

Frankenstein, the Plight of the Planet, and Seeds of Hope

Robert Romanyshyn in Conversation with Bonnie Bright

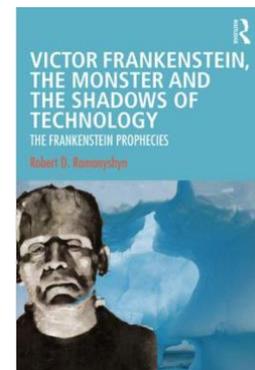
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BB: Hello, and welcome to Depth Insights. I'm really excited to be here today in conversation with my good friend and colleague, Robert Romanyshyn. I'm Bonnie Bright and Robert is an Emeritus professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute, an affiliate member of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and a fellow of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture. He's a prolific author and his new book is called *Victor Frankenstein, The Monster and the Shadows of Technology: The Frankenstein Prophecies*. In 1972, he co-founded an interdisciplinary program in psychology at the University of Dallas, and in 1991 he was invited to create a research approach for the innovative doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Robert's book publications also include *Leaning Toward the Poet: Eavesdropping on the Poetry of Everyday Life*; *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind*; *Ways of the Heart: Essays Toward an Imaginal Psychology*; *The Soul in Grief: Love, Death and Transformation*; and also, *Technology as Symptom and Dream* (which some of you may be familiar with: It has actually been 30 years since he first wrote that book!) He has written a one-act play about Frankenstein, and he created a multimedia DVD entitled, *Antarctica: Inner Journeys in the Outer World*, based on his travels. You can learn more about Robert on his website which is www.robertromanyshyn.com.

And here's a bit about the new book that Robert has coming out which drops in May of 2019. Robert writes:

In the turbulent times in which we live. Mary Shelley's story can be read as both a prophecy of many of the crises we face today and as a beacon of hope for transforming them. Created by Victor Frankenstein, the Monster is his mind child created apart from women and abandoned by his maker, denied and never named by his creator, he nevertheless lingers in the collective imagination where his shadow reveals the psychological depths to the wired world. He is the companion who opens our eyes to what it is like to be an orphan and a refugee without an identity, a history, or a community. He awakens us to the archetypal longing for home...



BB: Hi, Robert. How's it going with you?

RR: Hi, Bonnie. How are *you*? I'm fine.

BB: I'm doing great. I'm really excited for the opportunity to be here with you today. Of course, we've had many kinds of conversations like this. Some of them recorded formally that are out there and available on YouTube and in other places like Depth Insights and Depth Psychology Alliance, but also, we've had a lot of informal conversations over the many years now that we've

known each other, and I think that some of that will come up in this conversation. We'll talk a little bit about the kinds of topics that we've discussed on a regular basis.

Of course, fresh on my mind is the whole symposium called “Earth, Climate, Dreams” that we did together a couple of years ago on behalf of Depth Psychology Alliance, which was really a discussion of those three particular topics, earth, climate, and dreams. And your work has always been just so profoundly important to me because you've always brought in culture and technology into those discussions, which are absolutely critical. So, I would like to just go forward in whatever way you'd like to. I think if you want to share a little bit about some of the topics that have been on your mind that would be great. I know you have a brand new book that is coming out My 15. So, I really hope that we can talk about that. Of course, Frankenstein's Monster has been on your mind and in your heart for many, many years, so more to come about that as well.

RR: Okay. Well, thank you and I'm looking forward to this conversation, too. I'd like to begin with a feeling response. Yesterday I heard an interview with one of the students in Munich, Germany, who is involved with other students in Munich who are coming out in numbers to protest the lack of serious political programs about the ecological crisis we face. And this young woman said something that really caught my attention. She said—this is a paraphrase—“Why should I be in school today when the very Earth that we all share is in peril, and our politicians are doing little if anything to correct the problems that we face? There might not be an Earth for me and my generation, so what am I doing in school?” And I know today—at least today, Friday here in California, at noon—is a worldwide march of students. And what I feel, and what I have felt, especially when I listened to the interview with that young woman, is how things are coming in from the margins, not from the center. They're coming in, and they have come in.

Remember the Occupy Wall Street movement? Then there's the Me Too movement, the election in our own Congress of many of the formerly marginalized people of color, and women who are now entering in droves into our politics. In addition, there are young students protesting gun violence, the Black Lives Matter movement and the students now marching to focus our attention on climate crisis. In the face of all this, I began to feel, and I have felt this for a long time, an increasing mood of sorrow overtaking me. Maybe some of that is having lived with the Monster on the margins for 20 years. In Mary Shelley's story, it is the Monster who has been silenced—his tale. All of the eruptions from the margins are the images in my mood of melancholy.

Recently, when you and me and Veronica and Jeff Kiehl and our friends in Australia (Susannah Benson, Sally Gillespie, and Jonathan Marshall) met for our monthly climate/dream group, one of the things that arose for me in that group is the feeling that in my sorrow is the sense of an ending. Things are ending. That sorrow is about a world that I have known, that the generations before us had lived in and worked in with a sense of hope and promise; a world that our children and our grandchildren might not have any more—at least the bare minimum, where there might be a better sense of income equality. That's breaking down. We have, particularly in this country, a rage against socialism when, in fact, corporate greed *is* socialism for the rich in this country. Few bother to challenge that. Instead those interested in maintaining things as they are say, “Oh, socialism, that's going to make America into a socialist country and that'll never happen.” Well, what about the socialism, the corporate giveaways? And what goes hand in hand with that is a destructive capitalism for the rest of us. Tied to that is health care—that's a major problem—racial injustice, ecological collapse or potential collapse, gun violence. So, all around us, these things are speaking to us.

We're at the end of a world-view, but we don't know now whether or—maybe it's better to put it that way—what kind of world-view will follow that if, in fact, there *is* a world to follow that.

I've been a psychologist all my life, but a disguised psychologist; it's been a really good cover story for me. As such, I always have been, concerned about any kind of formalization of our language, whether it be in politics, economics, and psychology, including Jungian psychology. Greg Mogenson, who is a Jungian analyst whose work I've always liked, said in one of his books that psychology created a loveless language for the disturbances or the epiphanies of soul.

It's time for us to speak up and say with passion, as human beings. And I need to get out of academic, institutionalized, formalized, institutionally correct speaking because we don't have much time. We are facing an ending which brings us personally and collectively into a confrontation with our mortality. And in trying to speak as a psychologist, I've always tried to pick up what's on the margins of our discipline by looking to cultural events and by looking, not only to history, but to poets. And so, one of the things I want to say in this opening is a sense of an ending.

But where has this all been said before before better than I could say it? And what came into my room—*who* came into my room—is William Butler Yeats. I put it this way because when we think we're thinking about or remembering someone that's still academic speak which says that it's all *in* us. But we don't *remember*. I'm not *remembering* William Butler Yeats. He's here and re-remembering *me*. That's "re-" with a hyphen. It's putting something back together again. So, I pay attention to that. And I said, "Sir, what do you want?" And he said, "Go read my poem." I said, "Which one?" He said, "The Second Coming." So, I'd like to share that. Can I do that?

BB: Oh, please. That's amazing. Yeah.

RR: "The Second Coming"—written after the end of the First World War, which was the beginning of one of the most catastrophic centuries in human history, where millions of people were slaughtered in the trenches—the slaughterhouses of the soul—for the greed of empires, whether German, Russian, American, English, French. After which the British and the French carved up the Middle East because there was a lot of oil there. So, Yeats writes,

Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer; / Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosened upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosened, and everywhere / The ceremony of innocence is drowned

Innocence. We can't afford to pretend that we're innocent anymore. In the '60s when I was coming of age, I remember that it used to be said, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." No innocence. Yeats goes on,

"The best lack all conviction, the worst / Are full of passionate intensity. / Surely some revelation is at hand; / Surely the Second Coming is at hand. / The Second Coming! Hardly are these words out / When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi, the spirit of the world. Troubles my sight; somewhere in sands of the desert / A shape with lion body and the head of a man. / A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun, / Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it / Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds. / The darkness drops again; but now I know / That twenty centuries of stony sleep" / Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle, / And what rough beast, its hour come 'round at last, / Slouches

towards Bethlehem to be born?"

That's a fundamental question. Who... *What* is that "rough beast" today? *The Frankenstein Prophecy* was written—or it wrote *me*—as an answer to that question, "What is that 'rough beast'?"

BB: Robert, you could not have started us off with better, fertile ground for a conversation in which I think so many things can unfold. I think the only question is where do we even begin? The images from that poem are really, really rich. So, I think I'll just jump in somewhere, and maybe we can see what unfolds from here. One thing that occurs to me is that you're talking about this sense of ending. I was holding that already, because a lot of my own work has been around this whole idea of the sense of loss of the sacred, and the way that we are not coming back (on a daily basis as we need to be) home to ourselves—to our bigger selves; to our sense of the sacred or the spiritual. And therefore, so much is lost.

When you started reading that poem, I was so touched, it literally brought tears to my eyes as the images came one after another. And this whole idea of the falcon, this amazing, magnificent bird not being able to hear the falconer. So how can it return home? How can it get those signals? So, this has been a huge, huge piece for me. too. And yet, this whole idea about endings: I mean, how can we, as human beings, begin to recognize and accept that there is a potential ending at hand here?

And then I come back to another question which I have heard you talk about before as well, so I know it's a theme for you. And that is that there have been other periods of time in which we felt there were endings at hand. So, for example, the nuclear threat that we were really facing so much in the '80s. And then, of course, your whole book, *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, which has been such a critical piece of work, 30 years old now, as I recently noticed you pointed out. I mean—still as relevant today as it has ever been, in my opinion. And yet, where are we in this process? Are we, as Thomas Berry, that theologian—or "geologian" as he sometimes referred to himself—said? Are we actually killing life itself? Are we actually in the process of killing the power and the potentiality of rebirth itself? Are these endings becoming so fast and furious that there's just no hope for us to ever get ahead of the eight ball, so to speak—and to really be able to... I mean, do we just have to accept it at this point? Or where do we stand in all of this? Where is the falcon in this? Can the falcon come home and truly be able to live there again?

RR: We're all kind of webbed together, I think. Whether it be feelings of fear or anxiety or melancholy—and poetry stirs that—so what you said about the falcon, beautiful bird: When it can no longer hear the falconer... that's what I try to trace out the technology book. The origins of modern technology is the Self as a spectator behind a window which only keeps his eye upon the world. So, no wonder he writes. The falcon can no longer hear us because *we've* moved away. And we've moved away by making ourselves lords and masters of creation.

But what I want to touch on now in terms of how you responded, I just want to say in passing, the question for me then—and given what you said Thomas Berry said—is hope possible even today? Well, I'm not going to give up on hope yet, except I'm going to remember again another poet, Eliot, who said, "Wait without hope because hope can be hope for the wrong thing." And yet, to wait without hope, means false hope—like things are going to be better; it's not our problem. But there is a different kind of hope that is patient in the waiting, and so... in

his later lines, its “But learn to wait with love”—Love for what is maybe not visible yet. A kind of hope that I saw in South Africa many years ago, in the Bush in the Umfolozi. You've been there recently. So, we have that...

BB: ...Across the decades. Yes, amazing.

RR: Marvelous! I remember that first morning I woke up and it was still not yet dawn, but it was just breaking the ridge of some hills, so the sun kind of draped to the top of the hills with a beautiful purple ribbon, and the birds began to sing. Now, that's hope! When out of the darkness of night and the sun begins to rise up, the birds begin to sing. Who is it?—Emily Dickinson, I think—who said hope is that thing with feathers that perches in the soul. This is a different kind of waiting, a waiting nurtured in being part of the cycles of nature.

But in this kind of waiting how do we communicate in relationship with others? Not bringing a message from on high? And I realize in my life, I've had two options. One of them is to just stay silent. Just stay silent! And that appeals to me, I think, out of, sometimes, weariness that we all feel. And I felt that so deeply when I was in the Antarctic in 2009. I've spoken about that before, and some of it is on YouTube. But that place, one of the last unspoiled places on Earth, was a spiritual reawakening for me. And something, as of that time, had not yet been fully opened in my own heart and soul—opened up—and that was, if you go silent, then...what I've felt: there is a beautiful sense of simplicity and serenity in the silence and the solitude, and something of a spiritual reawakening.

And maybe each of us at one point, depending on our age or whatever the case may be, knows it's time to leave this stage. The Chinese recluse did that, left the Emperor in his court—I think it was during the 15th century—I'm not sure of the date. They were statesmen who served the state, or the emperor. And then they left and they went to nature. And they made these beautiful ink drawings, and wrote these beautiful haiku poems. So maybe that's an option for each of us at the right time. But, damn it, I'm not there yet. I'm still a '60s unreconstructed radical! [laughter].

BB: Well, but sometimes, I would have to say, Robert, the older I get the more I see that we have all of these various parts of ourselves. And so...I mean, I'm so conflicted when I hear you say all that because I agree with every word you said, and then there is that part of me too that says what if? Or, how *can* I? I think of the student—the story that you opened with in the very beginning, and how she was so conflicted herself maybe. “Why am I in school? What am I doing this for if the world is ending? It feels like everything is coming down around me.” And so, where is the hope for her? And then the birds—I mean, that poem from Emily Dickinson that you just gave was so beautiful about hope and the many-feathered thing perched.... I forget the exact words.

RR: I think it's perched in the soul.

BB: Yeah. I think it is too. I've heard that before. Such a beautiful, beautiful metaphor. And yet, on the flipside, of course—just to bring that into it, because we're at least caught in whether we're mentioning it or not, obviously—I just saw the most devastating documentary on the decline of the bird populations and how they are down by over 50% and up to 80% in some countries. I mean, it was just devastating to watch it. And of course, I've been following Colony Collapse Disorder and the vanishing of the honey bees for many years now, ever since it really started to become a big news item. And when you talk about corporate greed, a lot of it comes back to that,

a lot of it comes back to our absolute disrespect or disregard for nature as a general rule. Even those of us who have some consciousness, I guess, around what's happening here—at least in our opinions around not being connected with something sacred; not being able to come back home to that on many levels—we're still caught in a society that is so focused and centered on these institutions that you're talking about.

So, I hear you. I go through the beauty. I remember the incredible, incredible peace—talk about stillness and peace—in the bushveld in South Africa, as you just mentioned. I mean, I can be back there in a split second, and when I'm in those moments, everything is just fine. Whatever happens, I'm going to find a way to stay centered around it. Okay, maybe not! [laughter]. But my sense is that I'm okay and that the world is going to be okay, and that even if the old king has to die—which is the way we're looking at our institutions from an alchemical standpoint—somehow, I think the human spirit has that spark that we can actually come through it and be okay in some way. And I really do want to believe that.

But then, there's always other pieces that come and sometimes just blindsides me completely. I'm just wondering how you feel about all that...

RR: I think that's really well said, and it clarifies the line from Eliot—"Learn to wait without hope." It's the kind of hope that we personally have, like this is going to happen to *me*... But you mentioned something about the alchemical vision and the sense of hope for that something larger—that's hope, I think, that has its nurturing soil in the sense of the sacred. And when we have no sense of the sacred, no wonder we feel vexed, and waiting for the Second Coming, and that hope—*honed* where it seems like we'd be numbed—and just anxious and afraid and fearful, and maybe can even ask the question of, "What rough beast?"... But when you have a sense of the sacred, then these concerns get pulled into a different perspective. So, I would agree with what you said very much.

And I do want to get back to what you've opened up about a sense of the sacred. But first I want to give the other alternative to silence. It is the way that I've tried to really deal with these issues about technology that go back to when I was a professor at the University of Dallas and I taught in the graduate program in psychology that Robert Sardello and I founded, and that James Hillman later joined. It was a marvelous 12 years.

But I always insisted on teaching undergraduates, as well. And my favorite group were the theater people. And I remember sitting once with one of the theater people, and that was the time of the nuclear worldwide concerns for destruction, the late '80s. And I noted this one really intense young man who I think went on to a theatrical career. He said, "Me and my group, we have no sense of the future. And do you know what it's like to live without a sense of the future?"

And that's where this whole question about how is it that our young people in the mid-80s could feel so despairing that they're ready to give up. And that, of course, led to the technology book. So, over the years working with this issue of "How have things gotten this way?"; "What are the origins of a technological way of framing the world?"... I've been trying to think about how best to say that. While, I've done it as a teacher and a writer, even now, I want to get out of that academic speak so we're not giving a lecture. So, I talk about going silent.

But the other thing is I have been fascinated with *Don Quixote*—Miguel Cervantes—the errant knight: the fool on a fool's quest. And interestingly enough—talk about synchronicity!—as I have been finishing the Frankenstein book, I get an invitation to be a keynote speaker at this huge conference on education, the arts, and technology. And this year, the theme is Don Quixote. It's like the world says, "Okay. Put up."

BB: Yeah. I always call those bread crumbs from the soul. You're on the absolute right track.

RR: So, for me, Don Quixote calls us to be—well, who is he? I mean, he's a fool in the proper sense. He knows that the windmills are not giants. There is even a sense at the end that he confesses that to Sancho Panza, but I've got to check into that, make sure I'm reading that correctly. But what's important for him is, as a knight errant, he dreams the impossible dream, the man from La Mancha. And what is that impossible dream? Don't forget the world that is passing away in this age, in the 17th century—the beginning age already of technology and capitalism and empires, etc. It's a plea to not forget a world that is slipping away. Not in any nostalgic sense, but in the sense of being able to enter into this world by not forgetting what we're leaving behind. And for me, that's what our task is.

We have to become memory keepers of what's passing away. The human-scaled world, the world of relationships with each other, of local communities, of participatory democracy, of inclusion of those who have been exiled and have been turned into monsters by those who are in the center. We need to be memory keepers. Because in doing that, we become guardians of homecoming. And so, for me, I still have to do that, and that's why I'm doing this. That's why I wrote the *Frankenstein* book. And yet what beckons is the Antarctic, or the Umfolozi, or even just sitting in the sun and listening to the birds. But “Not yet. Not yet.”

BB: Oh, Robert, that's so beautiful. The term that comes to mind when I hear you talk, of course, is engaged witness as opposed to a bystander who's looking through that window, as you mentioned in the beginning, with the first book. And, of course, to be an engaged witness, we have to be present to what's happening but not necessarily judge it, or even necessarily *try* to do something about it in that sense. Of course, there's always going to be a time for activism, and each of us might be activists in our own way.

We have different ways of going about that. But to be first the witness, and to hold the memories, as you say, so that we don't forget, because it's the forgetting that is the beginning of all of these issues—the forgetting of our connection to the sacred being at the base of all of those, of course. But also, the collective forgetting of what we have been as a humanity over the millennia...into this new technology.

I love technology, personally. I mean, of course, I, like everybody have my challenges with it at times. But it has enabled us to do so many things. But the thing is we have to maintain that engaged witnessing where we are conscious of what it's doing for us and how we are utilizing it at all times. It's when we go completely unconscious and jump on social media and just start surfing, and next thing you know two hours has gone and you don't really know where the time has gone...all of those kinds of things.

RR: Yeah. Well, I'm glad you brought up the distinction between a witness and a bystander. We have to be engaged witnesses. There is a sense of standing by. “They also serve who only stand and wait”—Milton, on his blindness. I don't like Milton's poems a lot. They don't translate very well into the world today. But that line, “They also serve who only stand and wait”—that's standing by. But the sense that you say about a bystander is that we're not involved.

So, we have to be engaged witnesses. And what does it mean to be engaged with technology? Well, while I am thinking about finishing *The Frankenstein Prophecies* I am thinking about the gap I feel between having written that book and worked on it for—at least in the writing, although I've been concerned with the Frankenstein story for about 25 years, I have

been writing it over the last 5 years trying many different forms; even a play that turned out to be a very expensive disaster-- I keep struggling with how to say it.

BB: Live and learn! [laughter].

RR: Live and learn. It was fun, though, to try it. But thinking about the gap, then, between finishing that book and how to say it, I realized I can just speak out of the passion of my heart, to get out of academic speak. That was a big move for me, which was aided by the support of my wife, Veronica Goodchild. The mind can be a loner but the passionate heart needs support. That's the other thing that we need now. We need companionship, friends, people who love us, people who we love, people we are concerned about.

BB: Communities.

RR: Communities. Even digital communities, like right now. So, I am not opposed to technology and what I've tried to do in the book is to sketch a third way between there unbridled enthusiasm for the next technological wonder—and you get that all the time: Get a smarter phone than the smartphone you have. I can't even manage my smartphone [laughter]. But more, more, more! It is an unbridled enthusiasm that will just keep us moving in a kind of sleepwalking style into the nightmare that is waiting for us—the next “rough beast.” So, between that, the unbridled enthusiasm, and on the other side... We can't disinvent the technology—an unquestioned naive rejection of it. How do we, as you hinted at, use the technology that serves us well, like this conversation made possible by technology? How do we use that in a conscious way? Well, one example: you were the one who dragged me into doing webinars.

BB: I guess I'll take credit now [laughter].

RR: It was a little bit less vexed, but so important, because remember that first webinar? I responded by writing an article which you generously published, pointing out the value being able to do these kinds of sessions, but without forgetting what we're leaving behind.

BB: Exactly!

RR: When we meet personally, face-to-face, and share a cup of coffee or greet each other with a hug, we make sense of each other in terms of the bodily gestures... That's not available here. But don't dismiss the technology because of that: use it wisely! So that's what I try to do in the Frankenstein book.

BB: Beautiful. And, of course, what comes to mind is, again, the memory keepers. You're keeping the memories of what it is to be embodied and engaged with somebody in the flesh, so to speak, even though we are in a format like this where we're seeing each other [on the screen] in our little boxes, so to speak, which is quite symbolic, in and of itself, isn't it? And, of course, in the dream climate group that we have been meeting with for several years now, we have joked about that frequently—about how we all come together, seven of us, in these little boxes every single month or every few weeks. And, of course, we have had, however, or *made* the opportunities to all meet together in person, which is not something that would've ever happened in a million years if we had not first been doing the thing in the little boxes on the screen.

So, we are creating opportunities through the technology, which I think is really beautiful. And then the whole piece of that is the engaged witnessing, giving each other a chance to really have a voice and to be seen—fully seen—even if it is through technology. And by the way, I want to credit that engaged witnessing to Mary Watkins and Helene Shulman because they really write about it beautifully in their book, *Toward Psychologies of Liberation*. It's not my idea, but it's such a profound idea.

RR: Yeah. Yeah. That's another kind of what you pick up—what you call—bread crumbs of the soul. It sticks. It feeds. It nourishes. It's sort of like—to get back to it— here we are in these boxes and what we're saying, but let's not get boxed in.

BB: Yes. Exactly.

RR: That's a cliché, what the box gives us. And then when you meet the person, you can celebrate that. "Oh, you are bigger than you appear in the box!"

BB: Exactly [laughter]. Right. Well, and then at some level, maybe, if you want to take it a step further and look at it symbolically. On some level, we can see the boxes that we're already in. And it gives us the opportunity to decide how we would like to step out of those boxes, to see that we *are* in a box. So, we can, therefore, emerge, embodied.

RR: Bonnie, that's why I love conversation with you. Because you just turned it now about how technology, while it is a crisis, it's also an opportunity. Because it allows us, or invites us, at least, to question what these technological achievements are asking us to forget. And, in fact, that's the way I ended the technology book, with that iconic picture of Earth from space. And the very same technology that made that picture possible is also the technology that contributes in many ways, as a consequence, to the Earth being in peril.

So, what does that image from space offer us? To really see the Earth, maybe for the first time, as something that is the *human* community: black, white, rich, poor, Middle Eastern, Muslim, Protestant or Catholic Irish, whatever the case may be... We are all on this boat that is sailing through the cosmos, on this *vessel*. And then maybe to begin to reflect on "What then does this technology ask of us to use it in a careful, conscious, aware way?" You just turned it that way.

BB: Yeah. Thank you. I mean, that's the spirit running through the conversation, I think. It's because we're both engaged and there's something that happens in a conversation like that where these ideas just feel like they pass through, like a river, almost. That's the way I see it. And it is profoundly beautiful. And you mentioned the vessel of Earth, and it's such an amazing, gorgeous image for me when I hear you refer to it in that way, this *vessel* that we're all on, on this beautiful Earth and the consciousness that we...if we only paid attention to that image every single day, imagine how all of our lives would change so profoundly.

RR: Yeah. But that image just occurred to me, in our conversation. What just occurred to me is it's an alchemical vessel where the experiment of being a human being who is neither angel nor beast, as Rilke says. So now here's your vessel. How can we make it work?" And I think we're at a point where that's a serious question. And for me, we have not made it work so well so far. But

there is still some time. And in that larger context, we get back to what we said before, the hope within the larger picture. That's there.

BB: Yes. And the more that we can return to our centers and really begin to work from that place instead of this place where we're projecting out there all of the disaster. I mean, sure, some of it is very much reality. But to stay in that center... In my work as a coach, that's something that I focus on a lot, is that really bringing everything back to this place in the center so that we can truly see with new eyes what is going on out there from a different perspective than that perspective of panic. Because when we are bystanders, all we can do is panic when we see what's happening out there; because we take it all concretely. It's the reality that we see that seems so prolific and concrete that there's nothing we can do to avoid it. But when we come back to this kind of center, that's where the imagination can come back in. It's where we're in touch with that spark of imagination that does inhabit every single one of us. We just have to get some air into it so that the pilot light can burst into flame and start burning, right?

RR: Yeah. See!! An image wants an image.

BB: It does.

RR: So, the image for imagination is a pilot light that needs to have that spark. That's really nice. Yeah. Imagination is the kind of seed that—I think it's the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset, said, "Imagination was the seed that the divine left in us after we were kicked out of Paradise." So, I think it's him, and I'm paraphrasing. But that image stays with me: the little seed. "Okay, you guys screwed up in that Paradise..."

Oh, this French writer, Emil Cioran... I love him because he seems to be such a Scorpion!—and he said we're not made for Paradise. Maybe we're not. And maybe that had to happen—the Fall. And maybe that seed was planted. And maybe that's how we help nature and the cosmos come to a fuller realization of itself. Because we're a part, we're a part of that consciousness of nature wanting to realize itself more fully. And I think we have to recognize that we have not done that very well yet. And I think we have to mourn a bit, and enter into acts of redemption, and become more humble, and surrender to what the world is asking now through the crisis.

It's funny I've always seen dreams as a nightly humiliation of the ego-conscious mind. Regardless of what they mean, they humble you. And humiliation and being humbled are the same root, *humus*, soil. So, dreams can humble us, and we need those kinds of things. And I think the crises are beginning to humble us, and get us into action.

BB: Beautifully said. Well, we have just a few minutes left, Robert. I really want to make sure we talk a little bit more about the Monster, who has essentially possessed you for all these years. So, let's talk about the book. I'm wondering how the Monster fits into all of this. What's the overlay here? Spell it out for us.

RR: What I like to say is, *The Frankenstein Prophecy*, written now, started 25 years after the technology book. It was born in my realization that things have been falling apart even more. And I needed to respond again, and not take the option of becoming the recluse—(not the Chinese recluse sort in the Antarctic). But I realized this time that while the technology book wildly exceeded what I ever thought would be its shelf life—it's had five reprints! I realized that

it has tapped into *something*, but I want to tap into where we are now, 30 years later. The education of—or speaking to people who have been—in the proper sense, educated; drawn out of themselves into the world through the crisis we face. And I wanted to do it in a way that tells a story, because I've come to believe that despite lot of good ideas we have—and they're important—what scientists give us about how we have to really have this kind of idea about sea power and wind power, etc. Or all the facts about how things are really falling apart... Climate scientists like Jeff Kiehl!

We need those facts. But people aren't changed by facts or ideas. They may be motivated into action, but stories change people. And that's who we are. We are storytellers. From the very first early times when we were around a campfire surrounded by darkness, we would tell stories about the gods. We need stories, and that's what the Frankenstein book is. It takes Mary Shelley's story, which has endured for 200 years, so her story is prophetic. It's a visionary piece of work. And what Jung means by visionary art is something that is not just written in the spirit of the times, but speaks to the spirit of the depths, so it foresees some things that are coming.

And I realized I have to read Mary Shelley's book as a visionary text. And as I began to get into it, the early efforts in which I tried to write it in my own ways didn't work. Eventually I saw that her story was questioning me and so the book is a series of eight questions drawn right from the text. The first six questions are about some of the crisis we face. For example Question Six is called “www.—Is Mary Shelley's Story a Prophecy of Being Homeless in a Wired World?” The question places us between rejecting technology and just using it blindly or unconsciously.

The last two questions, Seven and Eight, were sparked by Veronica [Goodchild]. When she read the first six questions, she said, “You're doing your Scorpio thing. It's so dark! It's not really going to register with people.”

I said, “I don't give a damn! They have to wake up. I'm not here to make them feel nice.” We used to have nice conversations like that, which... [laughter]. I wasn't into making people feel better. But she was right. She said, “There has to be some hope—but not in the wrong sense.”

The community issue again! So, I went back to the text, and the last two questions are about seeds of hope, one of which is the importance of recovering the dream, because the dream plays such an important part in Mary Shelley's story. It plays its part because Victor Frankenstein, possessed by his godlike dream to create a new species where they would honor him as their creator, and death would be— except by accident—never known by them. But in his godlike complex about himself—in that dream and in the work that he does—he has this dream, which is a nightmare about the consequences of his work. There are also other dreams, but he dismisses them. So, he's a perfect example of the spectator mind that I wrote about in the technology book: cut off from the body, cut off from nature, and hyper-rational. The pivotal role of dreams in the text is one of the seeds of hope: recovering the wisdom of the dream.

Another seed, if you read it from the Monster's point of view, is how the story of Frankenstein can be read as a love story: a tangled love story about the complexities of love when they are corrupted by power. But there are passages when the Monster, out of his loneliness, begs his maker to create a mate for himself. And in those passages, you are touched— unless you become completely numb—by the loneliness. What is expressed in his loneliness is the wish that's there for all of us: to go through life together with a mate who loves him and he loves. So, the redeeming power of love when it's not corrupted by power, which is what Victor Frankenstein symbolizes, is another seed of hope.

She's brilliant, Mary Shelley, because in his wanderings, the Monster finds—it was written in the 18th century, so that was a trope that could be used—Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Imagine, walking in the forest and you find a copy! And he begins to understand his plight from that point of view. But before he finds that book and is able to understand it, he has already been awakened by the book of nature, by the sound of birds, the light of the moon and other epiphanies. When you read it from his point of view, he's a perfect opposite to Victor Frankenstein, who cuts himself off from nature. And it's a way of saying to us... Mary Shelley, through the Monster... We are first educated into who we are because of our being called out by nature; the appeals of nature, their epiphanies. The Monster, then, is an emblem of recovering our broken bonds with the natural world—a third seed of hope!

The fourth seed of hope is that there is a new ethic in Mary Shelley's story. It is an ethic which is not a utilitarian ethic where the means justify the ends—*any* means. Victor Frankenstein, in his obsession to complete his work, sacrifices the human community, his relations with others, his relation to nature. Joyce Carol Oates, in her comment on Mary Shelley's story, says a novel is a perfect expression of the lethal nature of denial of responsibility for what we do.

The new ethic in the story is the basic question in my book: What are we responsible for? Who is that “rough beast”? It's the monster that we have created by denying responsibility for our actions on a global scale and on a personal scale. Just think of it in personal ways and then telescope it. How many people chuck partners in marriage right and left because the monster within, projected onto the other, that person then becomes “the one I have to get away from”? The seed of a new ethic is one that integrates the margins. And I think that's happening culturally. We spoke about that in the beginning, the “Me Too” movement, etc.!

BB: ...Right. All the movements. Right.

RR: Yeah. So that's what I tried to do. I'm exhausted by the book, I'll say that.

BB: I can only imagine.

RR: So right now, if I could magically get to the Antarctic, I would spend some time there, gin and tonic in hand, I don't have to bring the ice because it's already there.

BB: Unfortunately, the technology is not quite there to transport you just yet. But you do have the imagination, Robert.

RR: Yes

BB: Off you go, and well-deserved! I mean, this has been such a labor of love for you. And in my frame of reference, as you were speaking about each of those things and the beauty of bringing back in the dreams, bringing back in the nature and, of course, the birds...that's one thing that I mentioned already, earlier, that has touched me and is particularly on my mind right now. And then the ethics of it, the responsibility.

And of course, all of that kind of funnels down, in some ways, to the shadow. Ultimately, it comes down to that unconscious part of us that we have not been able to capture or see or witness. And as it bubbles up in the news on a daily basis, and the things that we see happening out in the world—that shadow continues to rise up and we have to see it, we are forced to see it.

Then the question, I think, coming back to that whole issue of ethics is, are we going to witness it and acknowledge it, and then grieve it in the way that it needs to be grieved? Or are we just going to sit back behind our screens and say, “Ah, well, you know; that's just what's happening now. That's what it is.”

RR: Yeah. You see, and you've been an engaged witness here. I mean, this is the first time—I have to confess this—since finishing the book, that I have felt I can and say what's really in my heart. I've gotten out of the mode of “I've got to be more academic (or whatever) about it.” And I realized I can do that because I've learned so much from you, your essays. Your essays—on [Odysseus] and Homecoming and some essays I think you mentioned the Orphan [or the Exile]. And then what you've done with your dissertation on Colony Collapse. Maybe that's what we have to do is strike up conversations in community and try and share that, which we will. And then risk being a fool. People might say, “Oh my God! This guy is... [laughter]. But, now, Don Quixote?”

BB: I was going to say...Do I see another book in your future? [laughter]

RR: No! No more books! [laughter]. No more books.

BB: Don Quixote would be the perfect place to go after the Monster theme. Never say never, Robert. I mean, I would read anything that you would write. And I know that I have seen you struggle a bit lately over this whole academic versus just being out in the world kind of thing. And I mean, the work that you have done has contributed so profoundly to my own education as well. So right back at you in that way, and also to our larger dream group, which has been such an amazing community. And then back to Depth Psychology Alliance, which was created nine years ago now, and includes the larger community, as well. And then on and on, because there are a lot of people in the world that really feel as we do. And whether they have an academic background, we have to be having these kinds of conversations that do bring it into the open in a way that everybody can relate to, and talk about it, and bring up these things that we're so fearful of talking about in a general basis.

And even depth psychology, transpersonal psychology, Jungian psychology—all of these things to some extent can help but they get institutionalized—a little bit, let's just say. So being able to *not* bypass it—to leave it as the foundation that it rightly is—and then to build on that and open it up and grow it to include the margins (as you said in the beginning) is really what I think the best possible way forward would be.

RR: Yes, I agree. To follow Jung: I say, “Thank God I'm not a Jungian.” Jung's work, depth psychology, has been an important foundation to me, as well as phenomenology. And you, in your work with the Depth Psychology Alliance: that, to me, is a very important contribution in using the technology in a way that serves the soul. So, kudos to you too!

BB: Thank you! Thank you. Well, that was always a goal for me—technology in service to the soul—and I think that is the same thing with the book, the Monster. I mean, we didn't talk a lot about him personally, so maybe there will be a Part Two of this at some point in the near future as the book comes out. I'm really, really looking forward to reading it. I have heard so much from you over the years, and I know that it's taken its twists and turns. And that you have really developed and changed. It has changed you.

RR: Yes, it has.

BB: I've seen that happen over the years. And really, just huge, huge congratulations to you for bringing the work to a place where you feel that you can put it out into the world. I mean, sometimes we tend to get very self-conscious about such huge works, but they truly have a life of their own and our goal, of course, is just to midwife them through as much as we possibly can. And I really believe that you have done that. So, I'm looking forward to the final product.

RR: Thank you so much. As always, I am in your debt, and I have a real sense of humble gratitude towards you. You're a good colleague, a good friend, and a good scholar. In the proper sense [laughter].

BB: In all the proper senses! [laughter]. Thank you so much.

RR: And a good coach, I'm sure now, with all of that background.

BB: Thank you. I really appreciate it, Robert. Thanks for spending some time with me today, and I absolutely look forward to seeing whatever happens next.

RR: Thank you, Bonnie. Have a good day!

BB: Same to you.

*Note: This transcript has been edited slightly from the original for clarity and simple corrections

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BIOGRAPHIES

Robert D. Romanyshyn is an Emeritus Professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute, an Affiliate Member of The Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts, and a Fellow of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture. In 1972, he co-founded an interdisciplinary program in psychology at the University of Dallas, and in 1991, he was invited to create a research approach for the innovative doctoral program in clinical psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute. In addition to on line webinars and interviews, he has given key note addresses, lectures and workshops at international conferences, universities and professional societies in the U.S., Europe, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and New Zealand.

His book publications include *Victor Frankenstein, the Monster and the Shadows of Technology: The Frankenstein Prophecies* (2019); *Leaning Toward the Poet: Eavesdropping on the Poetry of Everyday Life*; *The Wounded Researcher*; *Ways of the Heart: Essays Toward an Imaginal Psychology*, *The Soul in Grief: Love, Death, and Transformation*; and *Technology as Symptom & Dream*. He has published poems, numerous articles in psychology, philosophy, education and literary journals, written a one-act play about Frankenstein, and created a multi-media DVD entitled, *Antarctica: Inner Journeys in the Outer World*, based on his travels. Visit his website at RobertRomanyshyn.com, or email him at rdromanyshyn@gmail.com.



Bonnie Bright, Ph.D., holds M.A. degrees in Psychology from Sonoma State University, and in Depth Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, CA, where she also completed her doctorate degree. She is a Transpersonal Soul-centered Coach, certified through Alef Trust and Middlesex University, UK, and a certified Archetypal Pattern Analyst™ via Assisi Institute. In 2019, she is finalizing certification in Holotropic Breathwork™ facilitation through GTT (Grof Transpersonal Training).

She has trained extensively in the Enneagram, and has completed a 2-year training in Indigenous African Spiritual Technologies with African elder, Malidoma Somé, with whom she also traveled to his native Burkina Faso. Bonnie has worked with indigenous shamans and healers in Africa and in North and South America. Since 2007, she has written about colony collapse disorder and the mysterious disappearance of the honeybees, completing her doctoral dissertation on what she termed “culture collapse disorder,” the psychological implications of the destruction of “home.” She currently serves on the advisory circle for Climate Psychology Alliance—North America.

Bonnie created and served as the Executive Editor of *Depth Insights* scholarly journal for six years, and is the Founder and Director Emeritus of Depth Psychology Alliance™, an online organization with over 5000 members interested in Jungian, Depth, Transpersonal and other spiritual psychologies. She regularly conducts audio and video interviews for Depth Insights, discussing depth psychological topics with top scholars and authors. Her written papers and publications appear in multiple journals and anthologies, and she edited and published *Depth Psychology and the Digital Age* for Depth Insights Press (2016). Find past issues of Depth Insights scholarly journal, and videos of the original *Earth Climate Dreams* dialogues at www.DepthInsights.com. Connect with Bonnie on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/bonniebrightphd, or on Facebook at [BonnieBright.DepthPsych](https://www.facebook.com/BonnieBright.DepthPsych).