

**“Effie Gray”: Innocence, Betrayal and the Strivings of the Soul” -  
Symposium March 2014**

*“... for beauty itself is only the infant of scarcely endurable Terror ...”<sup>1</sup>*

is a phrase written by a poet that could be the caption for the Effie Gray Symposium which took place last March in the grand spaces of the Barbican Centre. Organised by two Jungian Analysts, Catherine Cox and Victoria Graham Fuller, layer upon layer, the film about Effie Gray, of an exquisite rare visual (and editing) sensibility, and the four presentations by Jungian analysts Matthew Harwood, Martin Knops, Victoria Graham Fuller and Dr Judith Woodhead together presented and proved a winged presence of archetypal forces streaming through the lives of two families, - palpable as when swimming and suddenly coming across currents in the sea. In one scene, a spidery Medusa-like shape is drawn while Effie, now wedded yet still an unopened rosebud is waking to a joy of the senses and gives herself over to a moment of dance in Venice, - we see her from above standing on a mandala painted on a marble floor, positioned in the very centre of it. As the cloth of her long full skirts billows outwardly in rolling waves, the design of fine wavy black lines on the white silk marks eight spidery legs, while on the soundtrack single piano notes pinpoint and punctuate her movements as the vibrations of fate. The image entices and instils in the viewer an implicit knowing of entrapment and pain to come, and the scene indeed invokes something of the poet’s ‘terrible beauty’<sup>2</sup>, - the edge between beauty and truth is a reality only bearable if fleeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*

<sup>2</sup> Yeats

The Symposium brought together a quality of film and analytical literature of the highest kind, thought and feeling steeped and imaged in a fascinating darkness of universal ideas. The panel made up of producer and co-producer, Donald Rosenfeld and Andreas Roald, and four Jungian Analysts, two men and two women, had a pleasing symmetry. Their conversation and questions from the audience elegantly facilitated by Catherine Cox, while interpretation and analysis was mixed with filmic imagery conjuring reflections in a windowpane, the passage of rain, raindrops sliding down the glass of a window superimposed over Effie's despairing gaze, and how the experience of father maps the destiny of a boy-child becoming man with his experience of a 'Death-Mother' more deathly than death-in-life, she so much in wanting of the son's inseminating genius. And throughout evidence of the signs of past and present trauma intertwining through the patterns of generations, the lingering influence, the process of change and transformation so close to the abysmal, the triangular forms of relating, - all reflected in the hidden geometry of human relationship.

The film was an experience as was the entire day from morning to afternoon and its middle of the day intermission for lunch, - good food and drink with a great view of all London and the meeting of friends and colleagues and a chance to meet with the film producers.

This Symposium, so beautifully coordinated, fulfilled a promise and left one wanting more. I found myself downloading the four papers from Catherine Cox' website (thank you!) and musing on them with a renewed wonder for things privately and professionally engaged with at work, and in life. With this Symposium Catherine and Graham gave a day that sang to us about

life as romance and riddle, that was also a literate entertainment with gravitas and humour.

Symposium papers available at [www.citypsychotherapy.org](http://www.citypsychotherapy.org)

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*Her talks and workshops focus on the process of transformation, using film and literature as a way of tracking such phenomenon.*

*Articles, short stories, features have been written for the Times, Observer Magazine, the Literary Review, also a storycookbook (Chatto&Windus, an aeon ago).*

*Presently is engaged with a visionary artist and friend on a project to do with the birth of an angel, and is in the last stages of a novelised memoir of legendary times - working title: Sculpting Air.*