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Knowing the Unknowable: Visions of Troubled Lands

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Abstract

Keywords

Transrational
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Love; Episteme;
Russo-Ukrainian
War; Ecological
Crisis

This paper describes the author's clairvoyant visions of war and personal experiences of transrational knowledges. It is an account of one Westerner coming to know outside of and despite Western episteme. Transrational knowing was modelled by companion dogs in the author's childhood and literary figures in early adulthood, and was experienced as a means of self-protection. Western culture fosters skepticism about transrational knowledges, such as psychic visions and telepathic connections. This paper asserts that transrational knowing—whether between humans, other species, or humans and other species—is a valid and readily available form of knowing that exists outside of and in spite of Western episteme. Western understanding of the nature of being, the nature of relating, and the capacity for knowing has been reduced by a particular form of material-oriented rationality that is overdue for re-envisioning. Despite pervasive epistemological pressures, some individuals experience and learn to cultivate seemingly alternative ways of knowing. In doing so, they are turning toward knowledges that arise from an illuminating love and, thus, can be subtle, variable, and highly contextual, unlike knowledges that arise from intellect, which tend to be consistent and predictable. The illusory perception that humans are fundamentally separated from each other and from more-than-human kin constitutes one form of fragmentation that has resulted in ecological and humanitarian disasters. Love, on the other hand, engenders links us with others in ways that both relate to and transcend materiality and the five senses.

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Transrational Knowing and Clairvoyant Visions of War

In the early months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, glimpses of the war appeared in my mind. *A mother holds her child's hand as they are made to walk through a smoky street; she knows they have no choice. An adrenalized man running through a building with comrades does not immediately realize the bomb blast behind him will end his life. A woman stands on the threshold of her beloved apartment with only minutes to decide if she will leave it—possibly forever.* These were not scenes relayed by news media and replaying in my mind. Rather, they were original, fleeting, unannounced, and out-of-context. Like scenes from a movie, they played out in vivid detail for a few seconds before vanishing. Unlike a movie, the emotions and thoughts of individuals I witnessed were revealed with seemingly impossible intimacy as I observed from both inside and outside these individuals. These multi-sensory visions arrived in the between spaces, such as between waking and sleep, while driving between this place and that, or in moments of not-doing, those ordinary pauses of daily life.

Here are the details of one vision:

After being tortured—once again—a POW (Russian? Ukrainian?) has been half-thrown back into a dark space functioning like a cell, where he is now sitting and slumped against what may be a dirt wall. The banter and fleeting laughter between the captors is hard-edged. This POW does not expect humanity from them. A second POW shares the space, but he is in worse shape, no longer able to sit up, groaning, and incapable of communication. The first POW has no intention of making a connection with him. With the captors guarding the door and more captors stationed beyond, the POW also has little thought of escape. Instead, his thoughts turn to his own death, which he feels will be imminent and inevitable. Fear and physical pain are present, but his primary focus is aloneness and regret: He has a mother and a sister left behind and seemingly far away, unaware of his condition. He thinks of them now, in this moment, wishing he could go to them, see them again, wishing he could tell them he loves them. He suffers most from feeling alone, far from the ones he loves.

I was at home in Vancouver, Canada, when this scene came to me. I might have been in my bedroom folding laundry—and paused—to observe as the scene came through. Immediately after, I replayed it in memory, studying the parts. In addition to the emotions I felt *with* him (aloneness, regret), I felt many emotions *for* him (frustration, worry, love). Most of all, I wished to express to him that *he was not alone*; I was there with him, sensing, experiencing, and feeling alongside him.

How did I come to witness this and similar war scenes? These visions contain a vividness, a resonance that I have learned to associate with intuitive knowing. Decades of spontaneous perceptions similar to these have shown me that my intuition tends to reflect real-world occurrences. When scenes arrive with a particular crispness, in an out-of-the-blue manner, and during between moments when I'm in a particularly open, uninvested state, more often than not, they appear rooted in real-life events. In these war instances, I believe I am clairvoyantly experiencing actual real-life events in real time. While some readers will deny the veracity of these visions, others might accredit them to unique talents they imagine I possess. In my opinion, both views are problematic and limit ontological and epistemological understandings, as explained below.

In this paper, I assert that this form of extrasensory intuition—this transrational knowing—whether between humans, other species, or humans *and* other species—is a valid and readily available form of knowing that exists outside of and in spite of Western episteme (Radin,

2006). Furthermore, the existence of transrational knowing may point to important clues about the nature of relationality and offer valuable “epistemological stretching” amidst a time of ecological and humanitarian crises (Harmin et al., 2017, p. 1490). In fact, reactions to transrational knowing, including telepathic phenomena, highlight aspects of our Western ontological and epistemological orientations that are overly constrained. That is, Western understanding of *the nature of being, the nature of relating, and the capacity for knowing* has been reduced by a particular form of material-oriented rationality that is overdue for re-envisioning. Part of this re-envisioning means reconceptualizing the nature of human relationships to other humans, to more-than-humans, and to the earth itself, and their relationship to us—a process that will not only explain and allow for more transrational knowing but may also foster greater responsibility.

In essence, the question, “how do I come to witness these war scenes,” leads down a path from information to epistemology, and from epistemology to ontology. Transrational knowing is not constrained by the physical realities of this earthly world as standard science curriculum has explained them. Nor, I assert, is transrational knowing governed by the mechanisms related to human biology, psychology, or even human consciousness; it is, instead, governed by love and the realities of the universe (rather than earthly realities). While this illuminating love has been helpfully interpreted and framed through the lenses of religion, such as Daoism (Lin, 2020), Islam (Khel, 1982), and Christianity (Chardin, 1817), I suggest that these religious traditions are converging upon a reality, and, as such, this reality can also be encountered independent of religion.

This paper describes the author’s personal experience of illuminating love and a selection of the resulting transrational experiences. It is an account of one Westerner coming to know outside of and despite Western episteme. While the pathway between Western science and transrational experiences remains obscured in fog (possibly permanently), I gesture to potential bridges while identifying science’s impediments to comprehending transrational ways of knowing. In writing this paper, I align with Barrett (2013), Harmin et al. (2017), and Yang et al. (2019) in calling for additional ways of knowing. As the world veers into catastrophe—climate crisis, the current threat of nuclear war, and innumerable additional tragedies—our capacity and willingness to *know* and *relate* in more expansive, connected, and lovingly responsible ways may help us find an exit ramp.

Episteme and the Inaccessible Knowledges

Foucault used the Greek term *episteme* “to name the set of conditions which enable something to be known” (Episteme entry, Buchanan, 2018). Some of these conditions include language, power structures, and the societal values imparted through public education. Despite these broader social contexts, personal contexts may enable individuals to “know otherwise” (Mozely & McPhillips, 2019). These personal contexts may relate to ethnicity, family values, personality traits, and relationships with the natural world. These additional ways of knowing might include psychic dreams, precognitions, telepathy, clairvoyance, intuitive interspecies communications, or other transrational ways of knowing.

Western societies, governed by principles of materiality, linearity, and individualism, tend to ignore these transrational knowledges and their potentials. Yet as Dean Radin (2020) clarified, “materialism is a set of assumptions rather than an absolute truth” (p. 85). People who appear to “know” beyond the epistemological boundaries of an era and locale may be seen as mentally and/or emotionally unstable, as prone to “embellishment, wishful thinking, sensory illusions . .

. psychopathology delusion, ignorance, and fraud” (Radin, 2006, pp. 245-6). Even children understand that venturing beyond normative epistemological boundaries—for example, by intuitively communicating with other species—puts them at risk of social exclusion or even ridicule (Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013; Kuchta, 2022).

The sociocultural constraints of episteme are so strong they can even lead to self-repression. Radin (2006) explained that in laboratory tests of psychic intuition, devout skeptics “systematically hit below chance expectation, thus supporting their desire” to avoid acknowledging psychic phenomena (p. 269). In Jeffrey Kripal’s analysis of scientists who have made the “flip” to belief in paranormal phenomena (2019), he insisted an extraordinary firsthand experience with the paranormal was essential in launching people past their rational barriers. He added, “One cannot think or reason or experiment one’s way there” (p. 70). Indeed, I only believe the snapshots of war reflect real-world events because I have repeatedly experienced the veracity of past intuitive knowings (as explained below).

Referencing other researchers, David Vernon (2020) concludes that the evidence is not scientifically problematic; rather, the topic itself is seen as problematic. Indeed, in laboratory settings, psychic experiences, or psi only slightly enhance knowing, yet the chances of these laboratory-controlled incidences resulting from mere coincidence are estimated at 1 in 10^{104} —that is less than one in a googolplex, an unimaginably large number (Radin, 2006). In other words, even by Western scientific standards, it is exceedingly unlikely that all psychic experiences are entirely imaginary. Vernon (2020) explained that psi research is underfunded, held to higher standards than those expected in other psychological fields, and excluded from most scientific journals due to mainstream disinterest in the topic. Thus—in a negative feedback loop—the topic remains out-of-view which further contributes to public dismissal (Vernon, 2020). However, even from mainstream scientific standards, it seems strange to overlook the study of psychic phenomena given the sheer prevalence of Westerners who claim to have experienced it (Knittel & Schetsche, 2012; Newport & Strauss, 2001; Radin, 2022). Outside the somewhat unpopular subfield of parapsychology, psychic knowing is rarely discussed at all. In education, topics such as telepathy and clairvoyance infrequently appear.

What educative possibilities might we miss by this oversight? Academics who study intuitive interspecies communication (IIC) provide some clues. They have recently begun exploring the way IIC can promote human healing (Erikson, 2022), interspecies justice (Barrett et al., 2021), and non-anthropocentric research methodologies (Wijngaarden, 2023). Furthermore, a shift toward transrational knowledges shifts the way we understand ourselves as humans, the stories we tell about ourselves and our relationships, and the philosophies that guide our practices. This shift turns us toward an *experience* of interconnection and the resulting awakening of greater responsibility for and bonding with each other.

Knowing Differently: Learning from Dogs

Particular conditions in my own early life at least partially supported transrational ways of knowing. My childhood family infrequently acknowledged but readily accepted certain forms of psychic awareness, such as between dogs and their human companions:

Our family dog, who adored my father, would wait at the window anticipating his return approximately half an hour before he arrived—even on rare occasions when he arrived hours early. My mother and I witnessed our pug, face to the glass pane, whimpering hours ahead of schedule and then my father unexpectedly arriving home. My parents smiled with amusement as my father ruffled our pug’s ears. ‘He’s very attached to your father,’ my mother would comment.

My father was a realist, an engineer by training, and not at all prone to superstition or wishful thinking. If someone had labeled our dog's behavior as "psychic," he likely would have dismissed it; this wasn't light-headed, make-believe stuff—this was just down to his deep bond with our dog. Because of this context, I understood this intuitive closeness as endearing but not shocking or unbelievable.

Another story about an intuitive dog proved so important that my grandmother wrote about it in her memoir and told my mother, who told me:

A 'much loved' German Shepherd, the companion to a British couple, was brought down to Vancouver and boarded in a kennel while the woman stayed at a hotel for a few nights. Her husband was still packing up their belongings from the Chilcotin region and would join them in a few days. But one night, the normally 'quiet and well-behaved' Shepherd 'caused a great commotion' with nonstop barking at the kennel. Alarmed, the kennel vet phoned the woman in the middle of the night. No one knew at the time (except it seems, the Shepherd), but the woman's husband, who was hundreds of miles away, had been caught outdoors that night in an unexpected cold snap. He was found frozen to death the next day (Buckley, 2018, pp. 102-3). "But how did the dog know?" I remember asking my mother. "I think Jack was just really close to his dog," my mother explained.

The Shepherd came to know about his human companion's life-threatening situation because their mutual love transcended the ordinary senses.

But how? The Shepherd and pug were not operating from a material and individualistic worldview (because, yes, dogs have understandings of the world, too). Instead, they seemed to exist in a world where relationship is primary and love is the element of connection—telepathic or otherwise. Experts from diverse fields have converged on this same discovery. Eben Alexander (2012), a neurosurgeon (and devout rationalist until his own profound transrational experience—a near death experience) asserted,

Love is, without a doubt, the basis of everything . . . This is the reality of realities the incomprehensibly glorious truth of truths that lives and breathes at the core of everything that exists or that ever will exist, and no remotely accurate understanding of who and what we are can be achieved by anyone who does not know it, and embody it all of their actions. (p. 71)

Penelope Smith (2008), one of the world's foremost teachers of intuitive animal communication, tells her human students that telepathic communication is "an inborn capacity of all species, including humans" (p. 15). She explains, "telepathic development is not a matter of developing some new power through mental exercises. It is more a matter of opening up to love" (p. 15). Teilhard de Chardin (1817) put it more simply: "Love is the primal and universal psychic energy" (p. 4). Through a deeply relational view of the world and an intense bond of love, these dogs were seemingly able to know what was otherwise unavailable through rationality and the ordinary senses.

Knowing Differently: Safety and Self-Care

Sensory perception and rationality also constituted an insufficient means of securing my own safety. In brief, due to particular repeated experiences of childhood, I understood myself to be persistently at risk of physical and emotional dangers. Consequently, I deliberately tried to expand my awareness to perceive events, people, and intentions even from a distance of

kilometres or days. *Where is X right now? What is X's mood?* Because of my vulnerability as a child, I was often unsuccessful in securing my safety, but the effort felt instinctual.

After an assault in early adulthood, I was diagnosed with PTSD and spent a year in a constant state of fear. With nothing else to guide me and suffering from severe vulnerability, I turned in earnest to my intuition for direction. Multiple times a day, I tried to expand my awareness to intuit circumstances distant from me in time and space. Intuition was, I felt, the only flashlight I had through that year-long nightmare. For example, I might ask:

Who is on this trail? Is it safe to walk here? A flash of an introverted elderly man crossed my mind. Twenty minutes later, I encountered him, sauntering toward me, absorbed in his thoughts.

Sometimes, I overruled intuition with reason:

Is it safe to pull over and fill up with gas? A nagging worry chewed at me. My heart started to race. But I could see for myself that the gas station was empty. I scolded myself for being paranoid and pulled over. Moments later as I was filling my tank, a truckload of cat-calling men drove up.

My healing resulted, in part, from an increased trust in my own intuition since, over and over, it proved accurate. Verifications occurred every week. If I tried to know, I would know. This kind of protective radar enabled me to choose more selectively what I experienced and avoid unwanted experiences. I experienced this knowledge as readily available as long as I asked. Typically, I placed my hand on my upper chest, a practice that originated from a need for self-comfort, and asked quietly inside myself: *What will tonight be like? Who will be there? What are so-and-so's intentions in wanting to meet me?* Most of these intuitions arrived as a feeling, but I also experienced precognitive dreams and telepathic messages. Importantly, even though the need to know originated from fear and a sense of danger, the ability to know seemed rooted in self-care and self-protection.

Around this time, however, I found another kind of verification of transrational knowing in my college literature classes. Despite cultural differences from myself, the characters of books, such as *House of Spirits* (Allende, 1982), *Love Medicine* (Erdrich, 1984), and *Ceremony* (Silko, 1977) shared many of my transrational experiences, along with some I had never imagined. Like me, those characters also had to learn to manage these intuitive knowings. It seems the function of fiction is often to express unsanctioned phenomena and concepts that the dominant culture has ignored and exiled.

Ultimately, my familial environment, personal intuitive experiences, and literary experiences showed me ways to live in a world where stories, rationality, and transrationalities wove together. The basis of the rational and sensory world, I learned from dogs, is love and relationality. The world cared about me and supported my need to protect myself by allowing me to glimpse near futures. The intuitively inspired characters of novels revealed cultures where rationality and transrationality could weave into each other. These models and experiences helped me navigate beyond the contemporary episteme to know the seemingly unknowable. Over time, I eventually learned to use intuition with less persistence and urgency for more light-hearted, amorous, or humanitarian intentions and to grasp some of the failures, ethics, and pitfalls of transrational knowledge, too (a topic for another paper).

The World as Relationship

Perhaps a primary reason many Westerners respond to hearing about telepathic visions of war as something strange or suspect is due to cultural assumptions about the nature of reality.

If a society orients from the ontological stance that individuality and the fundamental isolation of entities are the essential nature of the universe, the capacity for telepathic knowing seems extraordinary, inexplicable, and unbelievable. The Western ontology of individualism leans heavily on Enlightenment conceptions of rationality and natural law as governed by the known material world. How could someone possibly *cross over* the divide between us and know things without sensory data available to the individual self? However, the individualism ontology is only one option and, it increasingly appears unscientific even by Western scientific definitions. The rapidly evolving field of quantum science reveals that many of science's previous assumptions about time, matter, and energy were incorrect, or at least, incomplete (e.g., Malin, 2012). Furthermore, biological and philosophical studies in posthumanism (e.g., Bolter, 2016) and transhumanism (e.g., Barad, 2015) also highlight the ways Western science's previous assumptions about identity and independence have been inaccurate. These fields highlight the fallacy of separateness from which Western cultures operate.

Here, a clarification of individual versus relational ontology may help. The independent being—whether human, tree, or stone—as conceptualized by Western societies is viewed as an entity or object fundamentally separated from other entities/objects but capable of interactions with others. In contrast, the relational ontology, as I define it, weights it the other way. Although we are unique and autonomous individuals, the apparent separations between us are illusions born of material individualism; the most fundamental nature of existence is that of relating—being in relationship. Chris Laszlo et al. (2021) explained the relational ontology in the context of a quantum worldview: “-Relevant (in the sense of addressing the challenges society faces) worldviews need to draw from both very recent science and very old spiritual and Indigenous conceptions of a world that is complex, emergent, interconnected, inherently relational, dynamic, and entangled” (p. 294). Being in relationship (relating) and sharing understandings are fundamental aspects of existence whereas being primarily isolated and limited to the relationships and sharing our material bodies permit is a cultural illusion. (These sentences falter in articulating relationality since the English language inherently orients toward individualism.)

Consider, for example, that every being in existence evidences a prior relationship. Broadly and in brief, each person is the (secondary) manifestation of a (primary) relationship—however characterized—between a biological mother and father and the long line of ancestors before them. Each person evidences generational relationships to land, water, plants, and animals that have nourished and allowed for the growth of our bodies just as they nourished our ancestors. The beech tree outside of my window evidences human migration and fondness for particular tree species, and it evidences ancestral, arboreal relationships to soil, rain, and wind. A nearby rock evidences the relationship between sediment (including soil, plant, and animal debris) and pressure. We are—all of us, rock, tree, and human—temporary material manifestations of individuation resulting from ongoing entanglements. Our culture has simply chosen not to conceive of relationality as primary and fundamental. And, we have prioritized the material—the physical—above all else, a perspective that inherently limits the possibility of experiencing something beyond the physical. Seen from an ontology of individualism, it is possible for me to work to know someone, to work to understand their experiences by using my brain and senses to overcome our differences and distances. From a relational ontology, I need only shift my focus from the temporary embodied *me* to the more enduring shared space of *(me)we* to perceive, comprehend, and to some extent, *share* the experiences of a being temporarily arranged in the physical form of a human, tree, or stone. From this perspective, telepathic knowings become much more intriguing and their pathways more conceivable.

In fact, growing research in animal psi (*anpsi*) (Erikson, 2011) has begun to evidence precognition in dogs (Sheldrake, 2000) black planarian worms (Alvarez, 2016), and Bengalese finch (Alvarez, 2010) along with telepathy in horses (Erikson et al., 2022). Additionally, other phenomena experienced by more-than-humans, are still unaccounted for by conventional scientific rationale, such as the *Phycomyces blakesleeanus* fungus's inexplicable ability to avoid touching nearby objects; Merlin Sheldrake (2020) noted, "Despite decades of painstaking investigation, the avoidance response remains an enigma" (p. 58). While the fungus's avoidance response may or may not be related to precognition, intuitive interspecies communication, or other transrational ways of knowing, it reminds us we have much yet to learn about epistemological realities. Animal psi studies are still few in number, yet they already hint that psychic ability is not unique to humans—or even to specific individuals within a species. Alluding to the forces of episteme, Penelope Smith (2008) stated, "Since animals are not forced into the idea that words or symbols are the only or ultimate way to communicate, they do not lose their innate telepathic sensitivity and ability as most humans do" (p. 10).

In recent decades, quantum science has begun to illuminate theories and scientific properties that may enable transrational knowing. In *The Self-Aware Universe*, Goswami and Goswami (1993) asserted that "consciousness, not matter, is the ground of all being," and that this understanding can offer the West a new worldview—a much-needed paradigm shift, capable of uniting science and spirituality (p. 2). Goswami (2023) acknowledges "some conflict between quantum physics and the theory of relativity" but theorizes that a domain exists beyond space and time (p. 2). In *Entangled Minds*, Dean Radin's (2006) robust meta-analysis of global psi research explained transrational knowledge (precognition, remote viewing, telepathy) as quantum entanglement within the human mind. The emerging theory of our world as a hologram (Overbye, 2022) of a *realer* world might be used to explain quantum entanglement as well as experiences of a universal totality, material unreality, telepathy, and other seeming impossibilities of transrational knowing (Varan, 2017).

By and large, scientific reasoning is an immense gift to humanity, and yet we must allow contemporary science to stretch to fit reality rather than insisting reality shrink to fit the science. Some of the current values of scientific validity—objectivity, replicability, rationality—may in fact be obstacles to this stretching. How could deep mutual love or genuine threats of danger be brought into the laboratory? Ultimately, science's brain-based approach may limit scientific understanding of transrational knowledge. Science—a valuable tool for learning—could also be a gatekeeper preventing the admission of expansive, relational knowledges. Moreover, this science has originated from an earth-centered perspective, and understandings of beingness, relationship, and knowledge that appear "true" or "real" from Earth, could, in fact, prove to be quirks or outliers in the context of the broader universe.

Relating Through Love (and War)

Although the visions of war I experienced arrived spontaneously at various, unexpected times of the day and over several weeks, a process preceded them; I felt deep care and concern—and *love* for those involved during these early weeks of war when the visions arrived. With this feeling, I leaned out psychically, with curiosity, support, and openness. Recognizing that news media is not always reliable, I asked: *What is the real situation? What are people actually experiencing in Ukraine?* Although I asked the question generally, over the period of weeks, perhaps this is similar to what our family dog did in order to anticipate my father's arrival: *Where is my human right now? What is he doing?* For all the beings—human and animal—that I personally know, love in some form is the central aspect of psychic attunement. This love may

come in the form of care, ardour, compassion, devotion, companionship, etc. The love may, for example, be motherly or rooted in a desire to heal or orient from a sense of protectiveness.

Ancestral love may even play a role here, for I have now learned that all my father's relatives—his uncles and aunts, cousins, and grandfather—were killed or exiled by Russian invaders in the Ukraine during WWII. During that time, many of my ancestors would have experienced the same agony as the Sheperd stuck in a kennel while their loved ones were dying. Divine threads of love may have woven them together, shimmering and illuminating for them some of the seemingly unknowable statuses, locations, and suffering of their loved ones. Perhaps, the echoes of past love and loss make more audible the current tragedies. Perhaps too, the land itself reverberates to call home those who have been exiled or their descendants and enhances transrational knowings of place.

Theoretical physicist David Bohm (1980) asserted that the nature of the universe is a *whole* despite evidence of fragmentation. Bohm asserted that war is one example of fragmentation that occurs when humans are “guided by illusory perception which is shaped by fragmentary thought” (p. 9). The illusory perception that humans are fundamentally separated from each other and from the other inhabitants of earth constitutes one form of fragmentation that has resulted in ecological and humanitarian disasters. Love, on the other hand, makes evident the connections—perhaps forgotten—that existed between us all along. When people define love, they commonly refer to the heart, the centre of emotion. This reference, however, limits the experience of love to those beings who possess a physical heart, thereby disregarding the potential love experiences of sunflowers, stars, starfish, the land itself, or the world as a whole. In reality, love that originates in the human “heart” fumbles as much with love as the physical brain does with knowledge (another topic for another paper).

Here, I'm speaking of the love that is built into the very fabric of existence and, thus, touches everything within the universe. Love of this kind can potentially facilitate the return to wholeness. My own experiences of transrational knowing suggest that love links us to others in ways unconnected to materiality and the senses. But the kind of love I'm speaking of is not rooted in biology or culture and is not limited to humans or even Earth. This kind of love appears largely beyond the scope of contemporary science that homes in on neurobiology and magnetism. The kind of love promoting transrational knowledge prompts us—the Sheperd to his human—me to suffering Ukrainians—to shift into the relational space, which might sound a little like: *You are not alone—I feel with you—I feel (me)we in this experience; you are not abandoned—(me)we share this moment.* If we know this, accept this, we can also see how love is available, even or especially in the worst moments, as a way out of established epistemes, providing knowledge that is unavailable through ordinary, sensory means. Seen from the relational ontology, the question is not “How do I come to know about those suffering in war?” but rather “How could I *not know?*” And now that I feel I do know, I don't need to continue to glimpse at the war. I can continue to feel and emit the love that attaches me to those suffering in war, and hope that love in some way, subtly or concretely, reaches them. This love, this felt connection between us, might guide my own daily actions toward peace, a peace that ripples out into the world in whatever small way.

As we shift from the individual ontology to the relational one, we can acknowledge our connection to the tragedies of war and ecological crisis, renew our responsibility for the tragedies we ultimately share, and, we hope, renew our understanding and response to each other's needs. We can understand that we too have not been alone in our suffering, that other humans and more-than-humans have sensed us, offered psychic support, and even guidance. I

have felt this kind of support many times in my life—from maple, beech, and cedar trees, from stones, deer, dogs, ravens, and other humans. We can recognize that nonhuman entities—elephants, aspens, river microbes, and photons—are likely communicating, supporting, and offering guidance where they can to one another—and perhaps us—as we all transition through this challenging time of Anthropocene.

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