

Divergent Identification: Contemplation of Relationship with a Wild Twin

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Author Note

This paper contains reflections on a prompt paraphrased from our online course platform:

- *Describe your Wild Twin. What experiences have shaped them? What do they long for?*
- *Describe your process building relationship with them and practices that are emerging.*
- *Are ideas around a ritual or ceremony involving your Wild Twin emerging?*
- *How might this process connect to your solo time this May?*
- *Please also include a photo of the altar or ceremonial space.*
- *Did any of the following influence you or get you thinking about this assignment?*

Ottey, Shaw, Schrei, Grimes, Hine

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My shadow self is a *berserkr*, a *heiðinn*, a *seiðmaðr*. They live in raw, wild, natural, connected, and profound relationship in every realm. After *ensku kristnir* (English Christians) transitioned focus on abusive and domineering practices away from their own marginalized neighbors, and before they were adventurous enough to wreck havoc on racialized populations, they focused their ire on *heiðnir menn* (heath-keepers). Those who did not submit to normality were ruthlessly slain; erasure was the cost of maintaining connection with the land, the creatures, and the gods of their ancestors. Even old songs were appropriated for disseminating Christian ideology (see Appendix B), supplanting local ecologies in relationship with natural contexts to focus entirely on patriarchy and its domination narrative (compare with Appendix C).

Urðarbrunnr (the well of wyrd), tended by *nornir* (Norns, giantess maidens sometimes interpreted as sisters working with the past, the present, and the possible) is where fates of all the realms are twined. *Mímisbrunnr* (the well of wisdom), also at the base of *Yggdrasill* (the great cosmic tree which holds *Níu Heimar*, the nine realms), demands a sacrifice from those in search of knowledge. *Alföðr* (the father of all, *Óðinn*) visits both during his own acquisition of power, establishing an archetypal hero's journey in examples describing many different quests for learning and profit. He also journeys along the third main root of *Yggdrasill* into *Hel* (both the name of the hidden underworld realm and its master, *Loki*'s daughter) in order to plea for the return of his most beloved son *Baldr*.

In stark opposition to contemporary notions of manliness, despite leading warrior-shamans (*berserkr*, *úlfheðnar*, *jöfurr*) into battle and hosting feasts for brave heroes who have fallen at *Valhal* (Valhalla) along with his way of tending to everything about him (regularly

communicating and communing with ravens, wolves, bears, or other totemic beings), his most enduring sacrifice was of himself. Hanging from a spear, pinning himself to a tree upside down for nine nights without aid, he earned the knowledge of *seiðr* (sorcery), and *galdr* (incantation), *argr* (unmanly) practices punishable via outlawry or duels culminating in death (McCoy, 2012). This questioning of his authority even came from other gods, resulting in widespread derision of his practice in feminine arts and the resulting *ergi* (unmanliness) of the one-eyed Óðinn.

I've mused over autistic meltdowns as similar to transcendent rage embodied by human-animal relationship ascribed to the *berserkr*. It is noted as inspired, in part, by henbane in various sources focused on battle applications in viking society. Similarly, an autistic shutdown into catatonic awareness resembles mugwort guiding a *seiðmaðr* into shadow realms, evoking vibrant dreamscapes representing various facets of relationship with the magical. A more generalized *heiðinn* approach might utilize these plants in ways prescribed by advisors with more experience working in heroic dosing. This would allow for integration of specialized views and emphasizes widespread relationship with the numinous through various human-nature connections:

Óðr is a force that causes people to create or perform any of the arts; to pronounce a prophecy; to enter an ecstatic trance, as in shamanism; to produce scholarly works; to enter into the battlefield frenzy that was the hallmark of Odin's elite warriors [...]; or to become possessed or go mad.

(McCoy, n.d.)

Alternatively, drumming and/or breathwork inspired trance states might also be used to access numinous connection. With this broad conceptual application as compared to lived experience, non-ordinary states of consciousness stands out as an obvious and enduring through-line.

As I labor toward successful egress from the liminal space represented in my story arc by exposure to cohort based experiential education, I lean ever closer toward ancestral rites and observation of *berserkr*, *heiðinn*, and *seiðmaðr* theory and praxis. With themes of severance, threshold, and incorporation (Perluss, 2013) present as constant companions throughout my adult life, it has been no wonder to see them prominently displayed in our curriculum. I held many different hopes and dreams when I entered this space, so narrowing that field of awareness to the ever-elusive witness of my emerging truths has become self protection even as it was described as chosen isolation from people lacking in concurrent effort applied toward honoring difference. It is the mentorship, experienced witness, the potential for deep dives which led me to this place. It is escape from the empire of normality, even in minuscule ways, that increasingly drives my eagerly anticipated departure. My altar holds these prayers, and much more (see Appendix A).

Along with the acquisition of psychotherapeutic language, semantically rich maps of somatic experience have come alive. I've also seen enough in literature review to trust that spontaneous trait transfer is nearly unavoidable (despite my own skill in doing so), so I enter an age of authentically autistically queering nearsighted binaries held by prevailing paradigms in ways that are firmly rooted in ancestral wisdom, natural relations, runes, and *fjölkyngi* (magic).

Profoundly deep focus in monotropism flowers into generalizable pattern matching at scales only rarely trusted without supporting documentation. When one perceives things beyond the capacity that most report as possible they walk Occam's razor constantly; pruning valuable data to allow others access to digestible bits, while continuing to see several steps ahead and facing the ever present burden of recalculating that massive equation on the fly in real time. I have outsourced inquiry to ancestral guidance. The runes, gods, and giants lead my way.

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Appendix A
Heiðins Altari (A Heathen's Altar)



Appendix B**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (Verse 3)**

*Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!*

Sung to the tune *In Dulci Jubilo*, originally a rhythmic, energetic folk dance (Anonymous, 1400).

Appendix C**Hávamál (Words of the High One, Stanza 164)**

*Now the words of the One-Eyed
are heard in Ódin's hall,
for the benefit of humans,
for the harm of giants;
health to you who speak them,
health to you who know them,
profit to you who learn them,
health to you who hear them.*

An Old Norse poem from the *Poetic Edda*, originally composed circa 900 AD (Crawford, 2019).