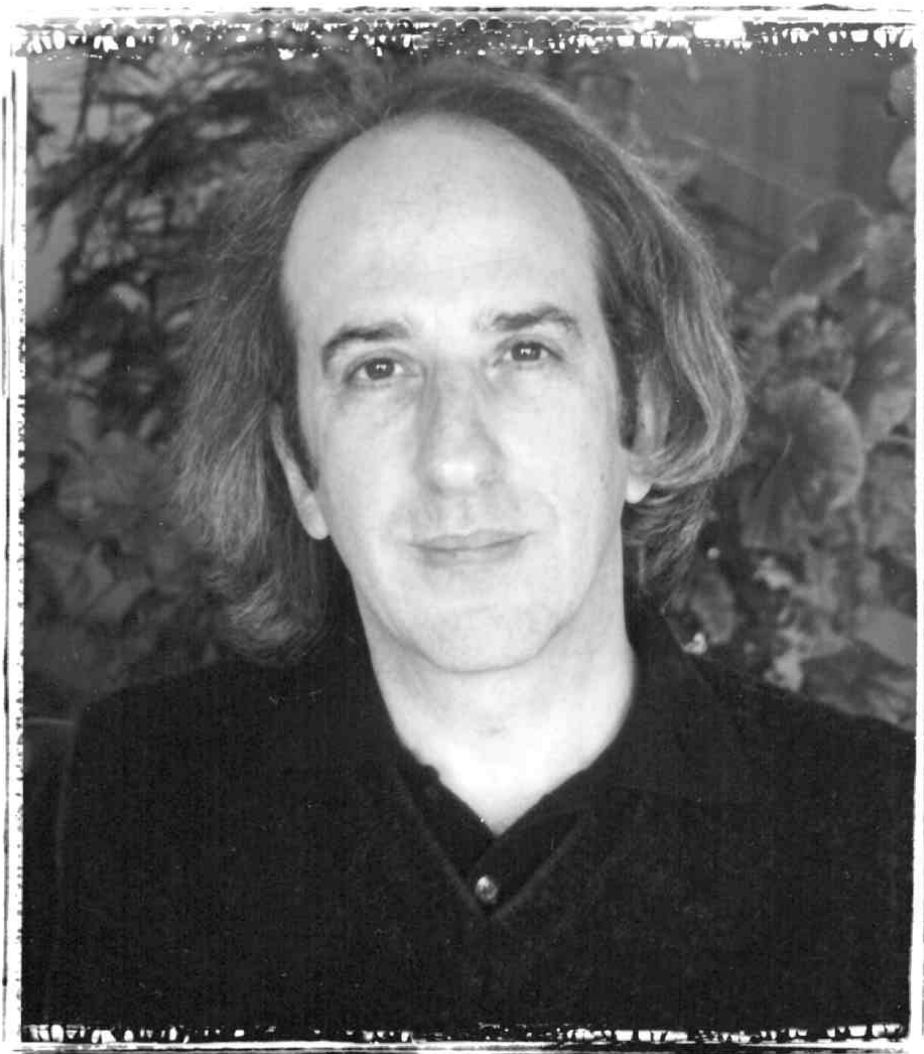




PETER KINGSLEY

and the Discomfort of Wisdom



Jeff Munnis

"What I have to say is in Reality. This is my life's work, I have put everything I am into it. This is it: end of story."

—Peter Kingsley

I first listened to Peter Kingsley speak at the Association for the Study of Dreams Conference in Berkeley in late June 2003. My interest in dreams is personal, not professional, but through my wife's professional relationships and some friends I was given a pass to attend the conference. Unfortunately, the introduction to the keynote address became a monologue, repeating information contained in the conference schedule, so I stopped listening and watched the audience. I did not direct my attention to Dr. Kingsley until the applause following the introduction had faded. He chose to sit in a chair next to a table on the stage rather than stand behind a podium. There was a long silence before Dr. Kingsley spoke, but this was not the result of some technical difficulty, or the fidgeting of a person preparing to speak. He looked at the audience very carefully, his eyes took in the

LEFT: Michael Madzo, *The dream of my life* (2001). Sewn painted paper, 21 x 14 inches.

room and I could feel the strength of his attempt to connect with every one. His first words were measured, carefully spoken, and he left the audience space in his talk for the ideas to settle in. I found the ideas fascinating, but I was equally interested in his delivery and his willingness to present the audience with long periods of silence. Dr. Kingsley's equanimity during the question and answer period made me as curious about him as about his subject. He was not detached, he was engaged, engaged in opening up the audience to the wisdom of Parmenides and Empedocles and he had offered his own experience with dreams as a point of entry.

There was polite applause after the presentation and questions, but I felt a ripple of discomfort underneath the response. Dr. Kingsley, in a very subtle way, had challenged the audience, a large group of psychologists, scholars and dream workers, to engage the subject of dreams very deeply. Perhaps, in a way that called out anyone bluffing their way through the importance of dreams or the value of dream work. The tables had been turned on an audience that was used to preaching the value of their work to the rest of the world, and someone from the rest of the world just walked in and told them how he had integrated dream work and a process called incubation into his life work. I felt very deeply that something significant had happened in the room and it was clear to me afterwards, that only a few people had

understood Dr. Kingsley's challenge. But, as you will read in the interview that follows, there has to be something special going on inside you in order to hear and understand these ideas. You have to be willing to let the words of Empedocles and Parmenides change you before you try to place your meaning in the words.

Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic and *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*, Dr. Kingsley's first two books, were sitting on tables outside the conference meeting room. I purchased both books and picked up a small brochure describing his new book, *Reality*. I read *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*, first, because Dr. Kingsley explained in his talk how he received the first chapter of the book from a dream. Next, I tackled *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic*. Both books are fully annotated and show considerable scholarly research supporting Dr. Kingsley's ideas on how the teachings of Empedocles and Parmenides had been distorted and misunderstood. It started with Plato, along with some misrepresentation by Aristotle and Theophrastus, and a long line of philosophers and scholars perpetuated the charade right down to the present day. The ideas, as well as the implication of those ideas, resonated with me for quite some time as well as stimulating my curiosity about certain details of the books I held in my hands. Oxford University Press in Oxford, England, published *Ancient Philosophy Mystery and Magic*; Golden Sufi Center Publishing, Inverness, California, published *In the Dark Places of Wisdom*. I called Golden Sufi Center to request a pre-publication copy of *Reality* and to arrange an interview with Dr. Kingsley.

interview

Dr. Kingsley's ideas are penetrating on two levels. First, he cuts a wide swath through the scholarship on Empedocles, Parmenides, and the Pythagorean tradition. He upsets commonly held ideas, challenges us to re-examine the role of reasoning and logic that came out of Athens and basically tells us that scholars and philosophers totally missed the point of these early teachings; the same teachings many consider to be the foundation of Western intellectual history. I have looked at some of the reviews of Dr. Kingsley's work and I can sense the uncomfortable understanding that his work rendered unreliable volumes of scholarship on the ancient world of the Mediterranean. Second, in *Reality*, Dr. Kingsley's ideas are presented from a personal perspective that shows his willingness and commitment to listen carefully and allow himself to be transformed by the poetry and teachings of Parmenides and Empedocles. It is also clear that his personal understanding, coming from the inside of both the academic world and from his own mystical experiences, challenges accepted academic standards. I interviewed Dr. Kingsley, equally curious about both topics: the academic and the personal.

We met in Inverness and talked for several hours in a house surrounded by trees, perched on the side of a hill. The very quiet and peaceful setting matched Dr. Kingsley's per-

sonality and mood. Some of the things we talked about reached a little deeper than his presentation at the Dream Conference in Berkeley. I felt fortunate that I could sit down with him and listen to him explain his ideas, ideas that could turn your understanding of the world upside down.

Dr. Kingsley believes we only have an illusion of control in this world and that we go to great lengths to protect our perception of control. One of the reasons he believes dreams are so important is because we usually have no control over them. This idea of control also finds its way into his thoughts on the idea of having control over a spiritual practice: "A real spiritual practice will apply itself to you in ways that you have no idea of." Wisdom is there for us if we are willing to do the work necessary to look and if we are willing to explore our own discomfort and travel into our own dark places.

I started our conversation by saying to Dr. Kingsley that I felt he was a man in transition, perhaps transition from being a scholar to taking on a subject from a personal perspective.

This is something someone asked me last week, actually, two people in the last couple of weeks. I seem to be an academic who is moving into a non-academic field. That, I guess, is the general impres-

sion given by my biography—or at least by what can be gleaned from it . . . but it's not really true.

I found Dr. Kingsley's manner, one on one, to be very close to the manner he embodied at the conference presentation. He paused, and I mentioned that I thought "personal" did not have to mean non-academic.

*Well, I think my work has become more and more non-academic in the last few years in the very particular sense that I don't accept the academic norm of so called "objective" writing. I did that at first, but I threw it out the window in *The Dark Places of Wisdom* and even more so with the new book. You know, there are very specific criteria for writing an academic book or article. You have to maintain some kind of objective tone, an objective distance and not identify with what you are talking about. God forbid! I have a friend in Oxford, an extremely professional scholar, who once warned me that "the worst thing you can possibly do is to identify with the things you are writing about because that leads to insanity." So, this is the modern academic myth—objectivity. It's something that has to be maintained, but is something that is totally an illu-*



sion. So, in that sense I no longer write academically. And I also make fun of scholarship. Not only do I not accept the norms of academia but I actually comment on them and critique them, especially in the latest book (*Reality*). So there are many people in academia who have been up in arms against me, because...well, this is the interesting thing. The first book was, after all, published by Oxford University Press, so they can't simply dismiss it. They also know that I can handle the material either as well as or better than anyone else in the academic world. And this is the tricky thing, especially about the new book. It has extensive endnotes. And those endnotes, as scholars will probably realize, are so right up front in terms of breaking ground academically with regard to the texts of Parmenides and Empedocles—making comments and drawing conclusions that have never been made or drawn before—that anyone who chose to ignore them and pretend they had not been written would be very foolish. I planted these extremely scholarly and academic commentaries at the end of the book, which is totally unacademic. And I did that deliberately, so as to make the situation as unpalatable as possible. I want them to have to read this book. Although I did publish a long academic article to accompany the book, most of the real academic work has gone into the endnotes of the book itself and a lot of scholars are going to want to ignore that material because of what I say in the main part of the book. But they will do so at their peril! So is my work academic? It is, and it isn't. I know that I can stand my ground with any academic who is willing to discuss the material with me. But a lot of academics are not going to want to do this because they know I am going to question their assumptions and that is something scholars themselves are never willing to do. They will question anything else, but they will never question their assumptions.

During the question and answer portion of Dr. Kingsley's talk at the Association for the Study of Dreams conference, members of the audience seemed particularly challenged by the idea that the use of reason had not led to any real progress for civilization. It was in this context that I wanted to continue. I commented that this led me to his ideas on how the use of reasoning has been based on an assumption and not many people go on to question the assumption.

Yes. Absolutely yes. We will question anything except our questions. This is simply an acute form of myopia. I consider myself a true scholar because I will carry things right through to their logical and necessary conclusion. But that takes me into areas that most scholars don't want to go into. Why? Because the evidence doesn't support their work, which is overwhelmingly limited and shaped by their assumptions. This is why I am very happy to stand up in debate with scholars on their own ground and discuss whatever details—however major or minor—they choose to consider.

It became clear to me that the most important aspect of understanding Dr. Kingsley was his willingness to go to places that others were not willing to go. It was at this point

that I realized that this willingness is the most personal component of his work and it was also clear to me he believed it added to the depth of his work rather than detracting from it. I picked up the conversation by saying that now we have something that is more personal in the sense that the subject of *Reality* has become your personal philosophy.

Well, I feel I need to say something here about the idea of my being in transition, because on one level it's true and on another level it's not. I went through a phase of becoming a scholar in the acceptable sense, writing a book that was published by Oxford University Press and publishing a lot of academic articles. But that, for me, was just like what I describe in my newest book: it was actually a whole exercise in cunning. I was simply putting on a garment that didn't belong to me, I had to wear it for a certain period of time and then I had to give it up. In origin I am not a scholar, although I can play the scholarly game as well as anybody else. I am a mystic, and there was a time when I realized it was necessary—not just helpful but necessary—for me to get the academic credentials and so I did that. Then the time came when Oxford University Press wanted me to submit material for more books: after all *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic* did very well for them and was a phenomenal success. I knew people who had published with Oxford University Press all their life and it's a great honor to be published by them. But that wasn't where I was going and I had already done what needed to be done. And in fact then I had a dream which is one of those kinds of dreams that you cannot ignore, or I cannot ignore. Quite literally, I had the first chapter of *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* dictated to me in the dream. That was it! And from then on I find myself stepping further and further beyond the academic world, although I was never really at home in it.

At the end of *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic* is a chapter describing some of the links between Empedocles, alchemy, Islam and Sufism. In the back of my mind I had been thinking of Golden Sufi Center Publishing and their catalog of books. The strongest link between Dr. Kingsley's book and his publisher is the subject of mysticism, but there were clear links to Sufism as well. I brought this up by mentioning that I noticed the link to what Sufis describe when they say that in order to know something, to know something about God, you have to commit to God, otherwise you miss some of the crucial understanding that the purely objective observer will never know.

Absolutely, that has always been fundamental to me. Ever since I was a little boy I would have to see for myself. I went around never satisfied, even when I was seven years old. I caused a lot of trouble in my neighborhood, I was asking questions like "What is love?" and I was told, "Love is being nice to other people." Then you ask them to go a little further, but nobody would do that. So I would ask and ask and ask and ask and there was only one person in the neighborhood who would listen to me: he was a mathematician who lived next door, and he was wonderful. He would just sit me down and say "Ask your questions, I don't have the answers but at least I can listen to your ques-

tions." And I began to know as a child, I began to see when someone gives you an answer that comes from above their neck. It's not a real answer, it's not a full answer. It comes from the mind, not from the heart, and that was something I always had craved for.

I felt a shift at this point in our conversation. The memories of childhood seemed to be so closely linked to Dr. Kingsley's own understanding of how he worked and why he worked with so much attention to detail. I asked, What about the practice of stillness and dream work described in your books? Here is this tradition, this ritual that lasts from hours to days. Have you actually done that?

Yes, not in a cave but in a room.

The answers in this part of the interview were interesting because the moments of silence in our conversation felt like they expanded. The pace was casual, but still very serious. And I asked about his practice of incubation.

It is something that I am drawn to naturally.

I interpreted his approach to the unconscious as a "before" form of guidance rather than an "after" form of guidance, that is, going to the unconscious with a question rather than responding to the unconscious prodding us to look at something that comes from a dream. He explained his own process.

Sometimes it has happened with my wife, or with me, that we are in a particular situation where we are unsure about something: unsure about what to do. In such a case it's ok, before going to bed, just to ask. And then sometimes it happens that you are given a dream. I remember once something very striking that happened to me when I was scheduled to teach in China for a year. Everything was ready, I had my visa, but something kept bothering me and I asked: what is this? And I had the most amazing dream, incredibly vivid, that told me in the greatest detail what would happen if I went to China: that it would literally be a torture. So even though this was the last moment and I was just about to leave, I sent the people who had invited me a telegram (this was what you did in those days) and of course they were very upset. But it was something I had to do. I trusted in the dream more than I trusted in what other people wanted or said.

That was a case of asking for guidance, but generally I am wary about asking too much because this is to place a subtle imposition on our dreams. In North America people often seem to have the idea that they should be able to use their dreams, control them, plan dreams. This is quite alien to me because, as far as I am concerned, the dream is something quite sacred. I don't want to condition it or place demands on it in any way.

The dream is a mystical experience rather than a psychological adjustment.

The worst thing we can do is try to make life fit in with our little expectations, because then we bring it down to our level rather than listening to it and learning from it. If I'm going to listen to a dream I can't be telling it what I want to hear from it. It was

quite a shock when I first came across the idea here in America of trying to control one's dreams. There are very, very esoteric practices in Tibetan Buddhism and in certain other traditions as well which allow you to go consciously into the dream state and control what happens there. But that has to be done after an enormous training and also has to be done with a real absence of ego. If you go in with the usual sense of ego, you will cause so much harm because the ego becomes immensely powerful. That is why traditionally these esoteric practices are only kept for initiates who have had their ego worn away year after year because then, when they do a practice like that, there is a selflessness and they won't do it for their own self-aggrandizement.

So I hesitate to ask. You know, one thing that keeps on coming up for me is the whole question of question and answer. We don't really look at all at what's involved in this, because we live in a question and answer culture. We are totally taken in by the myth of dialectic—which in its present form goes back in the West to the time of Plato. This is the basis not just of television debates and quizzes but also of the whole of modern education, not to mention our strange legal system. We really believe in the power of question and answer, and this is one belief that will some day need to be questioned. Usually, 99% of the time, when people ask a question they have energetically and quite unconsciously embedded in the question the answer they want to get. Just put a question mark at the end of a sentence and something very powerful happens. It can become a violation. Actually a lot of questions are almost like a rape. But to know how to ask a conscious question means, first of all, learning how to give up. Then we can ask the question and be totally open, with no idea or wish or inclination to prejudge what the answer will be. The trouble is that we now rush into this apparently innocent question and answer business without ever getting the most basic training.

I always understood meditation to be a way of withdrawing our projections from the world.

Yes. And the danger with the question is actually the projection. It's a very subtle expectation. If I want to ask for a dream or ask the unconscious even for guidance, it becomes extremely subtle, I have seen it in myself, and in others as well. It can be very, very dangerous to ask for guidance if you want help in a particular situation, because you will get help but it will probably be the help you were looking for. It is actually self-fulfilling and can become terribly confusing because the mind is so powerful. If you ask something of life, you will get what you ask for.

You may cut off the possibility of getting something greater or more beneficial.

Exactly. And this, again, is why I find it is important sometimes not to ask. But sometimes we do have to ask questions, and this is where it becomes very tricky because this whole existence is so tricky. If you want to have a vision of the Buddha, or Christ, you will. But, as many traditions tell us, such visions

are not truly real. When you are in a question and answer situation there is always a duality and so there will always be room for deception.

The presentation of Love and Strife in the book, *Reality*, suggests that we have idealized Love. From the apostle Paul in Corinthians, whether correct or not, to some of what we focus on in Rumi, Love tends to get looked at in a one-sided way. I pointed out that he describes in *Reality* how "with love, nothing is what it seems" and "love traps the soul while strife sets it free."

I go back to my childhood where I am running around asking the question, "What is love?" We have so many notions and ideas about love. We honestly think we know what love is. This is where the problem lies. You mention Rumi, and I find that very relevant because there is a book coming out soon called *Me and Rumi*. It's about Rumi's relationship with Shams-i Tabriz, his teacher, and the great Sufi scholar Annemarie Schimmel wrote an introduction to the book before she died. What she basically said in it is that this book is going to stop us in our tracks because we have such an overpowering notion of Rumi as representing a sweet, soft, gorgeous love and here is his teacher who is totally crude and ruthless and rough; and it knocks all our ideas of Rumi's sweet and sugary love out of the window. Rumi has become so popular—but what is this love that he talks about? We think we know what it is, but in my experience we just don't.

We have a sugar coated version of Christianity. Now we have a sugar coated version of Rumi. It's very satisfying to the ego, but basically love is destruction and dissolving of the ego. This is something I find so interesting with Empedocles, because when he refers to what we ordinarily think of as love he calls it "what humans call love." He doesn't say "what we call love", and that's because he was able to separate himself from the human condition. So is love, for Empedocles, the same as love is for us? And is what we call love really love? We have the comfortable idea that if we carry our ordinary feelings of love far enough then everything will become expansive and wonderful. But even in a human relationship, as most people know, if you really deeply love someone it's not sweet. It opens up doors which are quite terrifying.

In order to let go of a person, to love a person and set them free is terrifying.

Even below that, just to love a human being can be hell. People, if they are seriously in love, have to rush to a therapist and usually, just as with counseling for depression, the therapist will try to pull them out of the burning and heartbreak. But to me that is where the pearl is, right down there in the dark. That is where the treasure is.

Carl Jung describes growing as moving toward tension.

Sometimes the tension just pulls you apart.

In the last chapter of *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic* you mention the connection between

Empedocles and the Islamic traditions. Where do we see that today?

Well, really what happened is that these ancient traditions came into Islam mainly through southern Egypt and through the alchemical traditions. They had a tremendous influence on the earlier period of Sufism, which was quickly covered over by a lot of formalization. This is not to say there was ever such a thing as a Church in Islam, which of course there was not; but as the terminology and practices adopted by Sufis became more and more formalized, the idea that anyone apart from Mohammed could have exerted an influence on the beginnings of Islam became more and more unthinkable. And so these influences were almost entirely covered over. The only real place where room has been allowed for Empedocles is in the traditions of Iran. Somehow Iran kept its tradition. A tremendous wealth of knowledge and understanding has been retained there that was forgotten elsewhere.

You knew you were going against the grain at one point with your understanding of Empedocles. What was it like when you came to that understanding? Did you feel you were swimming against the tide?

Absolutely. But there is a very particular story about how I came in contact with Empedocles. Back in around 1973, I was forced into a situation by life—but it was actually by Empedocles—where it was him and me alone. This was just after I first came into contact with his teaching and I knew there was something very strange going on between him and me. I was a twenty-year-old kid and I was stuck in a room, incapacitated: a forced form of incubation. We have so many strange ideas about illness and health, very superficial ideas; and here I was forced into a situation of illness just so that I could understand Empedocles. It was the only way to hold me there: I had to be incapacitated so that something could happen. I was keeping a journal of all my thoughts, including every single thought about Empedocles, writing them down exactly as they came to me. Unfortunately I don't have it anymore. But there was one point, I remember it was about two-thirds of the way down the left side of the journal I was writing, when the question came to me which I immediately wrote down: "Please God, show me what Empedocles really means." And within the space of fifteen or twenty seconds at the most I had been shown the whole of Empedocles' teaching. I saw with absolute, crystal clarity that it was totally the reverse of what everybody in over two thousand years has always assumed it was. Love does not free the soul—and Strife is not evil, as people automatically assume. In fact Strife is the power that frees the soul from the snares of Love. And even at the time I realized immediately that this was no small matter. This one inversion had the most extraordinary implications for our understanding of Western history and culture as a whole. And I knew at once that this was the answer to my prayer.

I mentioned earlier on the subject of question and answer. Thirty years ago I asked a question and, ever since then, have suffered from asking it. That



LEFT: Michael Madzo, *The coming of unknown pleasures* (2000). Sewn painted paper, 22 x 12 inches.

and the English translation there—and there was no correspondence between them. The translators were not translating Empedocles at all: they were translating what they vaguely thought and hoped he might have said. It was a big shock. With time, when I had returned to Europe, I eventually understood that something very strange was going on. I began to realize that in the last two hundred years each time a scholar translates Empedocles he might make a point of questioning some minor detail here or there but will basically just copy the earlier scholars' translations. The result is totally bizarre. I give examples in my new book, like the one right at the beginning of the very special passage where Empedocles is talking about his words and describing how they need to be absorbed and taken in. Where he says "If you press my words down underneath your densely packed diaphragm" (referring to specific breathing practices), all scholars nowadays will translate him as saying "If you press my words into your crowded brain." And this process, of crowding our already crowded brains even further, is of course something we are all only too familiar with. But it has nothing to do with what Empedocles is saying.

It's a very great mystery how people, however intelligent, will not see what is right in front of their eyes. There is absolutely no ambiguity in the Greek: Empedocles is saying "underneath," not "into." But because this is what scholars want him to say, that is what they will make him mean. Again, it's completely self-fulfilling. All that most people can understand is their own densely packed brains, so that's what they assume Empedocles must have wanted to say through his own words.

I asked if other scholars were paying as much attention to the language. Were they missing the meaning because of not understanding the language?

It is much deeper than that. Empedocles and Parmenides were magicians. They knew how to work with energies we don't even know exist. They knew the power of words. They were responsible for creating, laying the foundation for, most of this culture we now live in. The mind can't understand that, but it is still fascinated by it and that is why people keep on writing books about Empedocles and Parmenides. They keep being drawn. But there is something in their teachings that the mind can't understand and when the mind can't understand something, and is fascinated by it, it becomes obsessed.

They will try to rationalize the situation and say Parmenides and Empedocles were just the primitive children of our culture. But they are not the children: we are. And where does this lead? Here is the basic issue I have come up against many, many times. For example, back in 1999 I gave a talk at UCLA and presented the archaeological discoveries that have to do with Parmenides which show that he was not just an abstract thinker: that there was much more

question completely changed my life. This is another reason why it's so important to be careful with our questions. You need to be very careful when you ask a question like "Please God, show me . . .", because if it's answered you will pay for that answer with the rest of your life. We have no idea how powerful questions are. And this is because we have no idea how powerful words are.

Dr. Kingsley's books offer rich detail to considerable depth on the language of Parmenides and Empedocles. It is one of the foundations of his work. I asked for his comments.

Words are like the ground, the earth. There is a tremendous power in words, a very particular power that you ignore at your peril. I should try to tell, in the briefest outline, the story of how I came to Empedocles. It was like an accident. I

missed a class in college, which was something very unusual for me, and because I missed that one class I was given Empedocles as the subject for a paper I would have to write over the break. The other kids teased me about it. I used to travel a lot in those days, so I took the original Greek text of Empedocles' poetry and the most authoritative English translation I could find and hitchhiked down to Morocco. Afterwards I realized that I had done this quite instinctively and unconsciously because there was no way I could be introduced to Empedocles while I was a part of the collectiveness of Europe. There is an incredibly dense and protective cocoon surrounding Europe that we are not aware of and that actually limits our ability to reach beyond it.

So I went down to Tangiers. In my hotel room or down on the beach I read the Greek text here

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going on. I carefully explained how we know now certain remarkable things as a result of those discoveries and how we can also work out a great deal by studying the fragments of Parmenides' poetry that describe a journey into the underworld. The next day I was in the corridor of the classics department and a teacher there said "You're too dogmatic. You want us to believe that what you are saying is right. You should stop giving the appearance that you are right and other people are not. You and I are just the same, and your interpretation of Parmenides is no better than mine." We were standing there in front of the chair of the department and other faculty members, and I looked her straight in the eyes and said, "But you and I are not the same. You read Parmenides so that you can change his meaning to suit yourself. I read Parmenides so that he can change me." And that is the basic problem, because unless you read these people with the willingness to be changed you won't change—ever. You will change them. You will make them into what they are not. The change has to happen somewhere. There is the power of change in their words. But people don't want to be changed, and so you have to be very careful. Sometimes they literally "correct" the Greek text. If they don't like something, or feel uncomfortable about it, they will rationalize it and change it. It needs a certain commitment just to sit down in a room and say with humility: "I don't have all the answers. And not only don't I have all the answers but I don't even have a single answer. I don't have any answers and I need help." And that's the way in which I approached these people. I felt they mean more to me than I mean to myself. I was willing to become completely open and see what they had to say. No argument.

I had a quote from Dr. Kingsley's book that says the same thing, in a very concise way and I read it back to him. "The fragments of his (Empedocles) poem come together, not on a drawing board, or in a book, but in ourselves."

If we look at the material in this way we learn so much more.

Again, I quoted a section from Dr. Kingsley's book, "there is nothing quite as capable of changing a human being as the experience of utter changelessness."

Have you experienced this? Once you have, it's something you can never forget or ignore.

Finally, I asked if, from his perspective, people understood what he was trying to do.

For the most part, yes. And I am amazed at how deep many people's understanding goes. But I am also surprised at some of the comments I see. One reviewer stated that I must have included the "mystical" material in *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* because my publisher wanted it. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is important for me to publish what I feel is important. I don't want my material to be edited or re-written. I have chosen to write the way I have written for a purpose. The first chapter of *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* was dictated to me in a dream: how can I change something that was given to me in that way? It would dishonor it; dishonor the process. Words have energy and we have to learn to respect that. Like music, words can have a certain effect when they come from a certain place.

A vibration, like a note, a certain vibration.

Yes. Yes. And I trust the process enough to let it be. It's not a matter of practice; it is just a matter of letting it be what it is. •••

RIGHT: Michael Madzo, *All I ever feel* (1998). Sewn painted paper, 13 x 11 inches.



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