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Of Brothels, Gambling-Hells, and the Salons of the Elegant: Collectivity, Individuality, and the Dream

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Life's Outer Collective

In his 1912 essay, "New Paths in Psychology," C.G. Jung celebrates the scope and vision of the emerging depth psychologies by contrasting them with the more established academic and experimental psychology of his day. Though early in his career he had achieved renown as an innovator in the field of experimental psychology, he was keenly aware of the limitations of approaches modelled upon the exact sciences in meeting the challenge presented by the living psyche, the psyche as it is manifested in peoples' lives. "[A]nyone who wants to know the human psyche" (*CW* 7:409), he writes

will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology. He would be better advised to ... put away his scholar's gown, bid farewell to his study, and wander with human heart through the world. There, in the horrors of prisons, lunatic asylums and hospitals, in drab suburban pubs, in brothels and gambling-hells, in the salons of the elegant, the Stock Exchanges, Socialist meetings, churches, revivalist gatherings and ecstatic sects, through love and hate, through the experience of passion in every form in his own body, he would reap richer stores of knowledge than text-books a foot thick could give him, and he will know how to doctor the sick with real knowledge of the human soul.

This passage, I believe, rings true. Even if we do not follow Jung in his apparent depreciation of the value of experimental psychology and scholarly pursuit, it is refreshing to hear the relationship

of psychology to the lived diversity of life affirmed so evocatively. Psychological knowledge is a knowledge of the way things happen and of the way we happen to ourselves. Outwardly and inwardly, life configures itself in patterns. Like the situations and settings Jung describes, these patterns are typical, part and parcel of the human drama. So typical are they, in fact, that for the most part we take them for granted, thinking about them as little as fish think about the ocean in which they swim, or the child about its familial milieu.

Jung called this condition of being unconsciously identified with the powers and principalities of our common human lot *participation mystique*. In states of *participation mystique* our individuality has not been made conscious of itself as a force of initiative distinct from the forms of collective life such as those Jung lists above. Subject and object, self and other, are undifferentiated. Motivations pour into us from the outside, from the dynamics of the group process. Many people, for instance, marry early, in their late teens or early twenties, as part of a great wave of marriage. Likewise, most of us get recruited into the value-system of a collective of some kind--in academic life by values such as "publish or perish," in other spheres of life by the work ethic, the bottom line, or the gravy train. We live, or are lived by, a persona that has been bestowed upon us by our society--Steady Eddy, Plain Jane, Reliable Ruth. A trip to the drinking fountain during a business meeting is all that it takes sometimes to be nominated to a committee or named chairman of the department. Our degree comes with obligations, as well as rights and privileges. At some time or other, whether we will or no, we all have the greatness of the collective psyche thrust upon us in some fashion.

This state of affairs holds sway so long as the source of life energy in the unconscious has not been discriminated from the objects in the world upon which it has been projected. While this is the

case the worlds in which we find ourselves remain fields, not of conscious choice and the freedom that this brings, but of unconscious and compulsive action. Contemporary systemic therapies speak of the individual as a function of a larger social process or system. Jung, with a similar problematic in mind, speaks of our traipsing about in twos and threes with motivations pumped into us from outside (CW 10:70).

Each of us, no doubt, could add to Jung's list of collective situations examples from our own experience. It is a common experience to be drawn into the fray of life in such a way that our individual moral sense checks in--if it checks in at all--only after the fact, as an incredulity, perhaps, about "what got into me?" The brutality we are capable of in sport does not reveal itself until we lace on the skates. The valour we are capable of in war does not present itself until we are called to duty and sent to the front. Only during that summer on the farm did we realize our capacity to curse and swear. As innocence gives way to experience we recognize the shadowy truth that nothing human is alien to us. Our potential for treachery and kindness, enmity and friendship, love and hate is revealed to us through the particular *mise en scène* that sweeps us into life--the drab suburban pubs, revivalist meetings, lunatic asylums, stock exchanges, brothels, gambling hells, and salons of the elegant mentioned by Jung.

Childhood, Family, Gender and Sexuality envelope us as archetypes in a similar manner. As patterns in the life of Everyman and Everywoman, they, too, pre-exist and provide life experiences we have learned to regard as the most shaping of who we are. To be a twin, the eldest in a sib line of nine children, or a coal-miner's daughter: these are facts with objective psychic properties, quite apart from the personalities involved.¹ The same can be said of our domestic roles. Husband, wife, father, mother, parent, child--none of these titles is exclusive to us, ours alone. On the contrary,

each is a highly collective pattern that draws us into the stream of life, heedless of our personal capacity or personal wishes. Said another way, although Childhood, Family, Gender and Sexuality become each our own as we live them, they are no more and no less our own than are the other things we live such as Affluence and War, Catastrophe and Famine, city streets and rural ramparts. Like a gypsy with a tarot deck, Life turns up the cards of our fate, leaving it to us to convert this dispensation into the more personal terms of a destiny.

By taking our place on Life's stage, and varying the parts we are given in relation to our individual uniqueness, meaning--or as we are now in the habit of saying, soul--is given to life. Repeatedly throughout our lives we find ourselves at critical junctures that compel us to make fateful choices. These junctures are thresholds of initiation, the defining moments of a higher history, the history of Life's *conscious* realization.

Before the rupture in their relationship Jane and Norman were being lived by the dynamic properties of that ubiquitous and generic, capital "C" Couple with which they, like a multitude of other couples, were unconsciously identified. Not until this archetypal relationship ruptured and they were brought to the brink of divorce did they chose each other individually, and a personal relationship begin. Likewise, a physician is a mere functionary of that aspect of the healer archetype that is mediated by the persona his training conferred upon him until he has had to grapple with an ethical dilemma and make a personal decision. "I don't know what you should do in this circumstance," the analyst tells his conflict-ridden patient, "but what you decide is clearly important; it will determine the kind of person you are." There is a fork in the road, a angel at the ford, a place of personal reckoning, for every individual.

Moral quandaries weigh our souls against a feather. If they are too heavy with collective

psychology we remain in the purgatory or hell of collective psychology. If, on the other hand, we have sufficiently differentiated ourselves, not only are we redeemed (our anxiety, guilt, and shame giving way, somewhat, as we realize that these are both ours and not-ours²), but the dead speed from their sepulchres as well, into the new dispensation that our choices inaugurate.

"I frequently have the feeling that [the dead] are standing directly behind us waiting to hear what answer we will give to them, and what answer to destiny,"³ writes Jung in his memoirs. Like a court of law, individual life contributes a precedent to the life of the collective. Old cases are reviewed in relation to new values. Or, to say the same thing a different way, once the four minute mile has been broken, or Everest climbed, by someone, it has been broken or climbed by all. The collective unconscious or ancestral soul is contemporized in relation to what we have each made individual in our lives.

Wandering through the world with a human heart, writes Jung, is how we learn about the human soul. As a traveller, a man who made numerous journeys in his life, journeys to America, India, and Africa, Jung knew how important it is to venture outside one's usual social and cultural milieu. To be a stranger in a strange land relativizes the received values of one's own people, throwing one's individuality into relief. Much of what one takes for granted or unthinkingly deems necessary is shown to be in fact quite arbitrary. As our awareness of the way things happen in the greater world broadens, our experience of the way we happen to ourselves broadens as well. This is not to say that the figure of the other is not a figure of interest in his or her own right.⁴ Such interest, however, has important repercussions for self-reflection. As we experience the otherness of other people, places, or things, aspects of our own interior world that we have yet to integrate into awareness stand forth more clearly. Doubtless, it was these unexpected and often uncanny

resonances of outer and inner worlds that inspired Jung to infer the existence of a level of the psyche that underpins the vast variety of its cultural manifestations, the collective unconscious. In his introduction to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, a work of Chinese Alchemy of some antiquity, Jung expressed it this way: "... growing acquaintance with the spiritual East should be no more to us than the symbolical expression of the fact that we are entering into connection with the elements in ourselves which are strange to us" (CW 13:72). What Jung says of the spiritual East could be said as well of any setting. We happen to ourselves in unfamiliar ways whenever we venture beyond the precincts to which we have become habituated.

Life's Inner Collective

Thus far I have been referring to the life of the psyche in an extroverted manner. The archetypal dimension of the psyche, I have been suggesting, as a dimension of soul common to us all, stands forth with particular clarity in group psychology. Go out into the world like the protagonist in Sommerset Maugham's novel *The Razor's Edge*, experience life in a variety of contexts and then, as Jung put it in the quotation we began with, you will "reap richer stores of knowledge than textbooks a foot thick could give ... and ... will know how to doctor the sick with real knowledge of the human soul."

There is another arena, however, in which the way things happen and the way we happen to ourselves play off each other, an introverted one. Though we may not have immersed ourselves in the various life situations Jung describes, these settings nevertheless engulf us each night in our dreams. Regardless of whether we have ever darkened the door of a church, a stock exchange, a gambling hell, brothel, or salon, or whether we have ever set foot in a prison, mental asylum, or revival meeting, any of these life situations can appear as the setting of our dreams.

Surely this is a remarkable fact. Just think of it: if we, like Mohammed, will not go to the mountain, the mountain--or whatever setting which that living kaleidoscope of images we call the psyche may send in its place--will come to us, even as it did for that venerable prophet.

As a student of dreams I never cease to be amazed at the psyche's ability to throw the dreamer's individuality, or lack of individuality, into relief against the myriad backgrounds of collective life. In one dream the life with which we are in unconscious fellowship may appear to us as a motorcycle gang, in another as a flamenco dancer. "What have I to do with these figures?" we wonder upon waking; "I've never even been on a motorcycle, never danced in a night club." Though we protest our innocence, ironically it is precisely this innocence with respect to ourselves and the possibilities latent in our depths that we are guilty of. Unlived life is guilty life and in our dreams we re-visit the scene of the crime.

It is frequently the case that we do not get on well with the fallen angels of our unlived life, the figures of our dreams. The bikers chase us and we awaken in fright. The flamenco dancer terrifies us with her erotic, voodoo stare.

In other dreams, there is more harmony. This is especially so when life is being creatively engaged. A young poet, during a creative period in which he wrote a poem a day, dreamt that he was sitting comfortably upon the uplifted tail of a whale as it swam through the ocean. The next morning he again rode on the whale's tail by writing a poem about his dream.

This planet has no handles
And there isn't any shore
Only the great fish cares
He does not swallow me
And I do not hook him
He carries me along upon his tail

Leviathan, Leviathan, Great Fish
Swimming through the ocean of my heart
I love you!

Once, during a time when I was studying relentlessly in preparation for a major exam, I dreamt that I was standing along the banks of a river, shoulder to shoulder with a hundred other anglers, snagging trout after trout out of the water with large treble hooks. Awakening from the dream, my moral reaction or individuating response was one of shame and horror at having been a party to this desecrating rape of the stream. A week or so later, when I was studying in a more relaxed spirit, reading this and that as the spirit moved me, I dreamt that I was again at the stream, by myself this time, fly-fishing. Keeping this dream in mind, along with the earlier one in which I had been viciously snagging fish, helped me to continue to study in the more relaxed and pleasurable spirit I had discovered.

A woman who was hesitant to endorse her artistic impulses and give painting the place in her life it seemed to warrant dreamt that she was in a wooded area of an Indian reservation with some young Indian children. The faces of the children were stained with bright colours from the popsicles they were enjoying. Upon waking the dreamer was reminded of the bright palette of colours that she liked to paint with. In the dream, the figure of the dreamer wanted the children to go with her back to the reservation's headquarters, but they wanted her to stay with them in the woods and play. Brooking no disagreement she turned and walked away, whereupon the children all committed suicide. Before the dream, it had been hard for the dreamer to credit her desire to make art. It seemed egotistical, self-indulgent, unrealistic, and impractical. She had so many people and things to look after in her outer life. The dream, however, showed the life that animates her impulses in a very different light. It is a life like that of Indian children, a life that wants to stay in

the woods, close to nature, and play. Turning her back on this life, according to the dream, has shockingly tragic consequences.

Recently, a man presented me with a dream in which he was playing football on his old college team. The opponents were formidable, but he had just caught a pass and run it down the field leaving his team in a good position for the next play--first and ten with twenty yards to make the field. The context of the dream seemed to be our work. We had had a session the week before that he felt helped by. The dream seemed to reflect that he had received something from the session and had run with it, leaving us in good shape for the next plays or future sessions. This, basically, was all we made of the dream. Today, however, I wonder what, if anything, his work on himself will mean for the football team of his *Alma Mater*. Will they have a championship season this year? Chaos theorists speak of a butterfly effect. A butterfly flutters its wings in Tokyo and there is a tornado in Kansas. Do dreams work in the same way?

Possibilities like these are difficult to entertain. I suggest them, not because I want to promote such beliefs, but to put us in touch with our resistance to doing so. As modern men and women, we can no longer think in such magical terms, not even if we have a nostalgic wish to do so. Dreams, however--and this is my point--do think this way. Nietzsche, Freud, and Jung all observed the way in which dreams immerse us in a more archaic mode of thought. The dreamworld, as these luminaries were among the first to observe, is a world in which subject and object, inner and outer, self and other are not clearly distinguished. For all it lacks in clarity and distinctness, however, this world is incredibly vital. In contrast to the isolated subjectivity of the post-Cartesian ego that "murders to dissect," the irrational psyche, as an all-inclusive imago of life, has the power to move, invigorate, and compel us to live. Where the mind-set of modern rationalism renders objects fixed

and dead by viewing them as objects,⁵ the imaginal psyche, in a chameleonic fashion, forms analogies and identities that foster a felt sense of aliveness.

For all the importance Jung placed on becoming conscious he was respectful of the irrational psyche and of *participation mystique* as a source of life. Indeed, he did not consider it appropriate to speak of projection until the state of *participation mystique* foundered of its own accord. It would be perverse to call love a projection during its enchanting, life-giving reign. Likewise, what modern consciousness discounts as illusion and superstition when encountering tribal societies is precisely what adapts the members of those societies to their world. Only when disturbances appear in the fit between our vision of the way things happen and how they actually are happening is there any benefit to differentiating out subject and object and seeing through projections.

In our approach to the dream we forget this. Our first move is toward distinguishing subject and object. We immediately assign the dream to the dreamworld, turning it into an object of our dayworld consciousness. Unlike Chuang-tzu, the Chinese sage, who wondered if he was a man who had dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was a man, it is *we* who dreamt of the butterfly, the motorcycle gang, the flamenco dancer, not the other way round.

The Moral Moment

Let us consider some more dreams.

A man in his early twenties dreamt that he was in the Community Centre of his small rural town. In the dream he is about to be married to a girl he had gone through school with in actual life, but with whom he had not been particularly friendly. The whole town is present, his family, a big crowd. He feels confused by what is going on. Gradually it dawns on him that he is the

bridegroom. How is that? To figure out how this came to pass he seeks out his bride-to-be. Sure enough they are to be married. "But have we been going out?" he asks her incredulously. "Yes, for about a year," she answers. He is dumbfounded. To top it all, he then notices that she is pregnant. "Am I the father?" he asks. "No," she replies. All this he is left to ponder. The whole town is assembled, the ceremony is but minutes away, the child is not his but will need a father. And then, suddenly, he decides, "I cannot go through with this." Summoning up his courage he seeks out his fiancée and tells her, "the wedding is off; everyone will have to go home." Awakening from the dream he was struck by how real it had felt. Why should he dream such a thing, and dream so vividly, when he, in fact, had no girlfriend and marriage was the farthest thing from his mind?

Like the other dreams we have discussed, this one places the dream-ego in a collective situation. The dreamer finds himself in the community centre along with his relatives and other town folk even as our other dreamers found themselves by a stream fishing with a hundred other anglers, on an Indian reservation with a group of Indian children, and in a football stadium in the midst of a football game. And, again, as in the previous examples, there is a moral moment. After speaking to his bride-to-be, his unconscious fellowship with the figures of the dream becomes subject to criticism. He decides to call off the wedding, as difficult as this is given the circumstances. In this way, he differentiates himself from his identification with the collective psyche and asserts himself as an individual.

Just as the fish does not see the ocean in which it swims, our dreamer, I believe, did not realize the extent to which he was identified with the rural milieu in which he had grown up. Previously, this had not been a problem. The need to repair some damage in the sphere of his roots had taken precedence over any need to try his wings, leading him to linger on in his home town, despite his

lack of prospects there. This dream, however, seemed to announce that this situation was about to reverse itself. The peaceful period of *participation mystique* was beginning to give way to conflict as the question of what he would do with his life became more urgent with the passing of another birthday. It was time to reckon with projections, not so much with his projections onto others, though this, of course, is always important, but with how the collective psyche--the place he hailed from--was projecting him.

In connection to the figure of his bride-to-be he said that she was "a typical Wellington County girl." Was this, he suddenly realized, what he was on the threshold of marrying--the Wellington County lifestyle? When he had asked the figure of his fiancée if they had been going out and for how long, she replied that they had been going out for about a year. This raised the question of how he had been living during the past year. What had he been doing that could be metaphorized as going out with this typical Wellington County girl? Reflecting on this, he recalled that a year ago he had had the opportunity to leave the district and go back to school, but he had taken a job in his locality instead. Along with the job came a lifestyle--weekend parties at the Stag and Doe, helping Jack split wood, standing up for his buddy in a brawl. Did he really want to marry this dame and be the father of another man's child? Or, did his true bride and his authentic paternity and manhood lie elsewhere? "I don't know what you should do," his analyst tells him, "but what you do decide to do is important. It will determine who you are."

Another young man, just emerging out of that state of *participation mystique* that psychology refers to with the terms mother-complex and provisional life, dreamt:

I am an inmate in a huge prison in the midst of many rough looking criminals. Very frightening men. There is a forlorn, naked woman hand-cuffed to the wall of my

cell. I want to free her. I begin a long walk through the court yard of the prison. Prisoners are milling about. It is intimidating, but I do it. In the middle of the yard stands the head of the prison--the warden. He looks like a criminal himself, the meanest of them all. He is only distinguishable from the other inmates in that he is larger, more menacing, and has a gigantic ring of keys on his belt--the keys for every lock in the prison. I walk up to him and simply ask him for the keys. All the other prisoners are aghast, but the warden gives them to me. I begin my long walk back to my cell. I am worried about being attacked by the other inmates, who are looking hungrily at the keys, and so I place them under my sweater. They are so many that I look pregnant as a result. Back at my cell I then unlock one hand-cuff, freeing the woman's hand. The other bonds fall off her.

Here, again, the dreamer finds himself in a collective situation. Though he had never broken the laws of his society or been incarcerated, this dream suggests that he is in unconscious fellowship with the likes of those who have. Something of the mentality found in a prison is present in him as well. Is it his un-lived life that places him in the same imaginal situation as those who society has deprived of their liberty?

"The prison," writes von Franz, "is the negative symbol of the mother-complex ... or it would be prospectively just exactly what [the puerile individual] needs, for he needs to be put into prison, into the prison of reality. But he runs away from the prison of reality, he is in the prison of his mother-complex, so it is prison anyway, wherever he turns. He has only the choice of two prisons, either that of his neurosis or that of his reality; thus he is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. That is his fate, and is the fate of the *puer aeternus* altogether. It is up to him which he prefers: that of his mother-complex and his neurosis, or of being caught in the just-so story of earthly reality."⁶

Doubtless, there is wisdom in von Franz's elucidation of the prison motif. Drawing on this imagery, she provides a compelling account of the way things happen. Our dreamer, however, does

not receive this wisdom from von Franz or even from his own analyst. He comes to his own version of it through the empathy and courage which the image of the naked woman chained to his cell wall stirs in him. The *participation mystique* in which the dreamer had previously lived is giving way to conflict and the urge to differentiation.

Just as with each court case or legal challenge a new precedent may be set leading to changes in the laws that are binding to all, so each dream, let us imagine, has a revolutionary potential with respect to the collective psyche or ancestral soul. How we respond to the images, and the quality of our feeling relationship with the unconscious, matters deeply.

Often, of course, we lag behind the cultural level attained by our outer and inner societies. When this is the case, the collective unconscious has a higher potential, and our dreams, as Jung said, are clearly compensatory. Though we may be changed in the process of grappling with them, the step we take as a result, even if it is a big step for us personally, may be but a small step or no step at all for mankind. Other situations are different. The small step we take in our personal life *is* a step for mankind. The individuality we have differentiated engenders new values, values that are compensatory to the collective unconscious and revolutionizing of the collective soul. These dreams, by no means rare, I think of as "coming of age dreams." Emerging out of the *participation mystique* that permeates our age, we take on a new status as elders of our culture.⁷

The Moment of the Ancestor

In this connection, I recall the dream of a middle-aged man:

I am on a huge plain, perhaps in Northern Europe, the Steppes or the Laplands. It is a huge, wind-swept landscape. I am with a man, a primitive tyrant or chieftain. He

is a man of power of some sort. This is vague. I don't see him until the end of the dream, but he is my companion throughout. A reindeer has been released to run and some other creature, too, perhaps. There is some sort of wager between me and this man regarding the reindeer's fate. We peruse the reindeer and in a short distance we find him. He is dead, but standing erect, harnessed to a sleigh. Or, actually, he is this sleigh, it being made entirely of his bone, hide, and sinew. I win the wager for this is what I had predicted we would find. We inspect the sleigh/reindeer to make sure it is the reindeer we had been following. I look carefully at the sleigh's construction; it is, indeed, the reindeer we had tracked. Then I turn to my companion to address him. It is only now that I see him for the first time. He is a magnificent man in clothing made of reindeer hide, sitting astride his horse. Looking at him I know that he is my ancestor. I then make a statement about the reindeer being dead. As I do so a bone arrow shoots out of me, from the region of my chest, and pierces his throat, killing him instantly. In this instant of his dying, however, there is in him an illuminating moment of awareness of the reality of what I said.

Much could be said about this dream. It is a big dream. I relate it in order to illustrate how the psyche represents that moment in life in which one's individuality has a higher potential in the dialectic with the collective unconscious than does the collective unconscious itself.

The first thing I would like to point out is that once again, as in our previous examples, the dreamer finds himself in a collective situation. The setting and characters of the dream indicate this clearly. Many generations back, the dreamer had roots in the landscape of Northern Europe, its people, and their totem-animal, the reindeer. His fellowship with this age-old heritage, however, was largely unconscious. He did not know that an ancestor rode beside him, unseen at his side, and that at some level of his being he followed the reindeer as his forebears had once done. A rational man of this rational age, he could not--who can?--think this way, except, perhaps, in a fanciful moment. Nevertheless, the life of the psyche expresses itself in precisely this imagery. Like ketones in the urine or bile in the blood, an ancestor and a reindeer show up in his dream. Compared to these actual images, words like "life-force" and "libido," "archetype" and "collective unconscious" are but conceptual abstractions. Jung, of course, for all his investment in theory-making, knew this

well. "Concepts are coined negotiable values," he writes, "but images are life"(CW 14:226).

The terms I have just mentioned--"libido," "life-force," "archetype" and "collective unconscious"--are not the only ones from the conceptual cannon of analytical psychology which this dream returns to the phenomenal touchstone of imaginal life. To this list we may also add "projection," "consciousness," and "individuation." What Jung refers to in abstract, conceptual terms as the process of withdrawing projections, our dream presents as a bone arrow fired from the chest of the dream-ego into the throat of the ancestor. Likewise, Jung's theoretical account of individuation as a revolutionary process of consciously bringing the archetypal psyche to unique realization in one's life is imaged in our dream as the quickening of awareness in the figure of the ancestor in that instant before death in which the dream-ego sees him for the first time. Evidently, the process of becoming conscious, in Jung's sense of the term, is not based simply upon our withdrawing *our* projections from one another; more deeply imagined, it is also about returning the bone-arrow to the ancestors who are the ultimate source of our unconscious life. We return the bone-arrow of projection whenever we truly bring our inherent possibilities to individual realization. Like Apollo dying into life in Keats' poem *Hyperion*, the ancestor dies into our life as we uniquely realize the archetypal pattern passed down to us as our legacy.

I think of this as a sort of Lamarckian theory of evolution occurring not phylogenetically, on the level of the DNA, but phylo-angelically, on the level of the imaginal psyche.⁸ Acquired characteristics *are* passed on, not only from our forebears to us, as Lamarck thought, but the other way around--from us to them. In each act of the will, in every act of choosing, each of us becomes (as did our dreamer in his dream) our own forebear. Said another way, our individual lives, if consciously realized, revolutionize the collective unconscious even as the ancestor in our example

becomes more conscious of himself on the brink of death.

In this connection I am reminded of Jung's dream of killing Siegfried. According to Jung's account,

... Siegfried appeared high up on the crest of [a] mountain, in the first ray of the rising sun. On a chariot made of the bones of the dead [compare here the sled made from the reindeer in the dream we have been discussing] he drove at furious speed down the precipitous slope. When he turned a corner, we [Jung and an unknown companion] shot at him, and he plunged down, struck dead.⁹

Contemplating his dream, Jung was impressed by its depiction of the collective situation from which he must differentiate himself. In his own words,

... [S]uddenly the meaning of the dream dawned on me. "Why, that is the problem that is being played out in the world." Siegfried, I thought, represents what the Germans want to achieve, heroically to impose their will, have their own way. "Where there is a will there is a way!" I had wanted to do the same. But now that was no longer possible. The dream showed that the attitude embodied by Siegfried, the hero, no longer suited me. Therefore it had to be killed.¹⁰

Although Jung's dream of killing Siegfried and the dream of killing the ancestor are "big dreams" in that they were fateful for the men who dreamt them, the insights we derive from them offer a perspective on our lesser dreams as well. Sometimes when I am listening to a dream, I am struck by how conservative, even antiquated its compensations are. While such a dream may aptly portray the theme that has become lively for the dreamer, I sense that the dreamer, as a modern person, is being called to update an age-old motif by grappling with it afresh. When this is the case, I sometimes imagine that the dreamer is being addressed by the ancestral soul, being challenged to tip the world's scales, as it were, with the weight of his own individual response to the scene with which he is presented: "Here is the way the psyche sees it. The ancestors have been there, done that; they can make a picture of it on the cave wall, and send you this dream. But now it is also as if

they are watching you. What will you do at this critical life juncture?"

Experience has taught me that this perspective is not fanciful. As people break with traditions or bring their traditions to unique realization, old figures come back in the dreams, changed. Perhaps something constellates between myself and the other that we contain and work through. Dreams come to confirm this. Where there was childhood trauma, images of the parents gradually begin to change, as if they have been re-educated by what went on in the analysis.

Dreaming the Myth Onwards

The dreams I have presented in this paper illustrate the psyche's tendency to place the dreamer in a drama that is figurative of the collective psychological situation with which the dreamer is in unconscious fellowship. The specific dreams I have selected, and the order in which I have chosen to present them, have enriched my discussion by providing a metapsychological fantasy or myth of the psyche. To complete this fantasy or myth, I will briefly discuss a few further dreams.

Just days prior to being diagnosed with terminal cancer, a sixty-year-old scientist dreamt that he was attempting to ford the South Saskatchewan River in his car. Aptly enough, the car was a Ford Escort. Compared to two other cars with huge tires that were on the river's edge, his own car did not seem adequate for making the passage. In order to better equip his vehicle, he decided to go to a local garage for repairs. There was time to get the car fixed before trying to cross the river and going to the various towns where he was scheduled to give a series of talks.

This dream, as was later borne out, presaged the dreamer's death. In this regard, the specifics of the setting and characters are noteworthy. Mimetic to those traditions of myth and religion that imagine that the soul returns to the ancestors at death, this dream places the dreamer in the farming

district of Saskatchewan where he was born and raised. While relating the dream to me, the prospect of giving lectures in such little hamlets as Elbow or Vanscoy, Saskatchewan struck the dreamer as amusingly incongruous. More deeply considered, however, this motif intimates that he had something to say to his ancestors. The idea here, I believe, is that what he had brought to realization in his own individual life was being added to the collective unconscious. He was not simply in unconscious fellowship with his ancestors, living out the repetition of their attitudes as these were passed down to him via the family complexes and cultural super-ego. Although he may have done this, he had also lived beyond this legacy, achieving, thereby, a higher value in the dialectic with the unconscious. Expressed in metaphors we drew upon earlier when discussing other dreams, this man had, in his own way, and with respect to his own people, shaved a few more milliseconds off the four minute mile, climbed a new summit of achievement, set a precedent, however minute, in the realm of human values.¹¹

The final dream I wish to present is an early dream of Jung's. Like the others we have discussed, this dream also depicts a collective situation with which the dreamer's individuality is in dialectical tension. Where the aforementioned dreams utilized the images of Indian children, a river-bank lined with anglers, a community centre wedding, and a reindeer-hunting ancestor, Jung's dream utilized the image of a single-celled life-form, a kind of protozoa that he identifies in the dream as a radiolarian.

Why, we are compelled to ask, out of the infinite set of possible images, a radiolarian?

Like the coming of age dream of the reindeer and ancestor discussed above, Jung's dream of that most primordial of all ancestors, the radiolarian, occurred during a youthful period of his life when he was in a quandary about which subject to study at university. The dream, moreover, played a

significant role in helping him resolve his ambivalence, embrace his destiny, and come into his own--or at least to begin to.

The dream of the radiolarian immediately followed an earlier dream in which Jung found himself digging up the bones of a prehistoric animal. If that earlier dream presaged Jung's later interest in the archaic vestiges or archetypes that structure the unconscious, the radiolarian dream presaged his later complementary conception of the unconscious as a living process.

Here is the dream as Jung recounts it in *Memories*:

... I was in a wood; it was threaded with watercourses, and in the darkest place I saw a circular pool, surrounded by dense undergrowth. Half immersed in the water lay the strangest and most wonderful creature: a round animal, shimmering in opalescent hues, and consisting of innumerable little cells, or of organs shaped like tentacles. It was a giant radiolarian, measuring about three feet across. It seemed to be indescribably wonderful that this magnificent creature should be lying there undisturbed, in the hidden place, in the clear, deep water. It aroused in me an intense desire for knowledge, so that I awoke with a beating heart. These two dreams decided me overwhelmingly in favour of science, and removed all my doubts.¹²

Though Jung states that this dream settled his doubts as to his course of study, I do not believe it was simply compensatory. Rather, it was the fate dream of a man whose individuality was destined to compensate the materialistic values of his day. Jung's youthful indecision about which field to enter was not simply a case of puerile indecision. On the contrary (though he had little inkling of this fact during that period) his ambivalence with respect to his educational path resided in the fact that the field that he was fated to study did not yet exist. Philosophy, history, archaeology, Egyptology, zoology--the subjects Jung felt drawn to--each intimated to him an aspect of the field he would later inaugurate. Taken singly, however, no one of these connected him to this field on its

own. At this point in Jung's life, what he would later call the transforming symbol existed in the hodgepodge, in the way each discipline deliteralized the others, in the intuition of a common essence.

Like its founder during his youthful period of indecision, analytical psychology, in many quarters, remains unclear about its identity. Just as Jung had difficulty deciding what to study at university, the universities of the world have difficulty deciding into which faculty to place analytical psychology. Is it a science, a religion, or a liberal art? Is it a branch of clinical psychology, a school of psychoanalysis, or a philosophical system? This confusion, combined with the fact that analytical psychology, following in the footsteps of Jung's own eclectic interests, trespasses into the precincts of disciplines as diverse as anthropology, theology, and physics, to name but several, has led to a devaluation of Jungian studies in academe. The antipathy arises, I believe, because the disciplines from which analytical psychology borrows do not sufficiently recognize that its object of study is not culture (in the case of anthropology), not God (in the case of theology), and not matter and energy (in the case of physics), but the human psyche. "Every other science," writes Jung, "has so to speak an outside; not so psychology, whose object is the inside subject of all science" (*CW* 8:429). In identifying psychology's object as "the inside subject of all science" I take Jung to refer to life as it is inwardly perceived and felt.

Dreams, in Jung's view, have an anticipatory character. Ego-consciousness, being the child of the unconscious, usually lags behind them. Awakening from a dream, we are usually baffled by what we have dreamt. This is not to say, however, that such dreams are without effect. Indeed, it is frequently the case, as it was with the student Jung, that the images of a dream channel our interest in a particular direction. We move forward along the gradient of its images, even as water follows a

gradient of flow. For this reason, hindsight is the greatest interpreter of dreams. Only by looking back at our dreams many years later, as Jung did in his autobiography, can we fully appreciate how we have been living in relation to the values that they had presented. More than that, only by looking back can we gain an impression of how the images of our dreams, as sources of vitality, have been living us. This recognition, I believe, is what Jung meant by meaning, as, for instance, when he spoke of the need of the individual to discover meaning in life.

Jung's dream of unearthing the bones of a prehistoric animal and the dream of the giant radiolarian are no exception to this rule. History has made their interpretation easy. Prefigured in their dreamscapes, the science of soul that Jung would later name analytical psychology is clearly prefigured.

In her biography of Jung, von Franz takes note of this fact, pointing out that the radiolarian of Jung's dream is reminiscent of the *lumen naturae* or light of nature, an antique notion that recurs in analytical psychology's conception of the living psyche.¹³ In the same work she also notes that Jung's radiolarian is a mandala and, thus, prefigurative of his work on mandala symbolism.¹⁴ I would add that the solar hero, a mythological figure Jung drew upon in his account of the emergence of consciousness out of its maternal matrix in the unconscious, makes its first appearance in the guise of this figure. The actual biology of the radiolarian supports this connection. Radiolarians live exclusively in the sea and have a translucent, greenish appearance because their outer cytoplasm contains smaller symbiotic protozoans that possess the chlorophyll that allows living being to draw the sun's energy into the universe of living things.

In his essay, "On the Nature of the Psyche" (CW 8: 322), Jung writes,

In its development and structure, [the psyche] still preserves elements that connect it with the invertebrates and ultimately with the protozoa. Theoretically it should be possible to "peel" the collective unconscious, layer by layer, until we came to the psychology of the worm, and even of the amoeba.

A few paragraphs later Jung expressly refers to the solar hero. With the image of the fantastic radiolarian of his dream in mind (with its luminous, opalescent hues and organs shaped like tentacles), let us listen as it bears witness to itself in his discourse (*CW* 8: 326):

Just as the living body with its special characteristics is a system of functions for adapting to environmental conditions, so the psyche must exhibit organs or functional systems that correspond to regular physical events. ... To take an example, the daily course of the sun and the regular alternation of day and night must have imprinted themselves on the psyche in the form of an image from primordial times. We cannot demonstrate the existence of this image, but we find instead more or less fantastic analogies of the physical process. Every morning a divine hero is born from the sea and mounts the chariot of the sun. In the West a Great Mother awaits him, and he is devoured by her in the evening. In the belly of a dragon he traverses the depths of the midnight sea. After a frightful combat with the serpent of night he is born again in the morning.

Just as the psyche creates images that are more or less fantastic analogies to the physical process, so images drawn from the various kingdoms of this world--animal, vegetable, mineral or human--create more or less naturalistic analogies to our psychic life process.

Jung's radiolarian image is such an analogy. Its suitability as a metaphor of that spirit of life we call the psyche may be further appreciated in light of yet another important feature of its biological actuality. Microscopically tiny though these creatures are, they exist in such incalculable numbers that the exoskeletons that they shed at death sink to the ocean floor creating the primary biogenetic sediment of the deep sea. These deep-sea oozes, as they are called, as the primal loam of life,

provide a naturalistic analogy for the ancestral soul. For if "the psyche is an $\Xi \Leftrightarrow \Phi \emptyset \forall$, [a substance, essence]," as Jung "firmly believed" it to be,¹⁵ its substantiality, like that of the ooze of the sea-floor, is that of an age-old sedimentary layer bequeathed to us from the dead who have lived before us. Said another way, the images that Jung identified with the psyche are, to the things in life that they seem to reflect, as are radiolarian exoskeletons to the organisms that slough them off at death--a rich sediment of vital material, generative of life at higher and higher levels of creation.

Life is a mystery that expresses its vitality by eluding our attempts to grasp it. In a similar way, the unconscious is always something more than consciousness can comprehend. Recognizing this, Jung recommended a symbolic approach. Quoting the alchemical dictum, *ignotum per ignotius*, he spoke of naming the known by the name of the more unknown.¹⁶ Lest I revert to my old habit of trying to snag the trout out of the river, or the radiolarian out of the sea, I must remind myself that I have been attempting to follow this same life-giving dictum. My effort, like Jung's, has also been to name the known by the name of the more unknown. To this end--and we are now at our end--I have named the dream of snagging trout by the dream of riding on the whale's tale, the dream of the Indian children's collective suicide by the dream of the man who freed the naked woman from his prison cell where she was chained, the dream of the reindeer and the ancestors by the dream of crossing the Saskatchewan river and lecturing to the dead, etc., etc., on and on. And, now, all these dreams I name with the name of a dream even more obscure--Jung's early dream of the radiolarian--the initial dream of analytical psychology.

Notes

1. This is not to say that personality is not important. Rather, it is to make the point that personality is realized or achieved as a function of conscious discrimination.
2. Cf., P. Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1952.
3. C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, A. Jaffe (ed.) R. and C. Winston (trans.) New York: Pantheon, 1963, p. 308.
4. G. Mogensson, "The Figure of the 'Other' as the Therapist of Metaphor," *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*. Winter 1989, Vol. 24, No. 4. pp. 28-38.
5. Writes Coleridge: "... all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead." *Biographia Literaria*, chapter XIII in M. H. Abrams, *et.al.* (eds.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, third edition, New York: W.W. Norton, 1962, p. 1588.
6. M-L. von Franz, *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*, Zürich: Spring Publications, 1970, p. VI/13.
7. Jung states "...it is quite possible that we contain whole peoples in our souls, worlds where we can be as infinitely great as we are infinitely small externally--so great that the history of the redemption of a whole nation or of a whole universe might take place within us." *The Visions Seminars*, vol 1, Zürich: Spring Publications, 1976, p. 59.
8. See my "Mourning and Metapsychology: An Archetypal View, *Spring 58: An Annual of Archetype and Culture*, Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1995, p. 65. Also see my "Psyche's Archetypes: A Response to Pietikainen, Stevens, Hogenson and Solomon," *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 1999, pp. 130-131.
9. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 180.
10. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 180.
11. Jung speaks of this as "laying an infinitesimal grain in the scales of humanity's soul" (CW 16:449).
12. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 85.
13. M-L. von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, Toronto: Inner City Books, 1998, pp. 31-33.
14. von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, p. 183.
15. C.G. Jung, *Letters: 1906-1950*, vol. 1, G. Adler and A. Jaffe (eds.) R.F.C. Hull (trans.)

Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 540.

16. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 354.