal and professional lives,” one individual wrote to me. “I keep reminding myself of the idea that transition is good, tension is good.” A leadership trainer from the UK wrote to me, saying, “I’d like to talk with you at some point about your thoughts on lessons on leadership based on your experiences in the Andes. I work globally with executive level leaders and am working on projects that support these folks to access the numinous/sacred/transcendent in ways that can help them to connect more deeply with their vocation, sense of interconnectedness and planetary purpose. My intuition is that there is a great deal that we could take from your experiences that could help foster this discussion-perhaps even exercises that we could use to help them to connect on a felt way to their transpersonal natures.” In another email a reader commented that, “If people realized that battle is part of the process, then perhaps more interpersonal relationships would work because people would go with the flow of it more. It’s awfully calming to know that “bad” things can be a normal part of a healing process. ... When I think about all the *yanantin* dances going on it makes the world seem so much more alive, in a way.”

While hardly a conclusive study, these informal comments indicate a certain hunger within the Western psychological appetite for a new model by which to view the interactions of daily life; one that offers an opportunity to engage with the world as a “dance” rather than a “battle.” In particular, having a “blueprint” of this dance in the form of the 4Ts (Tupay, Tinkuy, Taqe, Trujiy) offers a reference point by which to give context to the tensions of daily living; a framework for how these tensions may be viewed as a necessary and creative process rather than pointing to the unfairness of life. As do my research participants, individuals can apply the 4Ts to all domains of life, both personal and professional practices.

With that in mind, looking at the three complementary traditions all together, several similarities or “lessons” arise that seem to be especially important in understanding the complementary perspective and initiating this kind of shift:

Lesson #1: Do not start from a conclusion.

Each of these traditions espouse a kind of “mindfulness” training, maintaining the necessity of moving past initial, knee-jerk reactions in order to free our minds from compulsive assumptions. Hegel

(1954), for example, asserted that a *conditioned* mind is not a *free* mind; that a decision based on mental or social habits is a false reflection of reality, and the individual acting as such is not acting freely. Freedom of consciousness, he argued, is never arbitrary or habitual or in any way inauthentic. True freedom, he maintained, is “the activation of one’s own inner tendency; it is an unfolding of oneself; it is self-realization” (p. xliii). In a similar way, Jung (1995) maintained that while it may be necessary to make judgments, the individual should bear greater responsibility for the source of his or her judgments than is usually expected of us. He insisted that judgment should only come from a consciousness that has cleansed itself of projections and is therefore able to act purely from the authenticity of the Self.

Amado told me that one of the most essential aspects of his shamanic training was to become conscious of his initial reactions before acting upon them. When I asked him about this, he told me,

Usually we perceive the surface part of it—what one might think of as “evil”—and that is what we stick with. Often, a lot of people get lost in the reaction of it, and that reaction creates a blockage that keeps you from accessing it deeper. So, out of fear, out of irritation, you react to it. But the essence is much deeper. It is something that you have to journey into further. ... When we are facing that trickster energy, our first response is usually fear or pain or anger—all that heavy stuff. But once the first impression is done, what is your next action? ... You have to be a warrior. Every second, every minute of our lives we have to be warriors of light. It’s okay to have that first reaction and, yes, maybe even be afraid or angry. That’s natural. But then you must open up more and ask, ‘What is this all about?’ Go deeper. (Webb, 2012, pp. 106-107)

While from a Western perspective this approach might seem to be coming close to a kind of relativism, I was assured that this perspective does not imply apathy. When I asked my research participants if they would still stand up to something they considered “destructive” or “evil,” they were horrified that I would think otherwise. As one of my participants responded, “In this world, only the crazy people would say, ‘I am not against the bad.’ But you have to be against the bad in a very harmonious way” (Webb, 2012, p. 109).

Each of these philosophical viewpoints suggests that it is not so much *what* the individual chooses, but *how* the individual arrives at this choice. Each also recognizes the difficulty of dissolving the habits of mind that keep us trapped in our antagonistic divisions. In response, each has developed its own set of means by which the individual may disrupt habitual patterns of thought and step into a kind of “neutral zone” free from automatic concepts of right and wrong. Hegel described his own philosophy as a *via negativa*, or the “pathway of doubt,” offering a model for a kind of controlled scepticism that would lead the individual to a “loss of immediate certainty” (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 83) and, thus, a “loss of its own self.” (Berthold-Bond, 1989, p. 9) Jung had his patients use “Active Imagination”—an inner dialogue between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the Self—in order to reveal unconscious impulses and force a confrontation between the two and even a symbolic “death” of the ego’s absolute control over the psyche.

“Dissolution is a prerequisite for redemption,” Jung (1970) wrote. “The celebrant of the mysteries has to suffer a figurative death in order to attain transformation” (p. 283).

As noted, when I first arrived in Peru to conduct my fieldwork, my research participants were insistent that if I truly wanted to understand *yanantin*, I would have to have an experience of it by going into ceremony with the San Pedro cactus. “The Medicine will help you understand *yanantin*,” I was told. “But not only that. It will help you *be yanantin*” (Webb, 2012, p. 27). While the use of psychedelics is not the only means of initiating such a disruption of consciousness, it is one of the most dramatic. And while often in a Western context psychedelics are used for the purpose of escaping the “real world,” within the Andean shamanic context, the healer takes on a role similar to that of a therapist, creating an intentional space in which the revelations occurring within the journey are psycho-integrated and thus have application within the individual’s “non-stoned” life.

Lesson #2: Establishing a “perfect” relationship of complementarity does not remove the tension between them.

In other words, as mentioned earlier, a complementary worldview *does not mean a Utopia*. While reconciliation brings the once antagonistic opposites into interrelationship, it does not necessarily bring them into perfect peace.

The teleological goal of most Western religious and scientific pursuits tends to be the achievement of some form of Absolute Perfection, a state in which all complexity and tension is resolved through the triumph of the one more “real” or “superior” element. But while in Western thinking we are often chasing Utopias, hoping to get there through evolution, through linear progress, it has been pointed out (Cruz, 2007, Vasquez, 1998, Webb, 2012) that this kind of thinking is alien in Andean philosophical models. Cruz (2007) noted that in Andean thinking there is no concept of a messiah who brings with him an end to history. Likewise, Vasquez (1998) wrote: “It would not occur to anyone in the Andes to be considered civilized today and call their ancestors barbarians or savages, and thus discover a non-civilized type of human kinship” (p. 96). In contrast, while Hegel’s Dialectic did indeed present a teleological vision in which absolute freedom and absolute self-knowledge would eventually be achieved, he maintained that conflict is to be viewed as the inevitable *expression* of the Dialectic in action and that, “Eternal peace ... would produce a situation as foul as that of a sea never whipped by gales, and through war ‘the ethical health of nations is maintained’” (in Friedrich, 1954, p. xlviii).

In the West, our cultural tendency is to try to resolve or eradicate the tension of opposites by whatever means necessary. But while we may want the two energies to draw together in perfect love and harmony, it may turn out that their natural relationship is a pereptual *tinkuy* state, with all the blood, sweat, and tears that result from such an engagement. These complementary systems recommend that we drop all expectations or assumptions about what reconciliation “looks like.” The expectation for a certain outcome is often what gets us in trouble, for if a relationship of energies does not live up to our desires, we are likely to reinforce the antagonism through an attempt at manipulating it to conform to our standards rather than allowing the relationship to be as it is.

Lesson #3: Recognition of “other” as equal participant in the world’s construction.

Complementarity does not require *harmony*, but it does require *recognition*. While antithetical dualism asks us to choose one side over the other and then try to bend the other to our will, the complementary perspective calls for an acknowledgement that each side of the equation plays an essential role in the unfolding and enfolding of the whole. This is exemplified by the need that *thesis* and *antithesis* have for a non-self “other” who is an equal participant in the world in order for each to achieve full consciousness. Jung urged that the shadow realm of the unconscious should not be seen as “evil” or “less than,” for in fact it is the source of greatest power for the individual. Amongst my Andean research participants, it was noted that only through the eyes of one’s *yanantin* could one “see” oneself.

We believe that partnership is very important because, as they say, you may know yourself, but you can never *see* yourself. For that you need [another]. You need other eyes, another perspective to see that. When you are a child, you have your parents, but when you become older you no longer have your parents to see you, to recognize you. As an adult, your *yanantin*, your partner, is the person who is there to see what you don’t see in yourself, just as you are there to see in that person what he doesn’t see in himself. That is why it is easier to take care of another person than of yourself—because you are not supposed to take care of yourself! For that, there is the other person. There is *ayni*. It’s a service of love. (Webb, 2012, p.139)

True recognition, each of these systems maintains, is not always easy. In fact, it almost never is. When confronted with an antithesis—that which is “not-I” and, in fact, is regarded as a threat to “I”—very often our reaction is to try to *resolve* contradictions through an act of will in which we either attempt to suppress the other and/or mold one (the opposing) side of the equation to become identical to our own. The former option is a form of suppression (in which one overwhelms the other) and the other an act of *conversion* (an attempt to render both sides identical). Neither involves true recognition. In reflecting on the continually shifting dynamic of *thesis* and *antithesis*, Hegel maintained that it is only when the two recognize their interdependence and their equal participation in the world that they will achieve a final synthesis leading to Absolute Knowledge. Jung (1970) used the word “compensation” to refer to the psyche’s natural regulating mechanism, stating “consciousness is just as arid as the unconscious if the two halves of our psychic life are separated” (p. 163).

Lesson #4: What we perceive as a “twoness” is and always was a “threeness.”

While the idea of dualism as “containing two” has been the theme of this paper, in fact, each of the complementary systems that have been discussed regard the opposites not as a twoness, but ultimately as a threeness. For Jung, in the moment in which conscious and unconscious forces within the psyche come together in mutual recognition and interdependence, a “third thing” is revealed—the Self. For Hegel, this “third thing” was the synthesis that is the outcome of the battle between *thesis* and *antithesis*.

An example of this can be found in Andean models as well. Amongst the shamans with whom I worked, most use the *mesa* as their primary tool of divination, diagnosis, and healing. The *mesa* is a cloth altar upon which the healer places a variety of sacred objects. Most *mesas* are split up into three major “fields.” The far left side is known as the “Field of the Magician”¹² and contains objects that are believed to have “negative” and/or aggressive characteristics that the healer must “tame” (Joralemon & Sharon, 1993, p. 169). The energy of this section of the *mesa* is vital to the healer’s spiritual success, for here he or she gains the power to neutralize acts of manipulation that may be harming his or her client and return the negativity back to the sender. Too much emphasis on this side of the *mesa*, however, leads one to rely too heavily on personal will, leading to the temptation to exert one’s power over other people, a practice known as “sorcery” (Wilcox, 1999). The far right side of the *mesa* is known as the “Field of the Divine.”¹³ This section is said to be the place where things are brought into alignment according to the will of Spirit. Working in this field, the healer abandons personal agenda and allows the spirit world to take control of the situation. An individual who focuses too much on this side of the *mesa* may have trouble fulfilling his or her responsibilities of daily living. The center of the *mesa* is what is called “Field of the Middle,” and is where the two energies—divine will and personal will—meet and where the most powerful transformations take place.

Amongst these complementary positions, it is emphasized that this “third thing” was there all along, “exist[ing] from the beginning, but latent, that is, unconscious” (Jung, 1966, Volume 12, paragraph 104n). Out of the tensions created by their *tinkuy* exchange comes, “a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation.” This third thing is thus freed, revealing “the synthesis of a new unity” (Jung, 1966, Volume 8, paragraph 189). When discussing the dynamics of *yanantin*, my research participants likewise acknowledged that the union between the pair is not created so much as it is revealed.

One of them told me:

The other thing that we are taught is that your *yanantin*, your love, is not just suddenly going to be born. Somewhere he or she is alive right now. He already exists. It’s not like he or she is going to exist one day. Your *yanantin* is already here. The soul is already here, in preparation for you as you are in preparation for him. That person is also on a journey, in a preparation to arrive to that level of absolute purity and essence. Just like you. So, you never live life as if he is yet to arrive. He is always here and will always be here. Maybe you cannot connect with him physically just yet, or maybe you are already connected physically, but what you should start connecting with is the soul. Start with a

soul-level relationship ... From the moment you are born into this human body, you walk this path with your *yanantin* already. ... You already have a *yanantin*, right from the beginning. (Webb, 2012, p. 147)

When teaching workshops in which I incorporate these ideas, I focus specifically on creating a context in which this “third thing” might reveal itself within participants’ work and relationships. This is challenging, for it is not easy to see how things that have no recognizable connection with one another could enter into mutual relationship in such a way. But exciting revelations do occur. For example, an environmental activist once commented that the insight that she had had during the workshop was that she would likely never be able to convince the other side to see things the way that her side saw them. There could be no conversion. Instead, she would now begin to consider what third option there might be to bring the goals of the two sides together in some way that supported them both.

Conclusion

Jung (1956) wrote that, “[the opposites] ought, in their harmonious alteration, to give life a rhythm, but it seems to require a high degree of art to achieve such a rhythm” (p. 59). In reflecting upon my work in Peru and the work of such minds as Jung and Hegel, it seems to me that these are systems that have, each on their own way, developed or revealed a kind of “art” for navigating the tension of opposites ... if not always with *ease* then at least with *elegance*. Whether this confrontation takes place in our work, within the context of our research, in our personal lives, between ourselves and those with whom we share space on the planet—an important question to ask ourselves is: What “high art” can we create in order to help us dance with the tension of opposites, leading us to the third possibility that has been with us all along?

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Footnotes

1.- For the purposes of this article, an "ontological system" refers to any highly developed, organized system of shared meanings (beliefs, philosophies, etc.) through which a culture comes to understand the nature of reality and, in particular, the role of the individual within that greater reality. Thus defined, an ontological system provides the basis for how members of a culture-sharing group relate to the world around them—for example, what moral codes inform their interactions with both human and non-human entities, what epistemological practices are considered valid forms of "knowing," the ways in which such knowledge should be acted upon, and so on.

2.- Within anthropological and philosophical circles there has been and continues to be much discussion over the nature of binary opposition—its forms and functions as well as its origins and development. Some anthropologists have argued that binary opposition is the most fundamental category through which the human mind organizes itself, and that the frequency with which this form of classification arises within and across cultures is evidence that "bipartization," or the impulse to conceive of the world as split into "twos," is hardwired into the human psyche. On the other side of this debate are those who dispute the belief that binary classification has its basis in the mind. They instead propose that the human tendency to think in "twos" is rooted in the environment. Others suggest that binary opposition is merely the simplest form of classification, which accounts for its widespread appearance in human thought processes. Still others have suggested that binary classifications do not arise naturally, but may be prefabricated by the anthropologist-as-observer in an attempt to create meaning and order out of disparate cultural traits. With this debate in mind, my research was based on the tentative assumptions that, (1) no matter what the ontogenesis of dualistic or "binary" thinking, no matter whether or not duality is truly the most "accurate" of all forms of categorization, human beings *do* have the tendency to organize their world into contrasting pairs of "twos," making it our primary organizing tool, and that, (2) given this "preoccupation with polarity" much of human consciousness is

devoted to trying to understand and mediate the relationship of the opposites, both on spiritual and social spheres.

3.- However, most religious systems are not as “black and white” as this implies. Stoyanov splits religious systems into categories based upon the extent to which (and the *ways* in which) this opposition manifests. For example, within systems that exemplify an *absolute dualism*, the antithetical relationship of the opposites is, as the term implies, absolute, in that the opposing forces representing good and evil are believed to have originated from two independent, co-eternal principles that always have been and always will be separate. In contrast, other systems subscribe to a kind of *moderate dualism* in which one of the two opposites—typically the “evil” side of the equation—is considered to be a secondary principle; one that has its origins in the primary and more supreme principle. Despite these ontological differences, philosophies of *absolute dualism* and *moderate dualism* both share the fundamental belief that the aspect considered to be “negative” or “evil” should be rejected and/or destroyed.

4.- As with the “antagonistic” models (see above footnote), complementary worldviews can also be separated in two various “categories” that reflect the degrees to which—and the ways in which—this particular ontological model is present within a culture.

5.- This categorization is considered particularly true of individuals living the traditional or pre-Conquest lifestyles of this region, who engage in what Dover describes as “a set of [philosophical] mechanisms which together engender a uniquely Andean perspective” (pp. 7-8).

6.- While a complete overview of the historical rhythms of complementary dualism in the Andean world is beyond the scope of this essay, the 1532 invasion of the Spanish was justified, in part as the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church’s “holy mission” to rescue the indigenous population from idolatrous beliefs and practices. As Harrison puts it, “words rivaled swords as an instrument of conquest in the Americas.” While the Inca empire had adjusted—but not radically altered—the earlier Andean philosophical models, the Spanish sought to remake the Andean worldview in accordance with vastly different European standards of judgment about how the universe worked.

“[T]he experiences of the conquered under Spanish rule were radically different from those under Inca rule. . . . The Incas struggled to impose their vision of the world on those whom they vanquished. Yet, that vision was one that conquered peoples could make sense of. The Spanish invasion imposed alien economic, political, religious, and conceptual structures on Andean society.”

Three centuries later, despite independence from Spain, the continued infiltration of Western economic practices such as wage labor and market integration continued to cause unprecedented changes in basic social and economic relations in even the most remote regions of the country.

7.- Although the terms “shaman” and “shamanism” are useful when referring to indigenous healers and ritual specialists as a cross-cultural whole, within the context of this article, I have tried to use local terms—for example, *paqo* for the shamans of the highland Andes, *curandero(a)* when referring to practitioners of the north coastal region, and/or whatever terminology the participants use to describe themselves. Many of the participants with whom I worked, however, do refer to themselves as “shaman.” I therefore use this term to refer to them in the context of their social-spiritual work.

8.- My primary research participant in this study was Amado Quispe, a young indigenous man who at an early age had been initiated into the indigenous spiritual teachings by his grandfather, a renowned *paqo*. During my first fieldwork trip, Amado introduced me to Juan Luis, another young shaman who became my second primary participant. My research also included six other Andean participants—four men and two women, ages 50-65. Three of these six were also considered “shamans,” while the other three participants

were university scholars who had an academic interest in complementary dualism as a cornerstone of Andean philosophy. Each of the research participants for this study were chosen as participants based on having demonstrated an ability to think both reflectively and critically about their experience of the phenomenon of *yanantin*, with the shamans speaking more experientially and the intellectuals regarding it in a way that was more broad and observational.

9.- By “contradiction,” Hegel does not mean that which is *logically* contradictory—for example, a statement such as “This object is a lamp and a crocodile.” Rather, a “contradiction” involves two things that are related, but that have been separated in order to create a seeming opposition.

10.- These are not the terms that Hegel himself used in explaining his system (although he did use them once in his preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, he did so somewhat disparagingly); nor did he demonstrate the dialectic in quite this simplified a manner. However, the model presented here gives a general, user-friendly way to understand Hegel’s philosophy.

11.- For Hegel, this “third thing” was the missing piece of Kant’s incomplete skepticism, for it was the synthesis of *becoming* it unites the estranged elements of *thought* and *being* and in doing so relieves the incongruence between them. Thus, one can achieve true knowledge.

12.- Other names for the left side include “Field of Personal Gain,” “Field of Domination” and “Field of the Sly Dealer”.

13.- The right side of the mesa is also called “Field of Divine Justice,” “Curing Bank,” and “Heavenly Bank”.

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