

The Divine Magic of Fiction*

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Over the course of my studies at Vermont College, I have become aware of the magical healing qualities inherent in fiction. In this essay I will discuss the interplay of my creative process and my spiritual evolution; the magic in my novel-in-progress; and my notions that both the reading and writing of fiction can not only foster the melioration of spiritual evolution in individuals, but that all of humankind and the universe at large can benefit from the positive energetic shifts fiction creates.

I began *Miranda's Garden* not long after I first discovered a writer lived within me, approximately seven years before coming to Vermont College. The idea first came to me one day as I stared out my kitchen window, mechanically swabbing dishes with a soapy rag. It came like a flash, a quick gift bestowed from someone or something outside myself. Not a picture, but a knowing of some kind that the story would be about a woman with amnesia and that the piece would be novel-length.

Being so new to fiction writing (I had taken my first creative writing class about a year before), I was unaware of my own creative process and didn't realize that character development takes time. I began to concoct characters, their names and physical attributes, and situations that seemed interesting to me, trying to keep in mind the writing basics I had picked up in a few creative writing classes and workshops I had attended. I was going about writing in a way that I would later come to think of as writing from the outside in. Those characters, which I wouldn't

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realize until much later, were mere cardboard figures, flat cut-outs that had no life, couldn't move, breath, speak, and feel the way fully developed characters do.

I scoured phone books for characters' names, researched amnesia at the library, and talked to professionals who could give me facts I believed would make my novel more believable.

During this process, I developed flu-like symptoms that had come and gone in the past but now were so persistent and acute that it became difficult for me to function in any kind of productive way. I spent much of my time in bed or lying on the couch. While the symptoms continued, so did my desire to force my way into the novel. I was driven. I remained faithful to my clunky process of getting scenes on paper and giving my characters breath. I also remained faithful to gaining an understanding about what was behind my illness. Not only did I forage books at the library for the factual information I believed would make my novel more real, I also read about my condition (a diagnosis was finally made by a doctor—one of many who I saw, who ran tests to understand the basis for my symptoms). Every book I read, every page I turned, showed me a word that made it clear there was something brewing within me: my symptoms were *psychosomatic*.

No longer able or willing to live life as a sick person, I started therapy. This would not be the first time; I had attempted before to quell the vague feeling that something was wrong with me. While I wasn't aware at the onset, this therapeutic experience would be different than the previous ones. It would not be about my present and what I could differently to be more functional. It would be about my past. It would be about the truth. It would be about finally getting to the root of the

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thing that had grown inside me and affected me in ways I had no capacity for understanding at the time.

As I continued my therapy, I underwent extreme emotional upheaval. I found myself entering a darkness I felt sure at times would swallow me up. I felt as if I were standing on the edge of a jagged precipice as I wobbled to maintain my balance and that at any moment I could fall and never return, leaving my three small kids (then 5, 2, and 5 months) motherless. Much of the time, life was overwhelming as I experienced the daily rigors of mothering, and tried to comprehend and manage what was happening to my mind (I believed I was going insane) and my body (I was still plagued with intermittent bouts of illness).

I persisted in trying to penetrate the novel. In fact, it was as though I was compelled by some force to continue; I could not stop scribbling down ideas, images, and dialogue on any semi-blank piece of paper that was within arm's reach. As I persevered both my own personal darkness and my awkward attempts to begin the novel, something interesting, something magical, began to occur. A symbiotic relationship between my psyche and my writing began to develop. As I delved into the darkness of my past and made a commitment to understand myself on a deeper level, I was feeding my fiction writing by unlocking long-forgotten doors to my creative mind. At the same time, my fiction writing was unlocking long-forgotten doors to my creative mind. At the same time, my fiction writing was unlocking psychic doors within me, allowing me to realize the understanding I desired. My focus regarding the novel shifted from the bigger picture to a more acute desire to understand the main character. I could see her, I began to feel the essence of her,

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and I began to write from the inside out. And, one day, again while I was doing dishes, I was given the gift of her name: Miranda.

As I became more aware of Miranda and her essence, I would realize that Miranda had been in my night dreams throughout my life. The woman in the novel and the woman in my dreams were one in the same. And they were a part of me. Because of the intimate interplay between my creative process and my personal development, it's not clear to me how or when I first realized what was at the heart of the novel. That is, I don't know whether I took my personal experience and placed it in the novel, bringing out the truth of the novel, or whether the writing of the novel helped me bring my personal truth to the surface. But at some point in this magical, symbiotic give and take between me and my work, I became aware of the fact that the novel was not a story about amnesia due to an injury of the brain, as I had first thought, but it was about repression due to an injury of the spirit, and that injury was sustained through the soul-squelching act of incest.

Upon this realization, my relationship with the novel and with myself deepened. A layer of my psyche had been peeled away, which exposed more complex and intricate pieces of myself. A truth had been told that changed my view of myself, my family, my personal history, and of life. I was left holding a bag of personal and family myths, all of which I stood had dissolved. My self-concept was shattered. If my life as I had known it had been a lie, then so had I.

Although this part of my process was difficult, I would later understand what a rich and fertile time it was for my personal creative growth. As my work progressed, I began to see that I had been given a gift. I had been given the

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opportunity as a grown woman to make a decision to be the person I wanted to be—the person I was born to be. I could re-write my life.

The writing of Miranda's Garden then took on new meaning for me. Miranda was no longer the vague dream-image that had gently nudged my psyche over the years. She was the warrior spirit within me who had endured tremendous emotional, spiritual, and psychic pain but who had remained alive. Her spark had not gone out. Rather than see her fear and what I had once viewed as weakness, I recognized an immense strength and power in her. And I began to understand the importance of embracing my personal darkness.

I withdrew from the University of Oregon (where I was working on a B.A. in English with a concentration in creative writing) knowing that if I were to truthfully tell Miranda's story, I needed to write for myself. I needed quiet so that I could hear Miranda's still small voice. I needed to tell Miranda's story and not let anyone else read the novel until it was finished, or until I was ready. I knew that my own personal growth depended on the truthful telling of Miranda's story, and the truthful telling of Miranda's story depended on my commitment to my personal growth. Miranda and I were partners. We were dual spirit warriors with the same mind, heart, and soul, and we didn't need or want the clamor of an outsider's voice in our heads as continued our journey together.

As I promised to tell her story truthfully, she gave me the tools I needed to further discover what was inside me, uncovering what was essential for the completion of the novel. She showed me the importance of running for exercise. It was through this daily physical exertion that I was able to begin dislodging the

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toxins in my body created by the abuse. She reminded me of my love for gardening when I was a girl, the thing that would keep me grounded when the past returned in unpredictable but inevitable waves. She showed me the psychic world I knew as a girl, the sparkle inside me, and the images I would use in the novel but wouldn't understand until several years later. As I confronted my past and clarified my life, the texture of the novel deepened and progressed as did the quality of my life. I understood my relationship with Miranda to be a kind of psychological magic; she was a part of me I had separated from myself until I was strong enough to bear the pain of remembering. The same part of me that knew it was best to go into hiding years before, is the part that brought me to writing and to the truth about my life. I knew a force was at work, guiding me on my path, and this part that I was learning to trust would eventually show me how to create spiritual magic in my daily living and how to render the story on the page as it was in my mind and heart.

Two years later, the novel still unfinished, I began my studies at Vermont College. It was my intention to finish the first draft of the novel during my first semester. I accomplished this with the realization that there was still much work to be done before the novel was truly finished. At the time, though, I couldn't say exactly what. I would later understand that further spiritual growth on my part was necessary. The intrinsic magical elements of the novel—the true essence of the novel—that had not surfaced, but that I felt in my body, couldn't manifest in the novel because they had not manifested themselves in my life as yet. I had learned what the novel was about but still had not been able to let the story's rich texture

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surface. I decided to put the novel away for a year, and I began to focus on my spiritual growth.

I knew that magic was at work in Miranda's Garden on various levels, but I didn't talk about the magic as I do now. I did, however, test the people around me. I told some about how I was magically given Miranda's name, only to discover two years later when studying Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, that the name Miranda is derived from the Latin *mirar*, which means "to wonder." Considering the fact that the entire premise of my novel evolved to be Miranda's wondering about her life, and about her "waking up" to the truth about it, and that I sensed an incestuous undercurrent in *The Tempest* and would later find that my ideas were shared by others, was a signal to me that I was on to something. As an ex-writing teacher said to me: "The writing gods put Miranda's name there for you."

His comment amused me at the time, but over the years, through experiencing the ebbs and flows of my creative and spiritual processes, I have come to take his comment quite literally. I now interpret my creative process as a spiritual process. When I write, I believe a kind of divine intervention occurs. I am tapping into a source that is greater than me but that is of me at the same time.

In *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece: A Collection of Pre-Hellenic Myths*, Charlene Spretnak describes the divine as the "creativity in the universe, or ultimate mystery—the self-organizing dynamics through which trillions of micro-events are manifested each moment throughout the entire cosmos, including our bodies" (xii). It is these self-organizing dynamics, or the magical synchronicity of the universe, that were present at the conception and in the later stages of writing Miranda's

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Garden. It is the perpetual movement and lining up of infinite energies that led me to writing, which led me to my truth, and which encouraged the cooperative interchange between my creative and spiritual work.

Besides the magic that opened my mind to the truth about my life, I began to notice more subtle magical incidents during the conception of the novel and the early character development, such as the naming of Aunt Minna—a name I had never heard and believed I made up. What a surprise it was to me, while studying Virginia Woolf (and experiencing the most profound spiritual connection I've ever had with a writer), to find that she had an Aunt Minna. And that Virginia Woolf shares a birthday with my grandmother, one of my perpetrators.

Or the naming of Miranda's best friend, Mary Ann Tibbett. Again, a concoction—a strange jumble of names and letters of names belonging to people I had known as a girl. But interestingly enough, while I was doing research about Southern Colorado (where part of my novel is set), I was told about a woman who had done a great deal of historical research on the area. Her name: Anna Tibbets.

Or about the day after writing the scene where three-year-old Miranda pokes her fingers in and out of a still warm pumpkin pie on the kitchen counter only to be yanked off the footstool and manhandled by Aunt Minna, I walked into my kitchen and found that my then two-year-old son had probed the pumpkin pie sitting on my kitchen counter with his small fingers.

These occurrences, just to name a few, told me that I had found a pocket of the self-organizing dynamics Spretnak wrote about and that the energies present

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within that pocket would give me what I needed to create the fully-textured, rich novel I carried within me.

While writing the first draft of *Miranda's Garden* I also became aware of the magic of the collective unconscious and its availability to me as a writer. In some of the earlier writing, images of a spiral as the moving, energetic force of life came to me. During this same phase in the writing, another character materialized: Her name is Spring, and she is well-versed in the ways of the wise woman tradition. At that point in my life, I had no conscious knowledge of witchcraft or of utilizing magic daily, but I wrote of the force and of the spiral shape I saw in my mind's eye. I allowed Spring's character to develop, only to find a few years later while undertaking a study at Vermont College regarding spiritual healing through herbs and ritual, that the spiral is the symbol for life and transformation in the wise woman tradition.

Given my newfound awareness of the synchronicity, or magic, the universe offers us, I developed a strong desire to learn more about ways to bring magic and spirituality into my daily life. I began to work with tarot and astrology, herbs, ritual, and past life experiences, and I began to sense a rhythm in my life. Perhaps the most relevant shift in my thinking at this time was my recognition of the importance of a feminine deity—the power of The Goddess and the intrinsic feminine qualities in nature.

As I focused more intently on my spiritual life, I became more aware of my need to be outdoors. Because of Miranda's desire to plant and tend a garden, my own interest in gardening and the healing powers inherent in plants and in working

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with the earth increased. I read books about gardening and plants which led me to see the cycles and the multitude of patterns present in nature and in the universe. My vision of universal dynamics shifted, and I began to view life on energetic terms.

I became more sensitive to the energetic and vibrational qualities of all living things as well as the vibrations of entities that reside in the ethers around us. I began to view every exchange I had with another person as an energetic event. I began to practice reshaping the energy that moved between us if the experience was a negative one, and it was an exciting discovery to find that I could reshape my energetic environment. I began to imagine visually what might be occurring. I saw ripples of energy leaving my body and spreading out into the universe touching on other people, changing their life with a new ingredient in their energetic mix, and I saw ripples of energy coming into my life, doing the same.

In his book, *The Philosophy of Astrology*, Manly Palmer Hall speaks to this concept when he writes of the celestial and alchemical dynamics of the universe. His first says that “the pattern produced by connecting the planets is the symbol of the world at the moment of the birth of an individual” (73). This image can serve as a solid basis from which to view our understanding to ourselves in the overall scheme of things. This pattern or symbol which can be given shape by way of an individual’s personal astrological chart, is a map of that person’s soul.

Hall points out that our likeness to the universe when he writes that “the Sun, like the heart, pumps its energies through the great body of its planetary system. [and] . . . the pole of the Earth binds together its three parts in the same way that the spinal column in the human body supports the human economy” (32). He again

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demonstrates this likeness when he writes, “The Earth is an embryo sun, a world as yet unborn. It is bound to the Sun or our solar system by etheric cords which correspond to the umbilical cord of the unborn child...” (31). We are all energetic perpetually moving parts of the whole. We are the microcosms of the macrocosm. We are all comprised of the same elements as the stars and the planets. All living things are comprised of moving ions of various vibrational qualities.

Perhaps Paracelsus, who Hall cites in his book, says it best: “For every star in the heavens, there is a star in the Earth, and for every planet in space, there is a planet within the body of man.’ . . .The Universe is a great sequence of similars decreasing in magnitude as we descend the orders of life” (33).

Hall also writes of the perpetual, cyclic energies present in the cosmos when he says “...rain falling from the sky is absorbed by the earth [and] absorbs these energies and later releases them in the form of living things” (15) and that “the flowers in the fields, the birds in the trees, and man himself with all his complex structure, are forms of energy rising up from and through matter toward their own source—the stars in space” (16). I love the idea of earthly life forms reaching up to the heavens as if wanting to return to their beginning.

Viewing human existence in this way enables one to understand and tune in to the harmonic resonance that perpetually surrounds us, the alchemical interplay between humans and all else. As Hall says, “Each of these radiant centers [stars] emits a different quality of vibratory light. . . each is a kind of alchemical formula” (27).

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As I pondered this idea of energetic shape-shifting, I thought about ways in which we can reshape our personal and universal energies. Every move we make send out oscillations in the universe and contributes to the collective energies that spread through the ethers to other people, to nature, and out to the celestial atmosphere where the planets and stars reside. We are all on a continuum of movement that perpetually passes into us, effects us, is reshaped by our reaction to it, and is sent back out into the world to create another kind of energy, which will be returned to us in another form at some point in the future. Floating and swirling around us is constant energy belonging to entities outside our bodies, which influence us and invoke our responses and actions.

The number of ways this occurs is probably as great as the number of stars in the heavens. Whether we whisper or shout, whether we run or walk, whether we hug someone or hit them, will create different shapes and qualities of energetic movement within our bodies as well as in our personal and collective environments.

The task for all individuals, then, and maybe more particularly for mystics and creative people is that we learn to separate our personal energies from the impersonal energies of others and the universe at large, to filter the essential from the non-essential, so that we are able to speak the truth through our work.

As a writer, I can create energetic movement in others by telling stories, and especially by telling stories truthfully. Because the truth is oftentimes difficult to hear, I can invoke anger in others. I can invoke tears and laughter. I can dislodge emotions in my readers and create more energetic movement in the universe. As

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Daniel L. O'Keefe says in *Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic*, emotion "alters the world by altering our perception of it" (31).

When I write a story, I create a dream in that my readers become involved, and it is in our dreams that we make sense of our reality, which leads to catharsis. In his essay entitled "Orestes: Myth and Dream as Catharsis" found in *Myths, Dreams, and Religion*, edited by Joseph Campbell, David L. Miller says, "a dream... is a magic mirror" (32). The act of reading fiction and experiencing the drama therein can supply the reader with "clues from [her] present life so that [her] present life will be working toward the future fulfillment of the meaning of [her] dreams" (32). When a person is actively involved in the interchange of her waking and dreaming life, when she sees the signs that clarify her experience of living, she experiences catharsis. As Miller says, "...on the Freudian model, catharsis is the recollection. . . of past history as present meaning. And on the Jungian model, catharsis is the vision of completion, the experience of unification, and in short, transformation" (33). Regardless of which theory we identify with, the catharsis created by experiencing the dream creates energetic and chemical shifts within the individual. Because fiction creates a dream and our dreams lead us to catharsis, the drama of fiction can also create internal transmutations of energies in individuals by serving as a mirror to the reader's life. Miller says, "the drama is not a mirror reflection [the reader's] tragic situation and clarifying it; at least it is not this only. It is a magic mirror, which teases and tricks [the reader] into future possibilities. It gives realistic visions of justice, of joy, or transformation, which will unify with [the reader's] own present life to complete it meaningfully" (37).

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I believe the drama of fiction can trick the mind into thinking of future possibilities and thus lead to catharsis more readily, or more completely, than visual drama such as television, films, and plays because the reader's imagination is engaged. I view our imagination not as part of our mental, cognitive process, but as an aspect of our souls. Our imagination is a piece of our soul. Our imagination is that small child who is in awe of life, who can see the magic around her, who can hear the voices in the ethers, and feel the power of the plants in her back yard. She is innocent and pure, and it is her innocence and purity that allows her to know all and to fully understand the synergistic flux of the universe, which, in turn, allows her to grasp the meaning of life.

We can view a visual drama—television, film, or play—and be given new perspectives from which to see life. New thoughts can be sparked, senses and emotions can be evoked, we can be made to feel, but the important ingredient is missing: our imagination. We can see the director's imagination, his or her version of an image or situation and be deeply moved and affected by it, but it isn't our view. It is given to us.

In fiction, visuals are described in narrative and any two people reading the same description may see something entirely different depending on our upbringing, where we've lived throughout our lives, and their personal experiences. When reading fiction, we must engage our imaginations more fully. We must go deeper into ourselves to participate in the dream. We see, but not in the same way we see when we view someone else's work. When we read fiction, we see with our heart's eye through our imagination. We see with a part of our soul.

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Fiction can awaken our imaginations and our souls, unlock our creative and psychic doors, let us breath deeper and can save our lives. By simultaneously creating emotion and touching the imagination, fiction can shake loose static energy within a reader and open doors, which can create life-changing spiritual awakenings. Though not exclusively, I believe this is especially true and important to the further spiritual evolution of women, and in turn, to our evolution as a species.

The telling of women's stories truthfully to dispel the myths that surround our lives—myths about our selves which are created and perpetuated by growing up and living in a patriarchal society or created by childhood trauma such as incest—will create the energetic shifts I have mentioned.

For example, many women have bought into the myth that marriage and motherhood are our tickets to total fulfillment and happiness. Too often women who have made important life choices based on this myth have found themselves suffering from a spiritual deficit years down the road, experiencing emotions they can't name or don't have permission to express. They realize the promises of marriage and motherhood have left them isolated, and they realize they have not had the opportunity to become entities unto themselves, and they are angry, resentful, and disheartened. They feel like half-people.

As Carol P. Christ says in *Diving Deep and Surfacing*, "Women often live out unauthentic stories provided by a culture they did not create" (1). Because of this, it is important to tell stories of women's lives truthfully. By telling these stories we can begin to reshape the destructive myths of our childhoods and of our culture, and we

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can begin to live more authentically. We can begin to create lives for ourselves that are reflections of our true selves, and we can form stronger bonds with each other rather than remain isolated.

Christ says she has found through her teachings that when women read fiction and poetry by women in which “their own spiritual struggles [are] . . . depicted . . . Friendships are formed which extend beyond the classroom” (xiii). The truthful telling of women’s stories is essential to women’s spiritual evolution because as Christ says, “If women’s stories are not told, the depth of women’s souls will not be known. Stories give shape to lives” (1). They “provid[e] orientation to life’s flow” (4), and when women remain isolated in their experiences the flow becomes sluggish, can stop and stagnate if not given the fuel to remain active.

As a writer, I can greatly affect a reader’s view of herself and her view of life by writing the truth. I can create a shift in the dynamics surrounding a reader by telling her an honest story with which she can identify, and by doing this, I can begin to change the isolation some women feel.

As Christ says, “when one woman puts her experiences into words, another woman who has kept silent, afraid of what others will think, can find validation. And when the second woman says aloud, ‘Yes, that was my experience, too,’ the first woman loses some of her fear” (23). This experience of realizing a shared feeling or thought with another person creates an energetic shift of awakening because the woman learns she is not alone in her experience. Hearing the true stories of women’s lives creates what Chris calls a “depth dimension.” Life develops a shape

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and texture and offers a multitude of possibilities form, which each woman can pick and choose to create the life her soul seeks.

Because many women have not been given options, they can't articulate what they want because they don't know what other possibilities exist. All they know is that deep in their centers, a part of them is starving, shriveling up. They feel like empty shells because their truth is not being articulated and, as Chris says, "without articulation, the self perishes" (6).

Many women sense they are on the verge of perishing spiritually. They have a vague yearning for an intangible, elusive something, and because they don't know what that something is or can't name it, they often feel helpless and ungrateful for not appreciating the lives they have. This can turn to guilt, which, when combined with their inability to say what they want, can turn to hopelessness, which leads to a feeling of nothingness.

Christ mentions Michael Novak and Stephen Crites' theories about story and religion and says that "every story has a 'sacred' dimension . . . 'because a . . . sense of self and world is created through them . . . Not to have any story to live out is to experience nothingness'" (2-3).

This is where the magic of fiction can have tremendous healing power. By hearing honest stories about other women's lives, women can begin to fill up their nothingness with the real parts of themselves. They can sift through all the ideas and rules they have carried with them all their lives and can decide what belongs to them and what belongs to others. That is, they can begin to separate the personal from the impersonal. They can begin to know they're not alone in their experiences,

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which will lead to their ability to “name the great powers from their own perspectives” (*Diving Deep and Surfacing*, 4). When women can name the great powers within themselves, they can begin to know the divine powers of the universe.

Fiction can be instrumental in bringing about profound changes in people. By reading and writing fiction, we can relive our life situations and transmute the experiences and the emotions from those experiences, much the way talk therapy does. Just as art therapy and music therapy can help individuals uncover hard-to-find emotions, I believe there is a portion of our culture that fiction can serve much the same way. The power of being able to discover the feelings as art and music can do, and then articulate it with words is empowering. The combination of recognizing emotions, finding words to describe them, then using the words to tell a story gives the writer a voice. Finding our voice and speaking truth of our soul is one of the most powerful experiences a human being can experience.

Because of my personal experiences with fiction, my notions regarding life and emotion as energy, and how I view fiction’s role in creating emotion and engaging the imagination (soul) of the reader and writer, it is my desire to develop workshops that focus on writing fiction of which the by-product will be a deeper understanding—or in some cases, a beginning understanding—of the self as experienced by the participants. I envision these workshops in various formats: weekly for a series of several weeks, day-long, or weekend retreats at the coast. My community is prime territory for this kind of creative, therapeutic approach to assist people in enriching their lives.

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My goal is not to turn everyone into a writer, but to help people unlock their emotional and psychic doors, find their inner truth, and to think and live life more creatively. When the creative process, in any form, is a regular part of one's life, those doors remain open and the daily magic, which is available to us all is at our fingertips.

While I envision these workshops with women in mind, I foresee a branching out to incorporate men's experiences and the experiences of adolescents and younger children as well.

Not only can women be healed through fiction, which dispels old myths and reinvents the lives of women, but men and our culture as a whole can be healed as well. By telling women's stories, we will all be given permission to stop playing our given roles and lead lives that reflect our truth. We will naturally make a move toward the more feminine aspects of the universe because when we feel the natural rhythms within us, we are drawn to the rhythms of nature. Because the forces of nature are feminine, we come into contact with the Goddess and through the Goddess, we are further made aware of universal rhythms in the moon's cycles, the magical dying and birthing of which life is made and of the ever-flowing, ever-changing energies of the universe. Through this realization and acknowledgement of the power of the universe, or the divine, humankind will experience a greater sense of personal power. This, in turn, will be given back to the universe positively, creating beneficial energetic waves throughout the cosmos, which will be returned to individuals in like kind. Through this continuous giving and receiving of truthful, spiritual energy, our species will be able to relate on higher, more loving, and

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proficient levels, and our means of communicating will change. By allowing men to experience the feminine and by allowing women to tell the truth about the feminine experience, what's really inside them, we will acquire the balance we are so in need of.

As for my own process and the novel's progress, Miranda and I are still working together. At the onset of this, my culminating semester, I had learned to trust in the powers of the divine in a way that would allow me to, at last, rewrite the novel giving it the depth and texture I have so long sensed, allowing the magic of the story to surface. During this semester, I have been able to move beyond my fear of finishing the novel. Throughout the years I have spent writing the novel and telling Miranda's story, I have developed a deep love for her, and I had seen the completion of the novel as a loss of her. My thinking has shifted, and I no longer fear losing her. I know that by finishing the novel and truthfully telling her story, Miranda will become immortal. She, as well as her power and strength, will always be with me and will forever move through the universe.

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