

ROMANYSHYN, R. D. (2007). *The wounded researcher: Research with soul in mind*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books. 386 pp. ISBN 978-1-882670-47-5. Paper, \$24.95. Reviewed by Rosemarie Anderson.

Robert Romanyshyn's *The Wounded Researcher* is an erudite, warm-hearted and soulful book about "research with soul in mind." In a lucid and lyrical writing, Romanyshyn relays his own journey in the development of an imaginal approach called alchemical hermeneutics. If there were ever a research book with which to "cozy up" on a winter night, this might be the one. You could probably find other activities for such an hour; but, by way of exaggeration, I want to emphasize how readable and personal this book is. To illustrate, I quote Romanyshyn directly:

The work that the researcher is called to do makes sense of the researcher as much as he or she makes sense of it. Indeed, before we understand the work we do, it stands under us. Research as a vocation, then, puts one in service to those unfinished stories that weigh down upon us individually and collectively as the wait and weight of history. As a vocation, research is what the work indicates. It is re-search, a searching again of what has already made its claim upon us and is making its claim upon the future.... In this sense, re-search as a vocation is a journey of transformation. What the knower comes to know changes who the knower is. It is an alchemical process in which one knows only insofar as one lets oneself be known ... (pp. 113–117)

For Romanyshyn, the wounded researcher is claimed by the work of research, which in time invites the researcher to relinquish the claim he or she has upon it so that the work itself can speak. Since alchemical hermeneutics invites and engages the researcher's unconscious processes, the "wounded researcher ... is meant to go down into the terrain beneath the bridge, into that abyss that the vulnerable observer attempts to bridge. The difference is that while the vulnerable observer includes only those subjective factors that he or she is conscious of, the wounded researcher delves into his or her unconscious complexes, which he or she then strives to make conscious (p. 108)." From this perspective, re-search is soul work or spiritual work because in relinquishing one's claims upon the work and the narrow perspectives with which one began, re-search again takes on a lively character all its own. The past that claims the researcher speaks through us to the future in language transformed by the act of searching again. The researcher begins to ask, "Who's doing this work after all?" begging the question even of authorship.

For the transpersonal researcher, much nourishment and support is found in Romanyshyn's alchemical hermeneutics, an approach to research that is intended to be complementary and easily blended with other research approaches. In addition, many procedures, such as transference dialogues, creating ritual space, the process of reverie, working with images and symbols, and writing styles appropriate to research with soul in mind, will find direct

application in transpersonal research and scholarship. I highly recommend this insightful and artful book to transpersonal researchers.

The Author

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