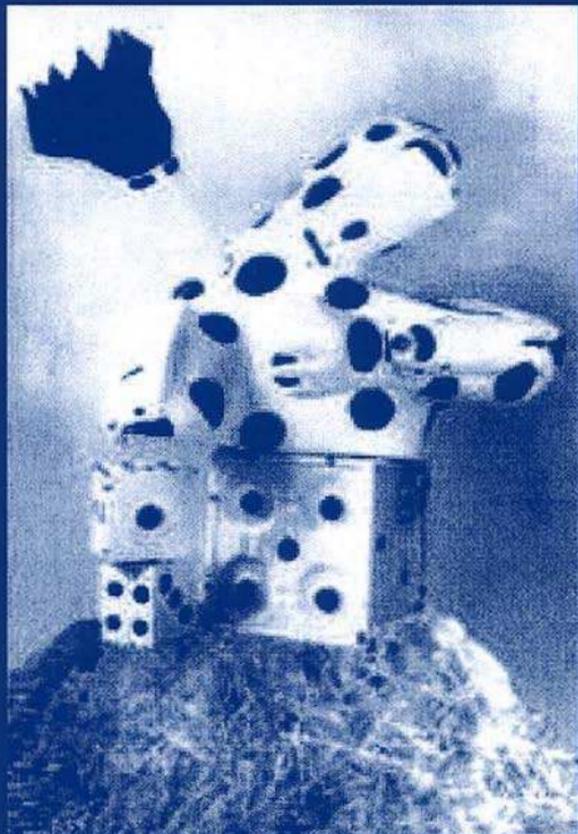


Another Jungian romance

EYES WIDE OPEN

Late Thoughts



DARYL SHARP

Eyes Wide Open

Marie-Louise von Franz, Honorary Patron

**Studies in Jungian Psychology
by Jungian Analysts**

Daryl Sharp, General Editor

EYES WIDE OPEN

Late Thoughts

Another Jungian Romance

DARYL SHARP

For MP and Nurse Pam, for my daughters Tanya Claire
and Jessie Kate, and for myself

The events, characters and situations in this book are neither wholly true nor entirely fictional. Rather they are embroideries on reality, which, after all, is the essence of any romance. Names, of course, have been changed, mostly.

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The greatest thing you'll ever learn
Is just to love and be loved in return.
—Sarah Vaughan, “Nature Boy.”

I wish you bluebirds in the spring
To give your heart a song to sing
And then a kiss
But more than this
I wish you love.

And in July a lemonade
To cool you in some leafy glade
I wish you health
And more than wealth
I wish you love.

—Rod Stewart, “I Wish You Love.”

It came to me that reform should begin at home, and
since that day I have not had time to remake the world.
—Will Durant, historian (1885-1981).

Preface

Funny how things happen. I was going through the manuscript for the previous book in this trilogy, *On Staying Awake*, editing it for the umpteenth time, changing a word here, a comma there, preparing page proofs for the printer, and just going to bed after listening to Eva Cassidy rip her heart out singing *Sunny Boy*,¹ when I was struck by the futility of it all. I mean, “Why do I bother?” Writing is a mug’s game. I can never say exactly what I mean, and I never know how it will be received. Well, vanity is a good part of it. As introverted as I claim to be, I still seek acceptance by my peers. And yes, as a matter of fact, I receive enough appreciation from them to keep me going.

So here I am again, trying to figure out who I am and what I’m here for. As a young writer I had the fantasy that one day I might say all that I thought and felt in one sentence, or at least in no more than a paragraph, but that was not to be. So I wrote books instead, which wasn’t all bad, for in that process I learned many things about myself that would not have come to light otherwise. It didn’t make me a lot of money, but what the hell, I became rich in eros.

I was thinking recently that for me, writing is a kind of disease, like Avian flu or SARS or that mad cow thing that recently spooked us all. And then I chanced upon an excerpt in *Time* magazine from a book entitled *Healthy Aging* by Andrew Weil, a medical doctor turning sixty. Along with the usual wise advice on nutrition and exercise and so on, he finally comes to speak of “spiritual health.” In that context, he recommends that one write an “ethical will.” Here is some of what he says:

¹ Eva Cassidy died of cancer in 1993 at the ripe young age of thirty-two. She sang her heart out right to the end, as if she’d live forever, as don’t we all.

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One way to promote spiritual well-being is through the writing of an ethical will. An ordinary will or last testament mainly concerns the disposition of your material possessions at death. An ethical will has to do with nonmaterial gifts: the values and life lessons that you wish to leave to others.

. . . No matter how old you are, it will make you take stock of your life experience and distill from it the values and wisdom you have gained. You can then put the document aside, read it over as the years pass and revise it from time to time as you see fit. It can be a wonderful gift to leave to your family at the end of your life, but I think its primary importance is what it can give you in the midst of life.²

That sure gave me pause for thought. I did like the idea and I considered doing it—writing my own ethical will. But the prospect quite unnerved me. What would I put in it? How long would it be—a page, twenty pages, a hundred, a thousand? How would I find the time to write it? Moreover, knowing my limits, I had just turned down the opportunity to edit and publish *The Collected Works of Marie-Louise von Franz*, a truly monumental project.

My heart fell, and I choked another glass of Scotch with ice.

I was saved further angst by my inner lady, dear Rachel, who came through loud and clear: “Hey dummy, you’ve already done it.”

Her words bemused me at first, but indeed, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that all the books I’ve written over the past twenty years or so are, in effect, an ethical will that has been updated/ revised over time, time after time. I might even include those books by others that I have edited and published, but perhaps that would be a stretch and not really fair to their authors—but all the same, the content of all the books I’ve published was relevant and interesting to me at the time.

So, my children and their children and my readers in the wider world are already well aware of my values, disparate life lessons and more. All

² *Time*, October 17, 2005, p. 52, an excerpt from Andrew Weil, *Healthy Aging*.

that I have written and published is my gift to them, expiation for leaving Procter & Gamble, so to speak. As Jung says, when you forsake collective values and embark on the journey of individuation, you are obliged to give back something of value to assuage the guilt of your defection:

Individuation cuts one off from personal conformity and hence from collectivity. That is the guilt which the individuant leaves behind him for the world, that is the guilt he must endeavour to redeem. He must offer a ransom in place of himself, that is, he must bring forth values which are an equivalent substitute for his absence in the collective personal sphere. Without this production of values, final individuation is immoral.³

And this book, mayhap my last, is yet another gift to them all, but mostly it is a gift to myself. I think of it as the third volume in the whimsically titled **SleepNot Trilogy**—along with *Not the Big Sleep* and *On Staying Awake*. Well, all told, it is simply another romance (or call it a conceit, why not) on the theme of trying to stay conscious. Like my other books, it is a bald-faced vehicle for explaining and promoting Jung's ideas about the psyche, interspersed with my own brand of mischief and comic relief, illustrated for the most part by my personal experience.

Now, strictly between you and me, I think it is fortunate that the books I write sell modestly. They don't win literary awards and don't appear on any list of best sellers. I am not consciously interested in fame and glory, but my rascal shadow sure is, and with just a little encouragement I bet he would take me into waters far too deep for my own good.

So let's just enjoy the journey.

Note: Some material in this book has appeared in my earlier books in other contexts. Also, my dog Sunny, who appears here in some chapters, died a few years ago. I have resurrected her for writerly reasons.

³ "Adaptation, Individuation, Collectivity," *The Symbolic Life*, CW 18, par. 1095. (CW refers throughout to *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*.)

conceit, noun:

1. Too high an opinion of one's abilities, worth or personality; vanity.
2. An ingenious witty thought or expression.
3. An elaborate or exaggerated metaphor.

—*American Heritage Dictionary*

I know what I have given you.

I do not know what you have received.

—Antonio Porchia, *Voices*.

Golf as a paradigm of individuation:

Inside each and every one of us

Is our one true, authentic swing.

Something we were born with.

Something that's ours and ours alone.

Something that can't be learned....

Something that's got to be remembered.

—*The Legend of Bagger Vance*.

Introduction

What Next?

What could I write next to promote an understanding of Jung's work? How might I reach more people? What new format could I devise? And how much of myself should be included? These are big questions for me. In search of answers I am always more or less distracted, not to say obsessed. I can calm down while making love, but that's about it.

My mind goes back a few years to a lakeside cottage I had on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario. I wrote several of my books there in the company of my dear dog Sunny, a Shepherd-Collie mix of advanced age. Here is some of what I came up with at that time.⁴

My mind buzzed with possibilities, but that was nothing new since intuition had displaced sensation as my superior function. Over the past few months I had fastened on a number of ideas for a day or two, but none had taken hold. Some friends urged me to invent a Jungian detective who solves mysteries from psychological clues. I gave it the old college try, but my heart wasn't in it. Maybe my life is mystery enough for me.

Come to think of it, what was *Chicken Little* if not a *roman à clef*? Who would ever have known that Ms. Little personified an archetypal motif, or of her close psychological link with the Sumerian goddess Inanna, if I hadn't cleverly assembled the evidence and then revealed it in a stunning finale, just like Agatha Christie's Miss Marple or Hercule Poirot? It's true that I was as surprised as anyone, but I did write it.

I don't think of Jungian psychology as a religion, but I know I owe my life to it. Once upon a time I was on my knees. After a few years of analysis I could stand on two feet, more or less erect. That experience has colored my life. If someone were to ask, I'd be hard pressed to differentiate my single-minded zeal for Jung from the religious fervor that

⁴ See *Who Am I, Really?: Personality, Soul and Individuation* for a fuller account.

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characterizes a born-again Christian, or any other evangelical for that matter. I'm not happy with this comparison, but that's the way it is.

Maybe I'd exhausted what I had to say about Jungian psychology. Maybe I should close my practice and sell the book business, quit writing too—do something completely different. I could learn Swahili or go into politics. I could go around the world, see new places, meet new people, marry a man. I could open the lid on the Pandora's box of my unlived life. Wouldn't that be fun?

Sunny licked my toes. I fingered her long snout and stroked her noble head, hard enough to warm the fur like the books say to do if you want them to feel loved. She inched even closer.

Looking into her doleful eyes, I felt that whatever I did she'd be with me, every step of the way.

Yes, in a world of uncertainty I have Sunny. She follows me from room to room; she howls when I leave her alone and runs in circles when I return. I am her master and she turns belly up to show it. She would brush my teeth if I taught her how. Sunny is true blue, a rare friend. And yet, at the same time, I suspect she'd go off with anyone who offered her a cookie. I don't know that for sure, but I wouldn't like to test it.

Such thoughts are a small measure of the opposites I've learned to live with, and one reason why I am reluctant to give lectures. It used to be fun, saying my piece in front of a crowd. I was an authority; people looked to me for answers and I readily gave them. But one day I realized that whatever I said, the opposite was just as likely to be true. I was knocked off my perch by the ancient riddle of the Cretan Liar, one of Professor Adam Brillig's morality tales.

"Nothing I say is true," declared the Cretan Liar, or so it is said in an ancient Greek legend.

Oh yeah? If that was so, then this statement too was a lie, which meant everything he said *was* true. Or did it mean he only told the truth when he lied? Perhaps he was lying only when he told the truth. What's the difference anyway? And who's to say?

I see the Cretan Liar symbolically, as an aspect of my personal shadow. He is tiresome but I have learned to live with him. Over time

we have reached a workable compromise: I admit I could be wrong, and he lets me write books with him in them.

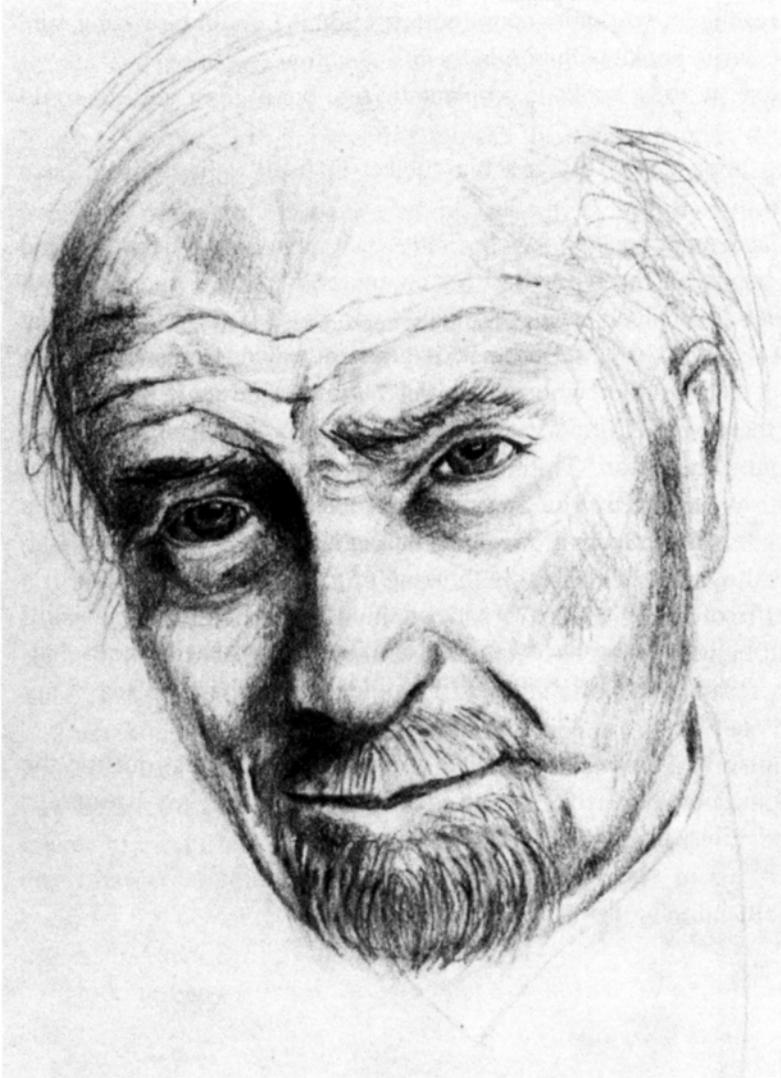
Of course, writing books is problematic too, but at least you get to do it in private.

Writing books, now that's a big subject in itself. I have often been asked how to do it.

I lean back and consider. "Well, first you sit down in a quiet space and put your hands on the typewriter (or computer, or pencil and paper, or stone tablet and chisel, whatever). Then you have to think about what you want to say. Then ask yourself if you are really interested in your story, and then wonder who else might be interested in it. If you can navigate these shoals, then get started. Write your heart out and don't think about publication. Think of it as a dialogue with yourself, your living will even. And if you are alternately proud of it and think it's a piece of shite, then you are probably on the right track."

Meanwhile, me, I am seriously thinking of training as a locksmith. It's not that I tire of analytic work, but locksmithing seems to me to be a skill that would be interesting to learn and useful too. And I need a new challenge. There are on-line courses so I wouldn't even have to leave my house.

I have also had a hot-tub installed on my back deck, just outside the dining room door. Now that was an idea inspired by MP, my paramour, and I wonder why I didn't think of it years ago.



Professor Adam Brillig, by Vicki Cowan.

1

Mayday Malone's

The world turns, with us on it. We can only hope we don't fall off. Anything more is gravy. Like my getting together with Professor Adam Brillig, retired Jungian analyst and my sometime mentor.

"Late thoughts?" asked Adam on the phone. I had called to arrange a meeting. "That's interesting! Not *too* late, I hope."

Adam Brillig is eighty-eight years old. I'm not sure where he came from.⁵ He has an accent, and he once told me he grew up in Eastern Europe, but that's about all I know. His body is giving out, but his mind is still sharp. We had collaborated before, notably on *The Brillig Trilogy*,⁶ and now I had a new book in mind. Frankly, I wasn't at all sure I needed him for this one; his idiosyncratic bombast might well take over. On the other hand, I have a great respect for Adam, second only to my feeling for Jung. I don't always agree with them, but they make me think. I suppose I project onto them a wisdom they may or may not have. But does it matter either way? "A truth is a truth," said Jung, "when it works."⁷ Of course that isn't necessarily so just because Jung said it, but it might be.

All I know for sure is that when I'm in a quandary I read Jung and if it persists I call on Adam. And to tell the truth—well, mine—although I had a good idea of what I wanted to say, I wasn't clear on how to say it.

Adam had agreed to meet at 6:30 in his neighborhood pub, Mayday Malone's. Now there's a name to fire the imagination. I crossed the threshold with Sunny closely leashed, thinking of the traditional cry for

⁵ Of course his name is easily traced to Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem, "Jabberwocky": 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe. ' Carroll interprets: "Brillig (derived from the verb *to bryl or broil*), the time of broiling dinner." (Martn Gardner, ed., *The Annotated Alice by Lewis Carroll*, p. 191) Quite appropriate, I think, for Adam is a consummate chef. Some of his other exploits are my own invention.

⁶ See *Chicken Little: The Inside Story, Who Am I, Really? Personality, Soul and Individuation*, and *Living Jung: The Good and the Better*.

⁷ "Some Crucial Points in Psychoanalysis," *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW 4, par. 578.

help from ships at sea (“M-a-y-d-a-y!”—from French *m’aidez*, help me) and then of Samuel Beckett’s comic masterpiece, *Malone Dies*. Which is to say that for me Mayday Malone’s evoked echoes of the ultimate opposites, life and death.

It was not my first visit to Mayday’s. More than once I had conferred there with Adam in a back booth. But I lived some distance away and due to the press of business I was not a frequent patron. As a matter of fact I am not a frequent patron anywhere because in my life my house is where the action is. A small practice and the publishing business keep me hopping. Except for early morning jaunts to the post office to pick up what’s in the box—and time spent with my artist friend Vanessa and our daughter J.K., who have their own house, and the occasional outing to play snooker—I leave home reluctantly.

On the whole, my daily mood depends on what I find in the box. A bunch of orders? Fan mail? A new foreign language edition? My heart sings. Empty? Bills? Advertising flyers? Another New Age journal soliciting ads? Blah. Worse than anything is the weekend because the post office is closed and there’s no mail at all. Most people dread returning to work on Monday morning. Not me. And when I’m coming back from a week away my excitement reaches a fever pitch. I always look forward to what might be in the box. And there’s never ever enough.

Now there’s a paradox. I don’t like going out, but my life revolves around what comes in from outside. Go figure. Typologically I think of myself as an introvert. I relate to the world subjectively, in terms of what’s going on in me. I could be quite happy alone in a corner. But what to do, then, about my extraverted shadow? How would he survive? I cannot help reminding you of Franz Kafka’s astute observation:

Whoever leads a solitary life, and yet now and then wants to attach himself somewhere; whoever, according to changes in the time of day, the weather, the state of his business and the like, suddenly wishes to see any arm at all to which he might cling—he will not be able to manage for long without a window looking on to the street.⁸

⁸ “The Street Window,” in *The Penal Colony: Stories and Short Pieces*. p. 39.

Adam too is reclusive. In times past he sailed the seas, climbed mountains, went underground. He was a gourmet cook, active as an analyst and on the lecture circuit, a popular speaker on arcane subjects. That was years ago. Now he putters about in his laboratory on the top floor of an old Victorian mansion, and welcomes visitors who bring low-fat food.

Adam and I have two things in common; well, three. He too did his analytic training in Zürich, he is loath to leave home and he likes pubs. There is a notable fourth: his life has been informed for some forty years by Jung's ideas, as has my own for thirty. Not that we worship Jung. We're much too savvy for that. But if Jungian psychology ever became a religion—which I for one do not promote—we could probably qualify as high priests. Call us acolytes, fair enough.

On the other hand, Adam and I are also quite different. I am a classical linear thinker. I go from A to B to C, step by plodding step. Adam is given to formidable leaps of the imagination that leave me groping in the alphabet. He's a great talker; I prefer to listen. Adam is flamboyant in company, the center of attention; I like the back row. Physically, I am six feet of prime muscle, honed solid around a thousand snooker tables. I have a slight paunch, but who doesn't at my age? Adam is a four-and-a-half foot dwarf with a Buddha-belly who once skied down the Eiger.

I sidled into a corner booth to await the little man. Sunny sprawled at my feet.

Winona, young and pretty, ambled over balancing a tray.⁹

"Hi, haven't seen you lately," she smiled.

"Me either," I winked.

I ordered a pint of Algonquin, a natural draft brewed in a small Ontario border town. It purportedly has no chemicals, just pure beer brewed with spring water. Actually it doesn't taste all that different from the multinational brands, but it does feel greener.

Mayday Malone's is an English-style pub and a sports bar. English pubs are all over the world now, designed to make you think you're just a few feet away from Big Ben or Trafalgar Square. In such places I have

⁹ Winona was not her real name; it was my Arnold shadow's code-name for any woman he lusted for on sight.

identified with the greats—Dante, Homer, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Rilke, Kierkegaard, Camus and a dozen others. Although I've fallen out of love with England I still feel at home in a pub.

Mayday's was crowded this Friday night, a week before Christmas in the year of our Lord 2005. There were half a dozen television sets spotted around the room on shelves, broadcasting games from around the world. On two there was hockey; others featured golf, soccer, curling. Off to one side a group played darts. There was a bar billiards table, shuffleboard, pin-ball machines. People milled about, drinking, laughing, shouting. For a moment I imagined I was back in London, in Finches on the Fulham Road, young and fancy-free. But I no longer cared for the noise, nor did I wish to turn back the clock to when I did.

Watching the door I saw Adam sweep in. He climbed on a chair to hang cape, cane and beret on a hook by the door, then turned to survey the room. Over a sea of heads he spotted me. He hopped down and limped over, greeting other regulars on the way.

"Boyo-boyo!" he said, rubbing his hands briskly, for it was chilly out. Snow was falling and angels were in the wings. Near the bar there was a miniature tree, a real spruce, with colored balls and tinsel and lights that went on and off, perhaps in sync with music drowned out by the cacophonous blast from the TVs.

I raised my glass in greeting and bent forward to hear him. His eyes sparkled as he looked around.

"I love this place," he shouted. "In Mayday Malone's I have been elated, depressed and indifferent. In Mayday's by any name I have had some of my most significant thoughts. Of course I've also had many that were banal. Sorting wheat from chaff—isn't that what life's about?"

He said this airily, as if it had just occurred to him. Adam's like that. He seems to talk off the top of his head, but I suspect he seldom says anything he hasn't rehearsed.

He was wearing a black turtle-neck under a Tilley safari vest, tailor-made small, over khaki twill pants. I had on a white tee-shirt, gray cords and an off-the-rack Hugo Boss linen jacket, green, full of holes.¹⁰

¹⁰ I have always found it hard to discard worn-out things—clothes, books, cars, lovers. I

Winona appeared. She and Adam seemed to have a special rapport. They tersely flirted.

"Hey you," she said.

Adam's eyes moved from hers to the tiny diamond in her belly-button, cheerfully exposed between tank-top and tight cut-off jeans. He looked up at her and wrinkled his nose.

She tossed her head. "Half a Guinness, old guy?"

"Make it a big one," said Adam, "why not."

Winona turned to me. "Another for you?"

"Please," I said, "and Scotch on the rocks. Glenmorangie?"

She nodded. "We have all the single malts."

Adam watched her as she moved off.

"An interesting young lady," he said, "self-confident, provocative, on the brink of life. She works here nights while she studies archaeology. She has graced my bed more than once, and I can tell you, she's not thick. A trifle naive, perhaps, but who is not at her age?"

A rhetorical question I could not gainsay.

"I wonder what goes on in her head," mused Adam. "I'd never ask, of course, but I do wonder. What are her fantasies? Do you suppose she thinks of that gem in her navel as just a fashionable ornament? Eh? Or does she see it as I do, metaphorically, as the tip of her inner treasure hard to attain? Hmm? What do you think?"

I said nothing. I used to have a ready response to just about anything. I was chock-full of opinions. Never mind where they came from, where they went or what they were worth. Now before speaking I reflect on what I really think and feel. I consider who's listening and the circumstances. This can become uncomfortable in a group, especially when the talk turns to issues about which I know enough to be ambivalent. Silence is seldom received as golden. Eyebrows are raised, fingers tapped, sometimes tempers rise. Without an opinion, who are you? What do you stand for? What's your bottom line? Fair questions, but how to speak and what to say when tongue is tied considering context, complex and archetype—

become attached, like they were pieces of my soul. That's called projection. I know better, but that's just the way it is.

that sort of thing? The unreflective are socially more acceptable. They speak their complexes and just about nobody notices.

Once in a while I find myself with someone who isn't desperate for an answer. One such was my partner Vanessa, who didn't need me to validate her, and another is this old gaffer who can barely walk. Oh, Adam does run on at times, but he is not unreflective.

"I am reminded of my rake-hell days," he was saying. "I was a puer with a vengeance. Oh my, I was. You know of my years in a monastery.¹¹ Well, when I got out I was at pains to make up for lost time. Phallos ruled. I courted both sexes, but at heart I was a ladies' man. They patted my head and fell at my feet. I was Don Juan incarnate, like Krishna with his bevy of milkmaids. Remember that song by Janis Joplin—'Get It While You Can'? Well I did my best.

"Of course that was in the good old days, when one didn't fear being struck down by some venereal scourge or a killer like AIDS. Never mind that I risked my life in other ways—on mountains, in caves and jungles and night clubs. I was young; death by any means had no dominion."

Adam prattled on about his dissolute life as if he were speaking to himself. I didn't mind because I fancied that one day, in answer to a clamoring demand, I would be called upon to tell his story from beginning to end.

"When I was forty-four," he said, "I suddenly found myself impotent. This was bad enough in the boudoir, but in my business life—which at that time involved brokering medical supplies to Third World countries—it was devastating. You see, my lack of phallic thrust was not only physical. Where I had been a man who knew his mind and spoke it, I became uncertain, indecisive, tentative. I doubted everything, and most of all myself. For some time I faced the day with a brave front, or just stayed in bed, but in the end I sought professional help.

"First I went to a psychiatrist. He listened to my story and smiled. 'You are suffering from a chemical imbalance.' He gave me an assortment of pills. 'Take a red when you get up and one before going to bed. The yellows are for when you're feeling glum in-between. Take a green

¹¹ See *Chicken Little: The Inside Story*, pp. 46ff.

if you feel suicidal, but do call my secretary before you take a purple. Good luck.'

"I took the reds and yellows and felt worse. I took a green and still felt like throwing myself off a cliff. So I consulted a Freudian analyst.

" 'I can help,' she said. She was beautiful, her office was not; cold steel, impersonal. 'It will take time of course . . . childhood traumas, erotic conflicts, so on and so forth. I shall need to see you four times a week for at least five years. I trust you are a man of means.'

"The Adlerian I went to was blunt. 'You are small, you would like to be big. You have unconsciously arranged your life to have power over others. Be honest now, aren't some of your best friends tall?'

"At my wit's end I saw a Jungian. He heard me out and shrugged. "I don't know what your problem is," he said, "but I believe you do. No one can find a cure for it but you; no one but you can identify it as a cure. And once you find it, no one but you can do anything about it. Do you dream?"

"I worked with him once a week for the next three years. Then I found my way to Zürich."

Adam settled back and stroked his goatee. He adjusted his glasses; the lenses were as thick as the bottom of a bottle. He looked me up and down, noting my tattered threads.

"Well, young fellow," he said, "what's on your mind?"

You would think I'd be grateful for the opening, having called on him for just this. But in fact his condescending manner irked me. It's true that I am young relative to him, but I'm glad to be quit of youth. I am a Capricorn, an astrological sign under which those who are born are said to age well and eagerly. I can believe it. I am seventy; I treasure my spare tire and I don't miss my hair. I always looked forward to being a senior citizen.

Across from Adam in Mayday's, my mind shuffled through some possible retorts. I could point out that without me he did not exist. I swallowed that because it was just as likely that I did not exist without him. I toyed briefly with the notion that Adam and I, despite the age difference, were peers. I could not sustain this. Then I thought of times my father put

me down. When I was twelve I had a job after school selling eggs door to door. One day I dropped a carton and was fired. "You can't do anything right," said my dad. When I didn't make the high-school baseball team he said, "You are a great disappointment to me." When I was twenty-two and defected from Procter & Gamble he said I'd always regret it.

"Take your time," drawled Adam. He pulled out his pipe and turned his attention to the milling crowd.

Well, shoot. Adam was not my father and I was a grown man. I had made my way in the world and now I was a man of substance, answerable to no one. Why, then, did I suddenly feel like a kid?

Clearly I was complexed.

Now isn't that typical. Just when you think you're in charge, you're reminded again that you're not. There are those who say you can overcome your complexes, but the best I've been able to do is to identify a few and know when they're active. Nor does that always stop me from acting them out.

I pulled myself together and addressed Adam as follows.

"From the many communications I have received of late, it appears that interest among the educated lay public in the problems of the human psyche is becoming more serious. New Age pursuits are on the wane. Channeling and crystals, auras, pendulums, past lives and the like have not delivered the goods. People are waking up to their same old neurotic selves. I believe they are now more open than ever to Jung's views on the nature and influence of the unconscious. Some say that Jung is old hat, but to me, and in my life, Jung's ideas are as good as it gets when it comes to exploring the mysteries of the human psyche."

This was rather more than I usually say out loud at any one time. I stopped for breath.

Adam said nothing. His eyes bored into mine, seeking—it seemed to me—my real motive. Fame? Fortune? Posterity? Nothing else to do? I shrank before his penetrating look, for I could not deny any of it. Whatever I might say, the opposite was there too. My only defense would be that while feathering my own nest I might incidentally do some broader good. Feeble, perhaps, but close to my truth.

“You understand it is not a question of imitating Jung’s actual life,” I added, “but rather how one might conduct oneself in light of his momentous discoveries.”

The TVs blared. Someone scored on one and the din increased. Several burly young fellows linked arms and danced. Girls jumped up and did the same. Adam laughed and clapped and swayed to the music. It was infectious and I joined in. Sunny covered her ears.

It was all over in a few minutes. Adam turned to me.

“That’s chaff for you,” he said, “and there’s a good deal to be said for it, at least when you’re young. Let the spirit flow! Without chaff, would there be wheat? Jung himself was none too conscious in his early years, as you know. And who is? We laugh and sing, cry and grumble; one way or another we get through the day. And what’s wrong with that? Good luck, I say. Until you’re on your knees there’s no need to question the front of your face.

“Ah, but what then, when the old ways no longer work? What do you do about the goblins? When Jung came to that point he went inside and discovered his parts unknown. And from his experience came a model of the psyche that is of inestimable value to everyone.”

This was exactly what I wanted to hear.

“Personally,” said Adam, “I regard the existence of the unconscious as a fact so important and so topical that in my opinion it would be a great loss if its manifestations were to be found only in technical journals gathering dust in libraries. If ever there was a time when self-knowledge was the absolutely necessary and right thing, it is now. People are hungry for substance. They have no end of cake, but long for bread. That is why you must continue to write. There are many who would toss Jung out as being too heady, too religious or mystical, etc., but you bring Jung’s ideas alive and make them understandable and palatable. You stretch gold.”

“Thank you,” I blushed. It was unusual for my mentor to express his appreciation for my work. Perhaps he had mellowed since his convalescence in the nursing home.¹² “I don’t write or publish books to convince others of the value of Jungian psychology; my aim is rather to provide

¹² See my book, *Not the Big Sleep: Getting Older and Bolder*.

stimulating reading for those who are already convinced.”

Adam nodded, “Preaching to the converted, it’s called. Well, nothing wrong with that. Jung tells of an old peasant woman who wrote asking if she might see him just once. He invited her to come. She was very poor, uneducated. She had not even finished primary school. She kept house for her brother; they ran a little newsstand. Jung asked her if she really understood his books which she said she had read. She bowed down and replied, ‘Your books are not books, Herr Professor, they are bread.’”¹³

Adam became thoughtful. I shut the outside off and focused on a tiny mole just above his left eyebrow.

“The world is in a godawful mess,” he said. “We are living in a time of great disruption. Political passions are aflame, internal upheavals have brought nations to the brink of chaos. So what else is new? The psychology of the individual is reflected in the psychology of the nation. Only a change in the attitude of individuals can initiate a change in the psychology of the nation.

“One of the great problems in our culture,” he went on, “is that extraversion is overvalued. Introversion is generally viewed as a somewhat shady activity, if not downright selfish. Being active in the world is deemed to be the measure of one’s worth. You don’t become Citizen of the Year on account of the time you spend staring at the wall, and you don’t get the Order of Merit for working on your dreams. Yet collective change involves first of all a change in oneself, which in turn requires an introspective system of accounting. And whoever gives careful consideration to personal life-events is bound to come up against the frontiers of the unconscious, which contains precisely what they need—bread, so to speak.”

“You are on-side, then?” I whispered, something caught in my throat.

“On-side!?” cried Adam. “Yes!—on-side and backside too!”

His hands flew out and knocked over my pint. Beer flowed into my lap; the glass smashed on the floor.

¹³ William McGuire and R.F.C. Hull, eds., *C.G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, p. 416. Adam did not, of course, footnote his conversation. To assist the reader I have sought out his references and give them when possible.

Winona waltzed over.

“What’s up, gents?”

“Dear girl, I was making a point,” said Adam, looking sheepish.

“Pray, bring a dustpan.”

I dabbed napkins on my pants and shoes. Adam looked around and knit his brow. “Mayday Malone’s is close to my heart,” he said. “It is a fine venue for fun and games, for fellowship, for sorting yourself out over a pint. But tonight there is too much noise. Everyone agrees that noise is one of the evils of our time, but would we have it if we didn’t secretly want it? Fear loves noise because it stops the fear from being heard; it drowns out the instinctive inner warnings. This kind of fear seeks noisy company to scare away the demons. People alone and in silence might reflect, and in our culture that is not encouraged.”

He stood up. “Let us debouche to my place. Do you agree? Fine! Pick up the tab, would you? There’s a good fellow.”

I paid up but decided to go home instead. “See you soon, if not before,” I said, as we parted.

Jung’s view of noise is not well known, so I would like to take this opportunity to give it wider currency. The following letter was written in 1937 to a professor of law at the University of Zurich, who had founded an association to combat noise. He had asked Jung for a contribution to be published in a reputable newspaper.

Dear Professor Oftinger,

Unfortunately I am so old and tired that I am no longer able to comply with your wish. You may be assured, however, that I have every sympathy with your project and understand it only too well. I personally detest noise and flee it whenever and wherever possible, because it not only disturbs the concentration needed for my work but forces me to make the additional psychic effort of shutting it out. You may get habituated to it as to overindulgence in alcohol, but just as you pay for this with cirrhosis of the liver, so in the end you pay for nervous stress with a premature depletion of your vital substance.

Noise is certainly only one of the evils of our time, though perhaps the most obtrusive. The others are the gramophone, the radio, and now the

blight of television. I was once asked by an organization of teachers why, in spite of the better food in elementary schools, the curriculum could no longer be completed nowadays. The answer is: lack of concentration, too many distractions.

Many children do their work to the accompaniment of the radio. So much is fed into them from outside that they no longer have to think of something they could do from inside themselves, which requires concentration. Their infantile dependence on the outside is thereby increased and prolonged into later life, when it becomes fixed in the well-known attitude that every inconvenience should be abolished by order of the State. *Panem et circenses* [bread and circuses]—this is the degenerative symptom of urban civilization, to which we must now add the nerve-shattering din of our technological gadgetry.

The alarming pollution of our water supplies, the steady increase of radioactivity, and the somber threat of overpopulation with its genocidal tendencies have already led to a widespread though not generally conscious *fear* which *loves noise* because it stops the fear from being heard. Noise is welcome because it drowns the inner instinctive warning. Fear seeks noisy company and pandemonium to scare away the demons. (The primitive equivalents are yells, drums, fire-crackers, bells, etc.)

Noise, like crowds, gives a feeling of security; therefore people love it and avoid doing anything about it as they instinctively feel the apotropaic magic it sends out. Noise protects us from painful reflection, it scatters our anxious dreams, it assures us that we are all in the same boat and creating such a racket that nobody will dare to attack us. Noise is so insistent, so overwhelmingly real, that everything else becomes a pale phantom. It relieves us of the effort to say or do anything, for the very air reverberates with the invincible power of our modernity.

The dark side of the picture is that we wouldn't have noise if we didn't secretly want it. Noise is not merely inconvenient or harmful, it is an unadmitted and uncomprehended means to an end: compensation of the fear which is well founded. If there were silence, their fear would make people reflect, and there's no knowing what might then come to consciousness.

Most people are afraid of silence; hence, whenever the everlasting chit-chat at a party suddenly stops, they are impelled to say something, do something, and start fidgeting, whistling, humming, coughing, whispering. The need for noise is almost insatiable, even though it becomes unbearable

at times. Still, it is better than nothing. "Deathly silence"—what a telling phrase!—strikes us as uncanny. Why? Ghosts walking about? Well, hardly. The real fear is what might come up from one's own depths—all the things that have been held at bay by noise.

You have taken on a difficult task with this much needed noise-abatement, for the more you attack noise the closer you come to the taboo territory of silence, which is so much dreaded. You will be depriving all those nobodies whom nobody ever listens to of their sole joy in life and of the incomparable satisfaction they feel when they shatter the stillness of the night with their clattering motorbikes, disturbing everyone's sleep with their hellish din. At that moment they amount to something. Noise is their *raison d'être* and a confirmation of their existence. There are far more people than one supposes who are not disturbed by noise, for they have nothing in them that could be disturbed; on the contrary, noise gives them something to live for.

Between this stratum of the population and the inertia of the authorities there is an unconscious *contrat social* giving rise to a vicious circle: what the one doesn't want is welcomed by the other.

Modern noise is an integral component of modern "civilization," which is predominantly extraverted and abhors all inwardness. It is an evil with deep roots. The existing regulations could do much to improve things but they are not enforced. Why not? It's a question of morality. But this is shaken to its foundations and it all goes together with the spiritual disorientation of our time. Real improvement can be hoped for only if there is a radical change of consciousness. I fear all other measures will remain unreliable palliatives since they do not penetrate to the depths where the evil is rooted and constantly renewed.

Zola once aptly remarked that the big cities are "*holocaustes de l'humanité*," but the general trend is set in that direction because destruction is an unconscious goal of the collective unconscious at the present time: it is terrified by the snowballing population figures and uses every means to contrive an attenuated and inconspicuous form of genocide.

Another easily overlooked weapon is the destruction of the ability to concentrate—the prime requisite for operating our highly differentiated machines and equipment. The life of the masses is inconceivable without them and yet it is constantly threatened by superficiality, inattention, and slovenliness. The nervous exhaustion caused by the tempo leads to addic-

tion (alcohol, tranquilizers, and other poisons) and thus to an even poorer performance and the premature wastage of the vital substance—another weapon for inconspicuous depopulation.

Excuse this somewhat pessimistic contribution to one of the less delectable questions of our time. As a doctor I naturally see more than others of the dark side of human existence and am therefore more inclined to make the menacing aspects the object of my reflections than to advance grounds for optimistic forecasts. In my view there are more than enough people catering to this already.¹⁴

Now, seventy years later, who can say better than that?

¹⁴ From *C.G. Jung Letters*, vol. 2, pp. 388ff. (slightly modified).

2 Becoming Conscious

The reason why consciousness exists, and why there is an urge to widen and deepen it, is very simple: without consciousness things go less well.

—C.G. Jung.

One of Jung's basic beliefs, and arguably his most important message, is that the purpose of human life is to become conscious. "As far as we can discern," he writes in later life, "the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being."¹⁵ Part and parcel of this is achieving a balance, a right harmony, between mind and body, spirit and instinct. Go too far one way or the other and we become neurotic. Jung says it in one pithy sentence:

Too much of the animal distorts the civilized man, too much civilization makes sick animals.¹⁶

The "civilized man" tends to live in his head. He prides himself on a rational approach to life, and rightly so. We are no longer apes. Thanks to reason, science and logic, instead of hanging from trees or living in them, we cut them down to build houses, which we then fill with appliances, ostensibly to make life easier, but arguably making it more complicated. Take computers, for instance—so very useful yet so devilishly frustrating and time-consuming when they go awry, though manufacturers do their best to make them seem human. When my Mac freezes, a plaintive little voice actually says, "It's not my fault!....." Granted that my soul may feel good about being technologically deprived from time to time, but me, I just feel bereft.

The more we lose touch with our other side, our instinctual base, the more likely it is that something will happen in us to bring about a proper balance. This is in accord with Jung's idea of compensation within the

¹⁵ *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 326.

¹⁶ "The Eros Theory," *Two Essays*, CW 7, par. 32.

psyche. One way or another, we'll be brought down to earth.

The so-called Age of Enlightenment has given us refrigerators, dishwashers, video games, men on the moon, ipods and God knows what else. And we hardly give a thought to what we've lost

It is just when we think we have everything under control that we are most apt to fall on our face, and this is especially true when we don't reckon with the uncivilized, ten-million-year-old animal in us.

That being said, unexamined instinctual behavior is a hallmark of unconsciousness and a fundamental characteristic of the undeveloped personality. Through analysis one can become conscious of the instincts and the many ways in which we are ruled by them. But this is not done with a view to giving them boundless freedom. The aim is rather to incorporate them into a purposeful whole.

Jung defined consciousness as "the function or activity which maintains the relation of psychic contents to the ego."¹⁷ In that way he distinguished it conceptually from the psyche itself, which is comprised of both consciousness and the unconscious. Also, although we may speak of ego-consciousness, in Jung's model the ego is not the same thing as consciousness; it is simply the dominant complex of the conscious mind. Of course, in practice we can only become aware of psychic contents by means of the ego; which is to say, the more we connect to what's going on in our unconscious, the more conscious we become.

My first analyst once said to me: "Think of what you've been, what you are now, and then reflect on what you could be." This is a useful exercise not only for a bird's-eye perspective on where you are on your journey of individuation, but also because it alerts you to what you might be missing.

We live in a stream of events. Something new happens to us every day, but most of us are so caught up in routine that we don't even notice. Consciousness is the result of observing and reflecting on events instead of simply reacting to them. Routine especially gets in the way of being conscious. We can sleepwalk through life as long as we stick to the tried and true. Think about it—when were you last *surprised*?

¹⁷ "Definitions," *Psychological Types*, CW 6, par. 700.

Some years ago I got a taste of what the unconscious can do to wake us up. I had agreed to give a Friday evening lecture and a Saturday seminar in Lafayette, Louisiana. I had mixed feelings about it because I don't like traveling; it interferes with my routine. But I booked my flight three months in advance to get the cheapest fare, and I was packed and ready to go two days before the flight. That too is routine for me and reflects my typology; I pride myself on attention to detail and being prepared.

It was an uneventful flight, and late that Friday afternoon I stood outside the Lafayette airport waiting to be picked up. Nobody came and nobody came. After about half an hour I noticed that the passing cars all had *Indiana* license plates. And there, right in front of me, was a big sign giving directions to the University of Notre Dame. Well, talk about your sinking heart. Of course I had checked my ticket, and more than once. It said Lafayette, IN, but I thought that meant "in" as opposed to "out"—and I *was* going *in* to Lafayette.

That experience had more than one meaning for me, not least that I was blindsided by my inferior intuition, the possibilities; in this case, the possibility that there might be more than one Lafayette in the United States. In fact, I later checked and there are over twenty! Luckily my return ticket took me back to Canada instead of to a Toronto in Texas, South Dakota, Ohio, Maryland, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa or Kansas....

I eventually got to Lafayette, Louisiana, about midnight. I went to bed feeling like a dummy, but the next day I gave my talk and did the seminar and had a great time. It was really quite special. A few days after I returned home, I received a letter from the woman who had been waiting to pick me up at the Lafayette, Louisiana airport:

Carson McCullers said, "Life is such a sudden place." I say this quite frequently. It is what I felt at the airport when you didn't show up. Even though I did use all of my October adrenalin, I had fun. And you, it would seem, had the unique experience of knowing (even if just for one afternoon), where you weren't, & where you were going. Now I ask you, "Why do they say the unconscious doesn't have a sense of humor? . . ." ¹⁸

¹⁸ Thanks to Sidney Creaghan of Acadiana Friends of Jung.

I do like that perspective. I think it's as good an expression as any of what's involved in becoming conscious.

Becoming conscious preeminently involves discriminating between opposites. As noted earlier, the basic opposites are ego-consciousness and the unconscious, so the first hurdle is to acknowledge that there are indeed some things about yourself that you're not aware of. Those who cannot do this are doomed forever to skim the surface of life.

For those who can admit to an unknown side of themselves, there is then the daunting task of discriminating between a whole range of other opposites—thinking and feeling, masculine and feminine, good and bad, and so on. And then there is the crucial difference between inner and outer, oneself and others; sorting those out can easily take a few years.

Consciousness may manifest during a moment of high emotional tension involving a situation in the outer world. We feel uneasy for no obvious reason, or strangely attracted to someone, and suddenly we understand what's going on. The other way is what happens in a state of quiet contemplation, where ideas pass before the mind's eye like dream images. Suddenly there is a flash of association between two apparently disconnected and widely separated thoughts. In each case it is the discharge of energy-tension that produces consciousness. These sudden realizations and flashes of insight are what we commonly experience as revelations or epiphanies. In Jung's model of the psyche, consciousness is a kind of superstructure based on the unconscious and arising out of it:

Consciousness does not create itself—it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious. . . . It is not only influenced by the unconscious but continually emerges out of it in the form of spontaneous ideas and sudden flashes of thought.¹⁹

Elsewhere he uses a different metaphor:

In the child, consciousness rises out of the depths of unconscious psychic

¹⁹ "The Psychology of Eastern Meditation," *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 935.

life, at first like separate islands, which gradually unite to form a “continent,” a continuous land-mass of consciousness. Progressive mental development means, in effect, extension of consciousness.²⁰

A child lives in a state of oneness with its primary care-givers. There is little separation between subject (oneself) and object (other people). As the growing child assimilates experience and develops personal boundaries—a sense of self separate from the outside world—so the ego comes into being. There is a recognizable sense of personal identity, an “I am.” This goes on in fits and starts, until at some point you have this metaphorical “land-mass of consciousness,” surrounded by the waters of the unconscious.

The first half of life generally involves this developmental process. If we get decent parenting in the early years, we stand a good chance of acquiring a healthy ego. But again, this is not the same thing as being conscious. There are lots of take-charge people with very healthy egos—captains of industry, politicians, artists, clergy, entrepreneurs and so on—who are still quite unconscious. In fact this would seem to be the rule rather than the exception. You can be a leader, run things like a clock and manage others well. But if you don’t take the time to introspect, to question who you are without your external trappings, you can’t claim to be conscious.

Mature consciousness, according to Jung, is dependent on a working relationship between a strong but flexible ego and the Self, regulating center of the psyche. For that to happen one has to acknowledge that the ego is not in charge. This is not a natural process; it is *contra naturam*, against nature, a major shift in perspective, like the difference between thinking the earth is the center of the solar system and then learning that the sun is. Bam! This generally doesn’t happen until later in life, when you look back on your experience and realize there was more going on than you knew. Ergo, something other than “you” was pulling the strings. You were not a puppet, exactly, but rather an unwitting participant in the unfolding drama of your life.

²⁰ “The Development of Personality,” *The Development of Personality*, CW 17, par. 326.

Becoming conscious, then, is not a one-time thing; it is a continuous process, *by* the ego, of assimilating what was previously unknown *to* the ego. It involves a progressive understanding of why we do what we do. And a major step is to become aware of how we're influenced by unconscious aspects of ourselves, which is to say, our complexes. In short, being conscious is not a destination but a way of life.

Becoming conscious also has little to do with the accumulation of knowledge. It is rather a function of how much we know about ourselves. And although no one is ever totally unconscious, on the other hand we can only ever be relatively more conscious—compared to what we were before. It is an uphill struggle, and not for the faint of heart.

Jung visualized the unconscious as an ocean, because both are inexhaustible. Freud saw the unconscious, or what he called the subconscious, as little more than a repository of fantasies and emotions that were active when we were children and then were repressed or forgotten. Jung accepted that for a while, and was an early champion of Freud's ideas, but in the end Freud's dogma just didn't accord with Jung's experience. Jung came to believe instead that the unconscious also includes contents we never knew were there: things about ourselves (in our personal unconscious), and then, at a deeper level (the collective unconscious), all the varied experiences of the human race, the stuff of myth and religion—a vast historical warehouse. Under the right circumstances, any of this can become conscious. Jung writes:

Everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness: all this is the content of the unconscious.²¹

And that is why, in spite of our best efforts, we will always be more or less unconscious.

²¹ *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 382.

To my mind, we are forever prisoners of our personal psychology, but if we work on ourselves enough we might make day parole. Or, to use the earlier metaphor, over time we can establish a few beachheads, but there are still all those other islands. My best advice is that you would be wise to become a good swimmer—familiarize yourself with who you are—and get to know some of the denizens that lurk in the deep.

Recall the mythological hero Gilgamesh, who in the fifth century B.C., after a lengthy quest, finally found the elixir of everlasting life, only to lose it to a water snake who snatched it from him. All that is writ in cuneiform on stone tablets and is still psychologically true today in the age of computers.

3 Self-Knowledge

In my childhood I belonged to a church whose minister put the Ten Commandments on one side and Satan on the other. This is white and that is black, and the devil take you for a wrong choice. He knew his opposites all right; they were cut and dried, with no bridge between. But my experience is that life consists of myriad shades of gray. I now say, know who you are and guide yourself accordingly. The difficult part is knowing who you are.

Most people confuse self-knowledge with knowledge of their conscious ego-personalities. Those with any ego-consciousness at all take it for granted that they know themselves. But the real psychic facts are for the most part hidden. The ego knows only its own contents, which are largely dependent on social factors. Without some knowledge of the unconscious and its contents one cannot claim to know oneself.

The average person knows little about the intricate physiological and anatomical structure of the body, yet we are accustomed to take steps against physical infection. Complexes are just as real, and just as invisible, as germs. Against pervasive unconsciousness we are virtually defenseless, open to all manner of influences and psychic infections. We can guard against the risk of psychic infection only when we know what is attacking us, and how, where and when the attack might come.

Self-knowledge is a matter of getting to know your own individual facts. Theories are of little help, notes Jung:

The more a theory lays claim to universal validity, the less capable it is of doing justice to the individual facts. Any theory based on [experimentation] is necessarily *statistical*; it formulates an *ideal average* which abolishes all exceptions at either end of the scale and replaces them by an abstract mean. This mean is quite valid, though it need not necessarily occur in reality. . . . The exceptions at either extreme, though equally factual, do not appear in the final result at all, since they cancel each other out.²²

²² "The Undiscovered Self," *Civilization in Transition*, CW 10, par. 493.

Jung gives this example:

If, for instance, I determine the weight of each stone in a pile of pebbles and get an average weight of five ounces, this tells me very little about the real nature of the pebbles. Anyone who thought, on the basis of these findings, that he could pick up a pebble of five ounces at the first try would be in for a serious disappointment. Indeed, it might well happen that however long he searched he would not find a single pebble weighing exactly five ounces.

. . . The distinctive thing about real facts, however, is their individuality. Not to put too fine a point on it, one could say that the real picture consists of nothing but exceptions to the rule

These considerations must be borne in mind whenever there is talk of a theory serving as a guide to self-knowledge. There is and can be no self-knowledge based on theoretical assumptions, for the object of this knowledge is . . . a relative exception and an irregular phenomenon.²³

Similarly, in the treatment of psychic suffering, Jung always stressed that the so-called scientific knowledge of humankind in general must take second place; the important thing is the particular person. On the one hand the analyst is equipped with statistical truths, and on the other is faced with someone who requires individual understanding. One need not deny the validity of statistics, but the more schematic the treatment, the more resistances it calls up in the patient. The analyst therefore needs to have a kind of two-way thinking: doing one thing while not losing sight of the other.

The recognition that there is an unconscious side of ourselves has fundamentally altered the pursuit of self-knowledge. It is apparent now that we are twofold beings: we have a conscious side we more or less know, and an unconscious side of which we know little but which in all likelihood is no secret to others and influences us in many ways we are not aware of. When we lack knowledge of that other side, we can do the most terrible things without calling ourselves to account and without ever suspecting what we're doing. Thus we may be baffled by how others re-

²³ *Ibid.*, pars. 493f.

act to us. The increased self-knowledge that comes about through depth psychology allows us both to remedy our own failings and to become more understanding and tolerant of others. A case in point is the typological differences between people, which I will not go into here since it is well documented elsewhere.²⁴

Self-knowledge can have a healing effect on ourselves and our environment, but this seldom happens without a prolonged period of professional analysis. Self-analysis can work to the extent that we are alert to the effects of our behavior and willing to learn from them; however, it is limited by our blind-spots—our complexes—and by the silence of others who for one reason or another indulge them. To really get a handle on ourselves we need an honest, objective mirror. Our intimates are rarely that. The unconscious is a rather more unsparing mirror, and analysts are trained to interpret the reflections. That is what makes the analytic dialogue so helpful.

Historically, the triad of repentance, confession and purification from sin have been the conditions of salvation. That has traditionally been the province of religion (“no salvation outside the Church”) and for some it still is, but among unbelievers—that is, those who are no longer contained in a dogmatic structure—the role is filled by depth psychology. As far as analysis helps confession, it can bring about a kind of renewal. Again and again, patients dream of analysis as a refreshing and purifying bath, or other symbols of rebirth appear in their dreams and visions.²⁵ The knowledge of what is going on in their unconscious gives them renewed vitality.

Jung purposely did not develop a systematic therapeutic method or technique, as did Freud for instance. But Jung did describe four characteristic stages of the analytic process: confession, elucidation, education and transformation.²⁶

²⁴ See *Psychological Types*, CW 6; also my *Personality Types*.

²⁵ See, for instance, Marie-Louise von Franz, *Redemption Motifs in Fairy Tales*, pp. 21ff.

²⁶ See “Problems of Modern Psychotherapy,” *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, CW 16, pars. 122ff.; also Marie-Louise von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, pp. 66ff.

In the first stage, you get things off your chest. Its prototype is the confessional practice of almost all the mystery religions of antiquity and their historical continuation in the Catholic Church. You confess to the analyst everything consciously concealed, repressed, guilt-laden, etc.—thoughts, wishes, fantasies, emotions like fear, hate, aggression and so on, and whatever else you are not proud of.

In the second stage, *elucidation*, you become aware of personal unconscious contents that have not been concealed or repressed but rather have never been conscious: dormant character traits, attitudes and abilities. You develop an understanding of complexes, projection, persona and shadow, anima/animus, and become aware of a regulating center, which we call the Self. This comes about mainly through close attention to your responses to daily events and the nightly images in your dreams.

Once these contents have been assimilated to consciousness, the next task is that of *education*, which refers to discovering your role as a social being—your place in the world, where you fit in, your vocation.

In the fourth stage, *transformation*, you become more fully the person you were always meant to be. Unconscious compulsion is replaced by conscious development; aimless activity gives way to a directed focus on what is personally relevant and meaningful. Egocentricity is subsumed by a working relationship with the Self.

This process of maturation, although not the only possible sequence, is essentially what Jung meant by individuation. It takes time and effort and usually involves some sacrifices along the way, but it can happen.

There are many methods and techniques espoused by therapists of different schools, but Jung's view was that technique is not important. What matters is rather the analyst's self-knowledge and continuing attention to his or her own unconscious. Analysis is in fact both a craft and an art. Whatever school an analyst trains in, he or she is obliged to deal in an individual way with what comes in the door. Jung said that when a unique, suffering person was in front of him, he put theory on the shelf and just listened. Nor did he insist on analyzing the unconscious, believing that consistent support of the conscious attitude is often enough to bring about satisfactory results. So long as it does not obtrude itself, Jung

felt, the unconscious is best left alone. Depth analysis is like a surgical operation; one should only resort to the knife when other methods have failed.

Nobody can be absolutely right in either the physical sciences or the practice of psychology. The tool with which we interpret what happens in both the material world and the psyche is the psyche itself. The observer's psychological predispositions and hypotheses influence what is observed; matter in the outer world and psyche in the inner are not only objects of investigation, but also subjects. It is a vicious circle with few objective guidelines, and so analysts of any school must be very modest in what they claim to do.

Today there are so many psychological theories that it is a bewildering quagmire. The Freudian and Adlerian schools are only two of the most well known of the depth psychologies. There is the Kleinian school and the Kohutians; there are Reichians, Lacanians, Hillmanians, Primal Screamers and Mindellians; there are those who work with sand, paint, clay, smell, palms, handwriting, aromas and bumps on the head; others still put their faith in abreaction or hypnosis. That is only in the psychodynamic area. There are also psychiatrists, behaviorists, neurologists, physicists, linguists, theologians and philosophers who overstep their limits in calling themselves psychologists.

In short, psychology is a point of view and no one theory explains everything. At the same time, it is very important that therapists believe in their particular approach, for, as Jung pointed out, it is often *that* one believes, not *what*, which has a curative effect.

That being said, Jung's understanding of the psyche seems to appeal to those who are philosophically minded and function reasonably well in outer life. They have inner conflicts and problems in relationships, which of course they rationalize as best they can, but on the whole they are no more neurotic than the rest of us. They are grateful to learn about the ubiquitous influence of the unconscious and are open to a mythological and symbolic perspective. Much of this they can find in books. The next step, personal analysis, is best suited for those who have reached the end of their tether and have no place else to go, or are otherwise called to

focus on their personal journey.

Self-knowledge can be the antidote to a pervasive malaise, particularly common in middle age, and a spur to an adventurous inner life—the hero’s journey, as I have described elsewhere.²⁷ Understanding yourself is also a matter of asking the right questions, again and again. Do that long enough and the capital-S Self, one’s regulating center, is activated. That’s when you realize that your ego is answerable to a higher authority, which in Jung-speak we call the Self.

Marie-Louise von Franz, the doyenne of Jungian analysts until her untimely death in 1998, writes that having a relationship with the Self is like being in touch with an “instinct of truth.” There is an immediate awareness of what is right and true, a truth without reflection:

One reacts rightly without knowing why, it flows through one and one does the right thing. . . . With the help of the instinct of truth, life goes on as a meaningful flow, as a manifestation of the Self.²⁸

In practical terms, this comes down to simply *knowing* what is right for oneself. One has a strong instinctive feeling of what should be and what could be. To depart from this leads to error, aberration and illness—and to hiding under the covers.

Personally, I owe my life to depth psychology and to the application of Jung’s ideas. Once upon a time I was on my knees. After a few years of analysis I could again walk. One day, perhaps, I will jog, or even run. Meanwhile, I truck along with the elephants.

²⁷ See commentaries in my books *The Survival Papers: Anatomy of a Midlife Crisis*, pp. 77ff., *Jungian Psychology Unplugged: My Life as an Elephant*, pp. 107ff, and *On Staying Awake: Getting Older and Bolder*, pp. 68ff.

²⁸ *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*, pp. 172f.

Personality and Individuation

The process of individuation, becoming conscious of what is truly unique about oneself, is inextricably tied up with individuality and the development of personality. The first step is to differentiate ourselves from those we have admired and imitated. Jung writes about this:

We see every day how people use, or rather abuse, the mechanism of imitation for the purpose of personal differentiation: they are content to ape some eminent personality, some striking characteristic or mode of behaviour, thereby achieving an outward distinction from the circle in which they move. . . . As a rule these specious attempts at individual differentiation stiffen into a pose, and the imitator remains at the same level as he always was, only several degrees more sterile than before.²⁹

Now there's a screed. And here's another:

Every man is, in a certain sense, unconsciously a worse man when he is in society than when acting alone. . . . *Any large company of wholly admirable persons has the morality and intelligence of an unwieldy, stupid, and violent animal.* The bigger the organization, the more unavoidable is its immorality and blind stupidity. . . . Society, by automatically stressing all the collective qualities in its individual representatives, puts a premium on mediocrity, on everything that settles down to vegetate in an easy, irresponsible way. Individuality will inevitably be driven to the wall.³⁰

Pretty strong stuff. If you were a government beaurocrat or had a key to a corporate washroom and read that, it might make you cringe, or at least wince. Of course it's pretty unlikely you'd ever read it; you'd be in a meeting or have much more important things to do. At least I did when I worked for Procter & Gamble fifty years ago.

In his autobiography, Jung notes that individuality and group identity

²⁹ "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," *Two Essays*, CW 7, par. 242.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 240 (italics added).

are incompatible; you can have one or the other, but not both:

It is really the individual's task to differentiate himself from all others and stand on his own feet. All collective identities, such as membership in organizations, support of "isms," and so on, interfere with the fulfillment of this task. Such collective identities are crutches for the lame, shields for the timid, beds for the lazy, nurseries for the irresponsible.³¹

However, Jung also made it clear that he did not advise people to become antisocial eccentrics. Always he insisted that one must adapt to reality and not disappear into the unconscious, so to speak. We cannot individuate in a corner; we need the mirrors provided by both the unconscious and other people. Our ongoing task is to sort out the reflections.

Personality develops by slow stages throughout life. It is achieved as the fruit of activity coupled with introspection and confidence tempered by a healthy dose of self-doubt. According to one of Jung's several definitions, personality is "the supreme realization of the innate idiosyncrasy of a living being."³² On the one hand, he says, it is an act of courage flung in the face of life, the affirmation of who one is. On the other hand it involves accepting some universal conditions of existence, such as where we find ourselves on this earth and having a physical body. Personality develops from germs that are almost impossible to discern. It is only our deeds that reveal who we are. As Jung writes:

At first we do not know what deeds or misdeeds, what destiny, what good and evil we have in us. Only the autumn can show what the spring has engendered; only in the evening will it be seen what the morning began.³³

In the beginning we do not know the limits of our potential, and of course we must also make choices. We are not only individuals; we are also social creatures with responsibilities and commitments. These are the inescapable Janus-faces of life: ourselves and other people. We have only so much energy. What we give to one is not available to the other.

³¹ *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 342.

³² "The Development of Personality," *The Development of Personality*, CW 17, par. 289.

³³ *Ibid.*, par. 290.

We are obliged to choose, and then to live with the consequences.

The twin running mates of personality are individuality and individuation. Individuality refers to the qualities or characteristics that distinguish one person from another. Individuation is a process of differentiation and integration, the aim being to become conscious of one's unique psychological make-up. This is quite different from *individualism*, which is simply me-first and leads inexorably to alienation from the collective. The individuating person may be obliged to deviate from collective norms, but all the same retains a healthy respect for them. In Jung's felicitous phrase, "Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to itself."³⁴

Marie-Louise von Franz, asked to comment on what Jung meant by individuation, said the following:

Individuation means being yourself, becoming yourself. Nowadays one always uses the cheap word "self-realization," but what one really means is ego-realization. Jung means something quite different. He means the realization of one's own predestined development. That does not always suit the ego, but it is what one intrinsically feels could or should be. We are neurotic when we are not what God meant us to be. Basically, that's what individuation is all about. One lives one's destiny. Then usually one is more humane, less criminal, less destructive to one's environment.³⁵

When the persona and the routine of life predominate in the form of convention and tradition—doing what is expected of you, putting your best foot forward and so on—there is apt to be a destructive outbreak of creative energy. Destruction is the dark side of any energy that is repressed. We are all potentially creative, which is not to say artistic, though some of us are both. We all have innate gifts. Those who are not involved in exploring their own possibilities, their individual talents, will take their frustration out on others or on themselves. Relationships suffer, health deteriorates. Heart and liver ailments, skin problems, kidney disease, cancer, depression and conflict—these are all potential con-

³⁴ "On the Nature of the Psyche," *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 432.

³⁵ "The Geography of the Soul," interview reprinted in *In Touch*, Summer 1993, p. 12.

sequences of undeveloped or unlived life. It is difficult to know whether the latter causes the former, or vice versa, but they have been observed to go together.

There is a famous short story by Leo Tolstoy called “The Death of Ivan Ilyich,” in which the dying Ilyich, a petty state functionary, laments his past. In the end Ilyich dies in abject sorrow, with the painful realization that he had lived his life according to other people’s values. For all his good intentions—or, and how difficult this was to admit, possibly even because of them—he himself had not lived at all.

What motivates a person to individuate, to develop personality instead of settling for persona? Jung’s answer is that it doesn’t happen by an act of will, or because someone says it would be useful or advisable:

Nature has never yet been taken in by well-meaning advice. The only thing that moves nature is causal necessity, and that goes for human nature too. Without necessity nothing budes, the human personality least of all. It is tremendously conservative, not to say torpid. . . . The developing personality obeys no caprice, no command, no insight, only brute necessity; it needs the motivating force of inner or outer fatalities. Any other development would be no better than individualism. . . . [which] is a cheap insult when flung at the natural development of personality.

The words “many are called, but few are chosen” are singularly appropriate here, for the development of personality from the germ-state to full consciousness is at once a charisma and a curse, because its first fruit is the conscious and unavoidable segregation of the single individual from the undifferentiated and unconscious herd. This means isolation, and there is no more comforting word for it. Neither family nor society nor position can save [one] from this fate, nor yet the most successful adaptation to [the] environment.³⁶

Being alone is relatively easy for introverts. They may lack a vital connection with the outer world but they generally have an active inner life. Extraverts are used to hustle and bustle and find it more difficult to live with just themselves. But whatever one’s typology, the great chal-

³⁶ “The Development of Personality,” *Development of Personality*, CW 17, pars. 293f.

lenge in the development of personality is to find a personal center.

Initially one's center is projected onto the family, a self-contained unit experienced as wholeness. Without it we are apt to feel rootless, at loose ends. Leaving one's family triggers an archetypal motif: the awesome schism between heaven and earth, the primordial parents. That is clearly at work behind the reactions of a child whose parents split up, but it is also constellated when one separates from the collective.

Loneliness feels like one has been abandoned. Mythologically, abandonment is associated with the childhood experience of gods and divine heroes—Zeus, Dionysus, Poseidon, Moses, Romulus and Remus, and many others. In fact, the motif is so widespread that Jung describes abandonment as “a necessary condition, not just a concomitant symptom,” of the potentially higher consciousness symbolized by images of the child in a person's dreams.³⁷

Anyone in the process of becoming independent must detach from his or her origins: mother, family, society. Sometimes this transition happens smoothly. If it does not, the result is twofold: the “poor me” syndrome, characteristic of the regressive longing for dependence, and a psychic experience of a potentially creative nature—the positive side of the divine child archetype: new life, exciting new possibilities.

The incompatibility between these two directions generates a conflict that is invariably present in a psychological crisis. This conflict is the price that has to be paid for maturity. On the one hand, we long to return to the past; on the other, we are drawn inexorably toward an unknown future. And it can happen at any age.

Personally, I have experienced this more than once; notably at the age of twenty-two when I left my interesting and well-paid job with Procter & Gamble for the uncertain lot of a struggling writer. It was several years before I stopped pining for my lost security, and only much much later did I realize, in retrospect, that my rather impulsive decision was the first step on my path of individuation—becoming who I was meant to be.

Initially, such a conflict goes hand in hand with the feeling of loneli-

³⁷ “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 9i, par. 287.

ness, behind which is the archetypal motif of the abandoned child. Thus Jung observes, "Higher consciousness . . . is equivalent to being *all alone in the world*."³⁸ Elsewhere he notes: "It is, moreover, only in the state of complete abandonment and loneliness that we experience the helpful powers of our own natures."³⁹

As well, personality cannot develop unless one chooses his or her own way consciously and with moral deliberation. And so to the causal motive mentioned earlier—necessity—we must add conscious moral decision. If the first is lacking, then the alleged development is merely willful acrobatics; if the second, it will become mechanical and sterile.

You can make a commitment to go your own way only if you believe that way to be better for you than other, conventional ways of a moral, social, political or religious nature—any of the well-known "isms." Those who adhere to these "isms" develop not themselves but a collective mode of life, at the cost of their own wholeness.

Moreover, personality is not the prerogative of genius. One may be a genius without being a personality, or vice versa, since everyone has an inborn law of life to answer to. In short, mental prowess is but a minor component of personality, nor is it a significant factor in individuation. Indeed, as noted elsewhere, for instance in fairy tales, where so many psychic patterns are illustrated, the one who finds the treasure "hard to attain" is as often as not a Dummling, an innocent fool.

The primary question in speaking of personality, as of individuation, is always, "Do you know who you are? Are you living your own way, your own truth?" The answer is seldom found without conscious effort, but that is essentially, metaphorically, the treasure the Dummling seeks.

Jung points out that because individuality and the development of personality are deviations not congenial to the collective, historically only a few have dared the adventure, the so-called hero's journey, which takes courage or at least the capacity to bear fear.

All the same, since the beginning of recorded time, heroes have been

³⁸ Ibid., par. 288.

³⁹ "Psychotherapists or the Clergy," *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 525.

endowed with godlike attributes. Anyone who would turn aside from the beaten path and strike out on the steep unknown was deemed either crazy or possessed by a demon, or possibly a god. Some were coddled, just in case; the unlucky ones were hacked to pieces or burned at the stake.

The hero's main feat is to overcome the monster of darkness: it is the long-hoped-for triumph of consciousness over the unconscious. Day and light are synonyms for consciousness, night and dark for the unconscious. Jung notes:

The coming of consciousness was probably the most tremendous experience of primeval times, for with it a world came into being whose existence no one had suspected before. "And God said: 'Let there be light!' " [Gen. 1:3] is the projection of that immemorial experience of the separation of the conscious from the unconscious.⁴⁰

Now we have depth psychology. On a collective level we still have heroes—athletes, actors, politicians and the like—and some of these we treat like gods. But we no longer expect of them anything as elusive and differentiated as personality. Individually, however, we have raised our sights. Thanks to Jung we now know that personality, in any substantial use of the term, depends upon a conscious and harmonious mix of ego, persona and shadow, in helpful alliance with anima or animus, our contrasexual sides, *plus* a working relationship with a supraordinate inner center, which we call the Self.

Call it God or the Self, or the Big Turnip, without contact with an inner center we have to depend on will power, which is not enough to save us from ourselves, nor to make a personality out of a sow's ear.

Simply and naturally, by virtue of the work on themselves, those with personality are a magnet for those whose souls long for life. You have to own up to the person you have become. Who you are, whether you intend it or not, has an inductive effect on others. To my mind this is all to the good, for if enough individuals become more conscious then the collective will too, and life on this earth will go on. Selfishly, I would like my grandchildren to have a future.

⁴⁰ Ibid., par. 284.

The guiding principle is this: Be the one through whom you wish to influence others; in other words, be yourself. Mere talk is hollow. There is no trick, however artful, by which this simple truth can be evaded in the long run. The fact of being convinced, and not the things we are convinced of—that is what has always, and at all times, worked a change in others.

I recall that in my first year of university, in Philosophy 101, we were asked to write an essay on the ethical consequences of aberrant (defined as unconventional)—thought or behavior. Plato? Socrates? I don't remember the context. I do recall the question, "What if everyone thought or acted as you do?"—and my cavalier feeling at the time: little me among so many, what's to worry?

That was more than fifty years ago. I was a bright and charming extravert, psychologically naive and impossibly normal. I knew as little about myself as I did about the genetics of bean-sprouts or the mating habits of elephants, and cared less. Now I know that we cannot escape a collective responsibility for the things we say, do and think, including their effect on others and subsequent events.

5 Sons and Mothers

“Some thirty years ago,” said Adam, “I was sojourning in the Himalayas when a group of local women organized a protest movement against the desecration of their environment by Big Business. Among other things, they adopted the tactic of embracing trees in order to protect them against commercial logging. The government sided with the loggers.”

My eyes wandered as Adam talked. We were in his loft, which consisted of several attic rooms with the walls knocked out to make a long low studio, ventilated by a huge window at one end. Under the window—which incidentally had an excellent view of the street—was piled up the usual apparatus of a traditional alchemical laboratory: flasks and retorts, Bunsen burners, jars, bottles and packets. We were stretched out on soft rugs and leather cushions, which made the low-ceilinged room seem more spacious.

The weather had turned foul. Sleet and snow beat the windows and thunder rolled. Sunny looked anxious and huddled as close to me as she could get.

“Troops were sent in,” said Adam, “authorized to shoot anyone who stood in their way. But this didn’t work. Perhaps the men decided that shooting a woman in the act of hugging a tree might not play too well on the evening news. Thinking they might have more success with dumb animals, the government and loggers sent in elephants to trample the women. Being obedient army elephants, they moved in on command.”

Through Adam’s studio wound a pebble path bordered by shrubs and bushes in pots and crates—cactus plants, small conifers, dwarf palms and rhododendrons. Along the path, hung on the bushes or dangling from the ceiling, were dozens of little placards and photographs, each one with a drawing or an inscription. Against the walls were terrariums and cages holding various fauna: spiders, termites, white mice, ant-eaters, axolotls. Interspersed were magazines and papers and journals, and books, books, books. I had been to Adam’s many times, but I was still bemused by his

living space. “A cornucopian delight,” he once called it. To me, fastidiously tidy, it was simply chaotic disarray.

“As you know,” continued Adam, “In the Hindu pantheon the god Ganesha is worshipped in the form of an elephant. There is an annual festival for this god, during which Hindu women sing a ritual song and bedeck the temple elephants with colored ribbons and massive garlands of flowers.

“Now, as the army elephants approached, the women left the trees, moving forward and singing until they eventually swarmed over the animals, stroking them and embracing their massive trunks and feet. The elephants responded by kneeling and could not be induced to rise. Troops and loggers withdrew. The government subsequently fell, replaced by authorities who passed new laws protecting trees.

“What can we learn from this incident? That elephants have a soft spot for women? That temple elephants can somehow communicate with their conscripted military brethren? That women are brave? Certainly it took courage to peel themselves away from the trees and face an unpredictable phalanx of behemoths. Maybe such acts capture our imagination because they are a spontaneous and spectacular expression of the more patient, enduring kind of heroism exemplified by females for hundreds and thousands of years. For what do such women personify if not a dazzling commitment to embrace life in whatever form—husband, baby, tree or elephant? What do you think, eh?”

I refilled our glasses from the bottle of Beaujolais-Villages Adam had placed between us.

“Perhaps,” I ventured, “those Himalayan women sang to the elephants in a pure act of faith.”

Adam nodded. “I believe you have struck the nail on its very head. The fruits of what we call the Age of Enlightenment—science, reason and logic—are ubiquitous but not all-inclusive. There have always been those who would die for a principle, against all reason and sanity. There will always be some among us who will walk toward elephants, singing hymns of praise, without regard for their personal safety. There will always be those who will embrace trees and the rough, huge feet sent to

crush them. Many will indeed be crushed, for that is the way of the world. But sometimes the beasts will kneel and pray along with them, a prayer of peace and harmony.

Sunny stirred and licked my foot. I rubbed her snout.

“It may be,” said Adam, “that such foolish, brave singers are humanity’s salvation. Some embracers of trees and huggers of elephants may even become pregnant, in time giving birth to themselves.”

I thought this pretty unlikely, but as usual when I was with Adam I was willing to suspend disbelief. More, had I not run afoul of my own rational mind? Had I not put my faith in Logos and pooh-pooed my personal feelings? Had my reasoned view of what was right and proper not brought me to my knees? Dostoyevsky’s *Underground Man* said:

Reason is a good thing. No argument about that. But reason is only reason, and it only satisfies man’s rational requirements. Desire, on the other hand, is the manifestation of life And although, when we’re guided by our desires, life may often turn into a messy affair, it’s still life and not a series of extractions of square roots.⁴¹

“I recently had occasion to look up some of the references to elephants in Jung’s *Collected Works*,” continued Adam. “A most interesting lot! As far back as 1912, in a lecture given at Fordham University in New York, Jung referred to elephants in speaking about the hypothesis that associations to the images in dreams can lead to a clearer understanding of the dream’s message. He spoke of a man who scoffed that by means of psychoanalytic interpretations one could even connect a cucumber with an elephant! Jung said:

This worthy showed us, by the very fact of associating “cucumber” with “elephant,” that the two things somehow have an associative connection in his mind. One must have a lot of nerve and a magisterial judgment to declare that the human mind produces entirely meaningless associations. In this instance, only a little reflection is needed to understand the meaning of the association.⁴²

⁴¹ *Notes from Underground*, pp. 105f.

⁴² “The Theory of Psychoanalysis,” *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW 4, par. 337.

I must say this baffled me—I, an aficionado of elephants, and also, by the way, of cucumbers—but I said nothing.

“In a later treatise,” Adam went on, “Jung referred to Pliny’s description of the fabled unicorn as having a horse’s body, an elephant’s feet and the tail of a wild boar.⁴³ He quoted tales of Queen Maya’s conception of the Buddha through the penetration of her side by a white elephant’s trunk, contrasting this with the medieval tradition of Mary’s conception of Jesus through the ear.⁴⁴ And he noted that the elephant is only one among many theriomorphic symbols of the Self that turn up in dreams, along with lions, snakes, dragons, and other powerful beasts.”⁴⁵

Adam disappeared then. I was glad to be spared a response for I was full up to here with elephants.

I stared at one thing and another. Disarray or delight, the surroundings were conducive to meditation. A hanging postcard near me showed a bespectacled gentleman behind whom a laughing lady swung naked from a chandelier. The caption read: **Jung and Restless**. Beside that were photographs of Adam—on a beach holding an iguana; on roller skates; in climbing gear; hugging a lovely on a cruise ship; pensive in a book-lined study. Another card pictured an old man tottering about in a walker behind a flapping chicken who cried, “This guy is falling! This guy is falling!” The caption: **Shattering the Myth of Chicken Little**. A variety of plants hung from hooks in the ceiling. The walls were crowded with prints and paintings, among which were two by Vanessa: a sketch of Adam in his birthday suit and a charcoal study of a nude female torso.

There was nothing in sight that didn’t put me into a spin.

I listened to Adam bustling about in his kitchenette, a screened-off corner at one end. I thought of what he’d said about himself the other day in Mayday’s. Adam Brillig as puer; it was hard to imagine.

“Adam,” I called, “that puer business in your early life, what was that

⁴³ “Alchemical Symbolism in the History of Religion,” *Psychology and Alchemy*, CW 12, par. 526n.

⁴⁴ *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5, par. 490.

⁴⁵ See “The Psychological Aspects of the Kore,” *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 9i, par. 315; also *Aion*, CW 9ii, par. 356.

all about?"

"Eh?" he called back.

Two minutes later he emerged with a steaming tray of crisp bacon and pancakes—better say *crêpes*, they were so thin—with black Swedish caviar (*svart stenbitsrom*) on the side, no less. And a pot of coffee.

"My friend," he said. "You come too seldom. Let us celebrate. Damn the cholesterol! And a new book in the making! Now that's something; it was such fun last time. How is the winsome Vanessa, anyway? What a delicate touch with a brush. And Jessy Kate? Now there's a lass with a future. Here, help yourself to rolls and huckleberry jam, and this is real maple syrup from Quebec, not that muck made from corn-cobs."

We clinked glasses and dug in. I was hungrier than I knew. As we ate I brought Adam up to date on the doings of Vanessa and J.K., who had just graduated with a degree in astrophysics. Then for a few minutes we sat comfortably in silence. I slipped some juicy scraps to Sunny. She'd had her measure of meal before our visit to Adam but she forever hankers for a snack.

"Adam," I said finally, "that puer business . . . ?"

"I did hear you," said Adam. "I've been thinking."

He took our empty plates to the sink and came back with a bottle of three-star Napoleon brandy. He settled on a cushion and tamped his pipe. I pretended to roll a cigarette and then crush it because I had stopped smoking. A cuckoo clock struck eleven, way past Sunny's bedtime, and mine too. She was still alert, sniffing around the cages. I could feel myself beginning to fade, but Adam was in full flight.

"Picture this," he said. "I was a middle-aged man but I behaved like an adolescent. As a matter of fact I was a textbook puer. I looked younger than my age and was proud of it; I was driven by my instincts and gave little thought to the effect my actions had on others; I acted spontaneously, prone to do what felt right, though what felt right one minute often felt wrong the next. I bent every effort to please others, and in return I expected from them the love and affection I'd had from my mother as a child—just for being who I was. In short, I moved through life irresponsibly, without having grown up.

"For many years this worked. I was not unhappy. Oh, some desires

were thwarted, but I blamed others for that. Troubling dreams were easily dismissed in the light of day. I was active in the world, master of my destiny. I had no knowledge of an inner life and felt no need of one. I dare say I would have continued in this way indefinitely had something in me not rebelled. Only then, as I said earlier, was I forced to seek counsel.”

I was wide awake now and avid for more.

“Later, as an analyst, I worked with many puers,” said Adam. “For the most part they were under the spell of a positive mother complex, as I had been.

“I remember one man close to forty who owned a small antique business. He was not married but he was close to many women. He was idealistic, trusting everyone, always in debt. He had a litany of complaints, both physical and emotional—upset stomach, heartburn, bad moods, depression, conflict and so on. I read these symptoms as an attempt at self-cure: his attitude was wrong; he was ill adapted both to the reality of his outer life and to the reality of himself.

“After some months he dreamt of a huge green woman with great hanging breasts. She was terrifying and he ran from her. He woke up crying. He had no personal associations, so I called his attention to the classic Indian goddess Kali, known as the giver of life who may instead deliver death—one among countless mythological images of the opposites in the guise of the Great Mother.”

“Kali,” I said. “Isn’t she often pictured with multiple boobs?”

“No, that’s Diana of Ephesus, but the same principle applies: a breast may hold not milk but poison. After this man had done some research, I encouraged him to confront Madame Green, as we called her, in active imagination. You know, play pretend, like when you were very young and sang to flowers, when there were ghosts under the bed and trees talked back. Our early ancestors lived that life; reality as they knew it. Animism, we call it now, though we still knock on wood.

“Anyway, he did so. He approached her in a little boat, but she just laughed and shooed him away. We surmised that she had something to do with his mother complex and his romantic view of life. But what ex-

actly? What was the unconscious trying to tell him? And what could he do with the information? Then in outer life he became obsessed with a somewhat hysterical woman—a girl, rather, barely half his age—who behaved just as a nature demon would. She teased and provoked but could not be pinned down.

“So here he had the Great Mother in his dreams, too scary to be accessible, and synchronistically a skittish real-life personification of that archetype. Now he was up against it. He could see a connection but he couldn’t do anything about it. He acknowledged that his inflamed desire for the girl was conceivably due to the projection of something in him—and I can tell you, even that much took more than a few weeks—but all the same he still felt helpless.

“I suggested that he talk to this girl in himself as if she were real. Again, pretend but in earnest. When he did so she said, ‘I am the same as the green lady with whom you could not talk,’ implying that she was immortal, like the archetype. He said he couldn’t accept that, and she answered that she was the beginning and the end—meaning she was God! Well, that shook him up. He was a lapsed Catholic and for some time he thought seriously of renewing his faith. Then a long conversation started in which his whole world-view had to be reevaluated. Over the next few months he had to review and reconsider every aspect of his life and attitudes, as she pulled them to pieces bit by bit.

“That’s how it goes when you work on yourself. Through a personal complex you become acquainted with the archetype. In this case, the green woman, on the archetypal level, was practically unapproachable. The next step mythologically is Kore-Persephone, the mother goddess in a younger form; he could speak to her. You see, the daughter goddess is closer to the human than the mother, just as God the father is more removed from humanity than Christ the son.

“So it seemed to me that what was going on in this man’s psyche could be viewed in terms of the Demeter-Persephone myth. When the carefree Persephone was snatched underground by Hades, her mother Demeter roamed the world in mourning. Similarly, a man confronted with the loss of his youth may be bereft. His task then is to get to know his anima—the archetype of life. That’s not news to you, I’m sure. What

do you think? Eh?”

It was a lot to digest. I played for time.

“What happened to the real woman, the girl?” I asked.

“Oh, he lost interest in her soon enough. Mind you, that wasn’t inevitable. Initially she was a magnet for his complex. He could have any woman he wanted—except this one. That was certainly part of the hook. More important, I think, was that she was as undeveloped emotionally as his own inner woman. Once he had a handle on his psychology the girl lost her numinosity and he saw her more as she really was—a rather simple-minded coquette who wasn’t even particularly attractive.”

“Good thing he didn’t marry her!” I said.

Adam nodded. “Of course many do marry the one who hooks them, and it isn’t always a mistake. It depends on what happens when the projection falls away, when the person you fell in love with turns out to be somebody else—like as not, yourself.⁴⁶ Instinct drives us to couple; relationship is something else. Coupling is good, relationship can be better,.

“In any case, this man I speak of did not have marriage on his mind. Far from it. He made that very clear to women before he bedded them—or they him. As if in this way he escaped responsibility for what he did. ‘I don’t fall in love,’ he said to me once. ‘I make it, beautifully. I shine my little light into any dark cave, and many a bleak life glows briefly.’

“His problem, you see, besides inflation, was Don Juanism, which contrary to the popular image of the type has very little to do with conquest. More often it is rooted in the desire to give pleasure and gain approval; that is one of the many consequences of the positive mother complex, and promiscuity is by no means its only expression.

“Naturally he was not aware of this. Consciously he only knew he was attracted to women, and they to him, and he could think of no reason to say No. I did not presume to judge his behavior. But clearly his symptoms—including occasional impotence—indicated an unconscious need

⁴⁶ Jung: “Just as we tend to assume that the world is as we see it, we naively suppose that people are as we imagine them to be. . . . projecting our own psychology into our fellow human beings. . . . All human relationships swarm with these projections.” (“General Aspects of Dream Psychology,” *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 507)

to establish a relationship with his inner woman, which would mean incarnating the archetype of the feminine. The green goddess in this man's dream was completely maternal, and the hysterical outer woman was the anima in classical form. She had certain characteristics that represented his specific anima, who would in time manifest as his emotional and feeling life. But first he had to meet her outside, as is usually the case. That is seen in one way as the incarnation of the goddess, and in another as the long, slow process of individuation.

"There is nothing abnormal about a romantic attitude when one is young. Only later in life, when you've had some disappointing experiences, do you come up against the cynical, realistic side of relationship. A degree of cynicism about love is healthy and necessary. No grown-up person can be only romantic. That goes against nature, and so does an endless succession of superficial relationships. This man had tried to ignore his internal unease but his own psyche would not let him. Frankly it was not a difficult case, since I had been through something similar myself. Otherwise I would have had only theory to go on, and that is a poor substitute for experience."

Sunny farted softly. I cast my mind back.

"When I was training in Zürich," I said, "there was a lot of talk among the students about puer psychology. Von Franz's book, *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*, had recently been published. Every man I discussed it with felt he fit the profile—more or less of a mother's boy, idealistic, somewhat effeminate, artistically inclined, fantasies of grandeur and so on. Even most of the women readily confessed to being puellas, meaning they recognized the puer aspect of their animus."

Adam nodded.

"Ovid speaks of the god Eros as the original *puer aeternus*, the eternal child," he said. "That might be all right for gods, but it does not work for humans. In reality, the puer is a parasite on the mother, a creature of her imagination, who only lives when rooted in the maternal body. In actual psychic experience the mother corresponds to the collective unconscious, and the son to consciousness, which fancies itself free but must ever and again succumb to the power of sleep and deadening unconsciousness.

"If a man lives as though he were eternal, as if he didn't need to adapt

to reality and a real woman, if he lives in fantasies of one day saving the world or being the greatest philosopher or writer, he is identifying with the god Eros. His personal heroes are people like Cyrano de Bergerac and Don Quixote and others who tilt at windmills. His ego complex is stuck in the archetype and the collective schema fits virtually all cases.”

“Including mine,” I admitted, flooded by memories.

“When I was in Zürich,” said Adam, “I did some control work with Dr. von Franz.”

“You didn’t!” I was grabbed by envy.

“Indeed, and quite an experience it was. She lived in a little house in Küsnacht, a village near Zurich, with the aging Barbara Hannah, a queen in her own right. It was late spring. We sat in the garden among growing things, or rather I did; von Franz would be on her knees with a trowel, planting or weeding. From time to time she lifted her head to comment on the case I presented. She had an uncanny knack for seeing archetypal patterns in what was going on in a person’s everyday life. Her remarks were earthy and to the point; her mind was quick and she laughed a lot. I would have to say I picked up as much from her as I have from Jung.

“Anyway, she told me that when she first lectured on the puer aeternus, many people came up to her after and said they knew exactly who she was talking about, each one giving a different name! In fact, she said, she had spoken about a man who had never even been to Switzerland; it was just that the characteristics she described fit so many men.

“You see, there’s nothing individual about someone who identifies with a god. They are enslaved by an archetype. If they pay attention when their psyche kicks up a fuss, there is the possibility of change. More often, I’m afraid, they dismiss their symptoms as due to something they ate, or blame their moods on someone else. If they remain unconscious they languish on the margin of life, forever at odds with family and friends, touchy, resentful, day-dreaming of better days to come.”

I thought again of my cranky old aunt in Saskatchewan. There she was in the middle of the prairie, a thousand miles from any sea. “One day my ship will come in,” she’d say, scanning the horizon.

Sunny rose and shook herself, adding some fleas to Adam’s collection

of fauna. She faced me with ears erect. I stroked her sides and remembered that tomorrow I was to take her to the vet for her semiannual grooming and shots. I divided the remaining drops of brandy between Adam's glass and mine.

"I must go soon," I yawned.

"You are welcome to stay over," said Adam. "You and Sunny can have the honeymoon suite." He gestured to a cot in the corner.

I waved vaguely.

"Adam," I said, "what archetypal pattern do you think the puer is caught in?"

He stood up.

"Forgive me," he said. "My brain cells have shut down. Tomorrow afternoon I have an appointment with some TV nabobs who believe I have answers to the mystery of life. I think they might better bark up their own tree, but I'm vain enough not to want to disappoint them. Perhaps we can go on in the morning."

I felt in no condition to drive, so I accepted Adam's offer of a pillow and a moth-eaten sleeping bag.

"It's seen better days," he said apologetically, "but it kept me alive on Mount St. Helens. The thermal lining is good to about forty below. Sleep tight. I have first dibbs on the bathroom."

I trekked downstairs with Sunny and directed her to pee in a patch of snow. She did. On the way back up her legs gave out. It wasn't the first time. She was fourteen, after all, old for dog-age. She sprawled between steps and looked at me dolefully.

"Good girl," I said, stroking her. "It's okay."

Together we stumbled back to Adam's where Sunny found a rug to scrunch up. I gave her a cookie from the supply I carry and instructed her to stay put. She didn't; I did.

6

The Good and the Better

There were two soft-boiled eggs and whole-wheat toast waiting for me when I got up at 6:30. I had dreamed of riding bareback on a horse, galloping madly through dense forests and fields of hay. I awoke exhausted, wondering if maybe, just maybe, on some level we actually do live out the fantastical happenings in dreams. That would explain why we wake up tired when we dream of flying, say, or climbing a mountain.

This sounds more like a New Age fantasy than orthodox Jungian thinking. Still, it is reported that in von Franz's first meeting with Jung he told her of a woman who dreamed she was on the moon. Von Franz said, dismissively, "But that was a dream." Jung replied, "Oh, she *was* on the moon."⁴⁷ Maybe that was von Franz's first lesson in the reality of the unconscious.

According to Jung, all dream images are essentially subjective. He suggests thinking of a dream as if it were a theater in which the dreamer is at once the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public and the critic. Thus all the figures in dreams are personified aspects of the dreamer's own personality.⁴⁸ This means that when I dream of Miss X or Mr. Y, the unconscious is presenting me with information to add to the inventory of my self-image. What is there about me that is like him or her? In what ways do we differ? How do I feel about them? How does their appearance in the context of the dream reflect what is currently happening in my life?

And my dream horse? A bundle of instinctive energy on the loose, perhaps. But why a horse and not, say, a fox or a weasel or . . . an elephant? And to what end? And my associations to hay and forests?

As a kid I used to play in a hayloft on my uncle's farm, with my cousin Jane. My first sexual experience, at age six, was tickling her pri-

⁴⁷ See Gilda Frantz, "I'll See You in My Dreams," in *Psychological Perspectives*, no. 31 (Spring-Summer 1995), p. 22.

⁴⁸ "General Aspects of Dream Psychology," *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 509.

vate parts with a straw; my second, age seven, was her tickling mine. Then there's the parable of Buridan's ass, who starved to death between two piles of hay because he couldn't make a choice. Jung's comment on this, as an image of a conflict situation, was that the important thing was not whether the bundle on the right or the one on the left was the better, or which one he ought to eat first, but what he wanted in the depths of his being—which did he feel pushed toward?⁴⁹

Very well, how might that apply to me?

Sunny interrupted my reveries with insistent demands of her own. I did not begrudge them; I think too much anyway.

Adam was bright and perky. "I was up with the birds," he said as we ate. "I've been reading von Franz." He held up her book on Apuleius's classic, *The Golden Ass*. "Listen to this":

The positive mother complex constellates the divine son-lover of the great goddess, and together they play the role of goddess and god, as Dr. Jung describes it in the first chapter of *Aion*. For a young man it is a great temptation to stay with the eternal mother, and he joins in by being the eternal lover. They cheat each other out of life and do not face the fact that they are ordinary human beings. The son cannot get away from the mother, and prefers to live the myth and the role of the eternal god.⁵⁰

"That is the archetypal pattern the puer lives out," said Adam. "He is stuck in the paradise of the mother-world. He finds it difficult to adapt to life as he finds it, which is rather harsher than the maternal tit of plenty."

"That's your considered opinion?" I asked.

"It is my experience," said Adam.

Sunny gave Adam a lick. He fed her a crust.

"Von Franz refers to *Aion*," said Adam, "where Jung speaks of the secret conspiracy between mother and son, and how each helps the other to betray life. Remember?"

I was fuzzy. Adam dug it out:

⁴⁹ "The Structure of the Unconscious," *Two Essays*, CW 7, par. 487.

⁵⁰ *A Psychological Interpretation of the Golden Ass of Apuleius: The Liberation of the Feminine in Man*, p. 70.

Where does the guilt lie? With the mother, or with the son? Probably with both. The unsatisfied longing of the son for life and the world ought to be taken seriously. There is in him a desire to touch reality, to embrace the earth and fructify the field of the world. But he makes no more than a series of fitful starts, for his initiative as well as his staying power are crippled by the secret memory that the world and happiness may be had as a gift—from the mother. The fragment of world which he, like every man, must encounter again and again is never quite the right one, since it does not fall into his lap, does not meet him half way, but remains resistant, has to be conquered, and submits only to force. It makes demands on the masculinity of a man, on his ardour, above all on his courage and resolution when it comes to throwing his whole being into the scales. For this he would need a faithless Eros, one capable of forgetting his mother and undergoing the pain of relinquishing the first love of his life.⁵¹

“That’s a pretty powerful rant,” I observed. However, it rang uncomfortably true.

“It’s not all bad news,” said Adam. “A man like that generally has a zest for life and is spurred to creative efforts beyond the ordinary. He deals with problems in a fresh and original way. He’s always into something new, surrounded by a mysterious nimbus of vitality that is particularly appealing to those who live a humdrum life. Primitives would describe him as having *mana*, a magical quality ascribed to gods and sacred objects. We sophisticates call it charisma. Unwittingly, just by being himself, the puer snares the unrequited. If he’s the Don Juan type, he has his pick of women—or men, if he’s gay. He is an excellent con man.”

I said: “But isn’t that puer vitality important for life?”

“Indeed,” replied Adam, “otherwise one is old before one’s time. But identification with the puer leads to the neurosis of the provisional life.”⁵²

⁵¹ “The Syzygy: Anima and Animus,” *Aion*, CW 9ii, par. 22. Von Franz explains “a faithless Eros” as “the capacity to turn away from time to time from a relationship The *puer aeternus*, in the negative sense of the word, very often tends to be too impressed and too weak, and too much of a ‘good boy’ in his relationships, without a quick self-defense reaction where required.” (*The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*, p. 52)

⁵² The “provisional life” is an expression used to describe an attitude toward life that is more or less imaginary, not rooted in the here and now. (Sharp, *Jung Lexicon*, p. 107)

One day, some day, the boy is going to be a great man. One's current lot is not what one really wants; one is always 'about to' take the step into real life. Some day one will do what is necessary—only not yet. As an aspect of the Self, the puer conveys the feeling of eternal life, of life beyond death. But the man who is all puer lives in the wrong kind of eternity, an ethereal space with very thin air. He misses the here and now, the blood and guts of life on earth; that has to be accepted because it is what makes the bridge to eternal life.

“Von Franz writes that the picture is the reverse for the man with a negative mother complex”:

In the positive mother complex, the young man identifies with the puer aeternus and thus has to dis-identify In the case of the negative mother complex, the man dis-identifies too completely from the puer aeternus quality. But actually he seeks this quality of creativeness in himself, that is, he seeks what he lacks in himself. [He] tends to be cynical and not to trust his feeling, or women. He is in a state of constant restraint. He cannot give himself to life, but always seeks the “snake in the grass.” . . . [So] the puer aeternus becomes a very important inner figure which has to be assimilated in order to progress from psychic miserliness and to counterbalance his frozen attitude to life.⁵³

“That's the nub of it,” said Adam. “The man with the positive mother complex, in his conscious behavior, takes great pains to please and tends to trust women rather too much. The one with a negative mother complex is overtly distrustful and possessive. But if you get to know them intimately, beneath the surface of the former you discover a jealous side, and behind the latter's wary front—a protective defense—there is a naive trusting shadow. They are brothers under the skin. That's consistent with Jung's model of the psyche, whereby the opposite of what one consciously is—our attitudes and feelings, the way we function and so on—also exists in oneself, but below the surface, so to speak.”

The opposites again. I have experienced them often enough—in love-hate relationships, ambivalence, conflict and more—but I still feel like a Dummling. Theoretically, the archetypes are neutral containers of the op-

⁵³ *A Psychological Interpretation of the Golden Ass of Apuleius*, pp. 71-72.

posites. For instance, the mother archetype is a primordial, instinctual image of “mothering”—all shades, good and bad—as it has been experienced since the beginning of time. The way the mother archetype manifests itself in a particular individual depends on personal factors like one’s experience of the parents and the environment. This is the so-called mother complex, and if it’s dubbed “negative,” say, that’s simply descriptive of its consequences in one’s life to date. But no need to fear, your savior lurks in the wings: the opposite, which also dwells in you. You only need to get in touch with the other side of the archetype.

No wonder, then, that when you deal with complexes analytically you have to stand on your head.

“There is no energy without the tension that naturally exists between opposites,” said Adam. “So in cases of depression, for instance, it is necessary to discover the opposite to the attitude of the conscious mind. The shadow, seen from the one-sided point of view of ego-consciousness, is an unknown or threatening component of the personality and is consequently repressed in favor of a more comfortable or familiar self-image, the persona. The repressed unconscious contents must be made conscious so as to produce a tension of opposites, without which life cannot flow.”

He picked up Jung’s *Two Essays* and read:

The conscious mind is on top, the shadow underneath, and just as high always longs for low and hot for cold, so all consciousness, perhaps without being aware of it, seeks its unconscious opposite, lacking which it is doomed to stagnation, congestion and ossification. Life is born only of the spark of opposites.⁵⁴

I peeked at my watch. My appointment at the vet was for nine. It was now a quarter to and Sunny was tugging at my pants.

“I have to go,” I said apologetically.

“Must you? Yes, of course,” said Adam. “Would you like to come back for the TV session? . . . Oh, never mind, I dare say I can manage on my own. But if you feel like it and have the time . . .”

Adam actually looked forlorn. Was it possible, after all, that he needed

⁵⁴ “The Problem of the Attitude-Type,” CW 7, par. 78.

me as much as I needed him?

“I’ll be here,” I promised.

After dropping Sunny at the vet I called Vanessa. She was working on a new piece, a mixed media collage—paint, fabric, wood, encaustic, spectrafoil. I see her things at various stages. It’s all chaos to me, until one day presto!—everything comes together. I don’t know how she does it, but then that’s what she says about my writing too.

“How’s Mr. Cabiri?” she asked. She said it fondly, referring to Jung’s notion that the little people in dreams and visions are akin to the diminutive helpers of Hephaestus, blacksmith to the gods.⁵⁵

“He’s in great spirits. He asked after you too. The winsome Vanessa, a delicate touch with a brush; that’s just what he said.”

“The rascal. Your book?”

“Coming along, thanks. What’s up with J.K.?”

“Oh, you know, I don’t see her all that much. She hangs out with her friends, in trees.”

“We’re all apes at heart,” I said.

Vanessa laughed. “And in other places too.”

We rang off and I spent a couple of hours on details. I took the messages off the answering machine, wrote a few checks and updated the mailing list. I did the laundry, and while I was in the basement I checked the inventory and made notes for reprints and other supplies. I watered the plants, washed the dishes, made a grocery list. I vacuumed the pool and swept the deck. I made myself a corned beef sandwich with Dijon mustard and garlic pickles, and ate it with a knuckle of Johnny Walker. This is my life, I thought. I was thrilled.

Being Saturday there was no new mail, but there were a couple of letters I hadn’t yet answered. This one came from England:

Dear Sir/Madam,

⁵⁵ “The Cabiri are . . . the mysterious creative powers, the gnomes who work under the earth, i.e., below the threshold of consciousness, in order to supply us with lucky ideas. As imps and hobgoblins, however, they also play all sorts of nasty tricks.” (“A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity,” *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 244)

I would be very pleased if you would accept my typed scripts for publishing. My typed scripts is about my nasty experience of school bullying which included a broken finger. The name of the unruly thug who broke my finger at M— school is named as J—. If you are interested I will send you my typed scripts to read and would be grateful if you would give me a definite answer.

I am a sucker for heart-felt pleas. Other publishers may fill their waste-baskets without a second thought. I answer almost everything, and especially a soul in distress. I am waylaid by concern for who's at the other end. That's a positive mother complex for you. How to respond to this woman's letter, however, still stumped me, so again I put it aside. Maybe I would send it to my colleague Sparkle whose Zürich thesis was called *The Wounded Finger: Anchorage for Soul and Sense*.

The other one was from Seoul, Korea:

To Whom It May Concern,

I extend to you my best greetings and wishes for prosperity.

I am writing to you about the results of my research on the female sexual anatomy. After more than thirty years of studies I have developed a method by which it is possible to easily recognize those women whose sexual organs are able to provide the greatest pleasure to a man.

By the form of the facial lips one can distinguish whether a woman has one of the extremely rare "ideal types" of sexual organ (so to speak, the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals among the sexual organs), or one of twenty other excellent types I have classified (see attached material).

I am sure that my book *Lips and Sex* can sell millions of copies within months. The need for it is great, and I would be glad if your company would be interested in publishing it in English

Yours sincerely, Wang Shoo-Lin

Enclosed were graphic descriptions of the sensory delights a man would experience on entering each of the three medal-winning vaginas described by the ancient Chinese—the "Thousand Worms" type, the "Millet on the Ceiling" type and the "Pouch with a String" type—plus a rare fourth, the "Gentle Chew" type, discovered by the author himself. It made for a colorful quaternity.

I had initially dismissed this with a laugh. I only publish books by Jungian analysts, and anyway I already had an open invitation to my own medal winner. So why had I kept the letter? Maybe my shadow was interested.

Indeed, Arnold said now, “What’s to lose?”

“Only my reputation,” I replied.

“Aw, gimme a break,” he said.

Together we wrote back:

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on your research into matters that have intrigued men for centuries. We would very much like to see a copy of your manuscript.

Then I stared at the wall.

It was now twenty-five years since I came back from Zürich with so much energy I thought I might explode. J.K. told me the other day that she read of people who suddenly, spontaneously combust. It’s hard to believe, but theoretically it’s possible. $E = MC^2$, where E is energy, M is mass and C is the speed of light. If you had no place to put your energy, it could build up inside until poof!—a burst of flame and at the speed of light you’re toast. In my case, however, it was more likely that I would float away into the sky and end up on some interplanetary rock like St. Exupéry’s Little Prince, who fell in love with a flower and whose best friend was a fox.

I was puffed up with learning; I knew things others didn’t.

Circumstances, and Vanessa, kept me down to earth. Among the former was a divorce. That took considerable energy, and so did finding a place to live, setting up a practice and giving lectures. But there was still lots left and I put it into publishing books. First my Diploma thesis⁵⁶—because no one else would do it—and then, because I didn’t fancy being a one-shot vanity press, I invited manuscripts from others.

Rachel, now what can I say about Rachel? Well, if she didn’t exist I would certainly have to invent her. But in fact she was there from the beginning, only I didn’t know it. I became aware of her as a phantom mate

⁵⁶ *The Secret Raven: Conflict and Transformation in the Life of Franz Kafka.*

who wanted attention and put me in a bad mood when she didn't get it. So we talked and laughed and quarreled and made up, and then did it all again, and again, and over time we developed a workable relationship.

Actually, her name wasn't Rachel at first; it was Diane, my teen-age sweetheart and for years the girl of my dreams (until she got a crush on Paul Anka). Then she was Gladys, my secretary at P & G; then Anna, a sexy waif from Bulgaria; then apple-cheeked Charlotte from Bristol, who seduced me on the roof of Harrods in London; and for a few weeks Nicole, a white witch whose erotic repertoire included the butterfly waltz and the Mulungi shuffle. For six passionate months in Zürich she was Cynthia. Ah, Cynthia, a real street fighter, that one; she told me she'd spent half her childhood hiding from her father in the laundry basket. There were others along the way; so many, so brief; I forget all their names, but I remember loving them as best as I could at the time. And finally she was, and remains, my Rachel.

Did I use that bevy of lovelies to get to know myself? Yes, but unconsciously. For my part, I am grateful for the daisy chain of broken hearts (mine and theirs) that led me to an appreciation of Sophia (Wisdom), ultimate manifestation of the feminine.

Of course that's all inside.

The other Rachel, mother of J.K., code-named Vanessa, is flesh and blood. Call her Rachel Two. From the beginning we had a lively connection based on lust and mutual respect, but I often wonder if it would have survived as long as it did if I had not gotten to know her namesake first—and she, perhaps, mine. At first I couldn't tell my Rachels apart, and sometimes I still mistake one for the other—and who doesn't, I'd like to know—but when I do they set me straight. I imagine it's like having two mistresses, though personally I wouldn't know, being a one-woman man—well, at any one time. Maybe that's what's behind my interest in the Don Juan syndrome. Think of going from one bed to another, and then some! And well received wherever! Boy-o, boy-o, as Adam might say. My shadow would jump at that. *Lips and Sex*. But how does one keep it up? Not forever, that's for sure.

J.K. was an accident, or so we thought at the time. I was ambivalent at

first; Rachel Two was not. I already had three others out in the world; she had none, and two abortions in her past. She was adamant; she'd go the distance with or without me. Then Rachel One weighed in. If you abandon her, she said, I will leave you. I took this to heart. So the three of us went to breathing classes and at the home-birth I functioned as one of the midwives. For sixteen hours we took turns walking Rachel Two back and forth. I worked my way through a bottle of Chivas Regal while the old doctor snoozed on the couch, and when Jessy Kate popped out she was quite as welcome as if she'd been planned. Now we can't imagine life without her. And that's no accident. More: when she was twenty-two she had the Axiom of Maria tattooed on her shoulder, in Greek!⁵⁷

My Rachels still have their own agendas, and I mine. We like it that way because it works.⁵⁸

Okay. So the energy I left Zürich with has had considerable issue. But as a matter of fact it's been waning recently. I don't greet the day with my old enthusiasm. I'm not so interested in what's in the box. Why not? I have everything I ever wanted, and more.

The good, says Jung, is the enemy of the better. "If better is to come, good must stand aside."⁵⁹ I've experienced the truth of that and I've often quoted it to others to encourage an openness to a nagging, underlying potential, a blind leap from a so-so life to the unknown. But when you already have the best life you can think of, what could possibly be better?

Maybe that's the point. Me, my ego, thinks all is for the best. But something or someone, in me, has another point of view. Maybe I have not been paying enough attention to my other parts. Now there's a thought. What do they want? My dream last night, galloping through the forest. So many trees; I can't see the forest for them. I put my mind to that. As if I had a choice; as if I were in charge.

⁵⁷ See *Not the Big Sleep*, pp. 97, 120.

⁵⁸ Okay, so after twenty-two years together, it stopped working for Vanessa and she left me for another man, but that's another story.

⁵⁹ "The Development of Personality," *The Development of Personality*, CW 17, par. 320. This idea was not original with Jung; Goethe said something similar: "If ever in this world we reach what's good / We call what's better just a plain falsehood!" (*Faust, Part I*, "The Night Scene")

Adam Brillig's Fling with Fame

I returned to Adam's just after two. He told me that he'd tidied up, being house-proud, but the only difference I could see was that the spines of the magazines were even and not higgledy-piggledy. He'd also changed his clothes. He looked quite elegant in a sky-blue suit and mauve bow-tie. His few strands of hair were neatly brushed, nails clipped, goatee trimmed, feet shod in ankle-high Bally boots, ox-blood.

"Spiffy," I said.

"There are times when one must cater to the projections of others," said Adam. "A learned gentleman does not sport an apron and sandals on TV. I have other personas in the closet. Would you care to see some?"

He was regaling me with anecdotes of his hunting days in Borneo when the TV crew arrived. The crew was two: a wiry fellow hoisting a camera, and a lovely young lady in bolero vest and flowered skirt. She introduced herself as the director and interviewer.

"Rickster, Ima T.," she said, vigorously shaking our hands. "This here is Ben. Thank God for Ben; he's handy, I'm not!"

She looked around. "My, what a great place! It has ambiance. Did you do it all by yourself?"

Ben was about thirty, boyish, in jeans and a black tee-shirt that asked: **Do You Know Where I Was Last Night?**

"Pleased to meet you," he waved. He put the camera down and backed out. He returned in a minute with spotlights and a coil of electrical cable. He busied himself setting up.

"Tea? Coffee?" I offered.

Ima T. Rickster said she'd prefer a Diet Coke. Ben said if it was not too much trouble he wouldn't mind a cold beer. I found one of each in Adam's fridge.

"Professor Brillig!" gushed Ms. Rickster, "I have to tell you, this is such an honor."

Adam bowed.

"As I told you on the phone," she said, "I work freelance. One day radio, the next TV, and in between I write an article or two. It's a fun life, always something new, learning on the job, just one step ahead. Well you guys know that, I'm sure. I bet you hear a lot of secrets too!"

"I saw you last year when you spoke on the archetypal significance of Chicken Little. I was on assignment and I didn't know an archetype from a toothbrush! I don't suppose you'd remember, but I'm the one who asked if Chicken Little might be called the first feminist. You said it was conceivable if she were female, otherwise unlikely. I thought that was priceless! Remember?"

"Well, maybe you read my catchy review, 'Jungian analyst Adam Brillig emerged from retirement last night to stun a capacity audience in Great Hall by equating Chicken Little's Cassandra-like odyssey with the Grail legend.' And so on. Je-sus! Did I get razzed about that! Of course my editor cut it to shreds, though he left in your comparison of Ms. Little—you're *such* a gentleman—with the Christ-stone rejected by the builders. What did you mean by that, anyway? Is it really true? Oh, but you were brilligant!"

She was waltzing along the path as she talked, twirling her skirt and fingering leaves. Her eyes darted from side to side. She stopped at a cage and exclaimed. "Axolotls?! For goodness sakes! What do they eat?"

She meandered back to where we still stood. "Hey Ben, let's go, we don't have all day."

Ben looked up from where he was, on all fours. He smiled at her and addressed Adam. "Sir, I am looking for wall-plugs."

Adam scratched his head and said he thought there were some behind the foliage.

"Now where shall we sit," mused Ms. Rickster, looking around.

Adam and I exchanged glances.

"Dear lady," said Adam, "I have the world on a string. Let me give you one end."

With a flourish he produced a length of rope which he proceeded to loop and tie around her waist. The other end he tied to a hot-water radiator. He then presented her with a stool.

"There now," said Adam. "If you stay more or less in one place we can talk. For my part, I would prefer the freedom to range."

Ima T. Rickster was delighted.

"Ben, did you hear that? Jeez, get a move on, man, this should all be on film."

It took another ten minutes to get the lighting right, but finally everything was in place. Adam straightened his tie and composed himself cross-legged on a cushion. Ben lowered a sound-boom between them. Ms. Rickster dipped into a make-up case and buffed Adam's face and head with a powdered pom-pom.

"There now," she said, "you want your words to shine, not your pate, right? You dear old dear old dear. Trust me, I've done this a hundred times."

She primped herself in a mirror and then looked at her notes. "Are you ready?" she said to Adam.

He nodded.

"Ben?" she called.

Ben poked his head out from behind the camera. "Could you move just a little closer together?"

Adam inched his cushion toward Ms. Rickster's stool. Ms. Rickster inched her stool toward Adam's cushion.

Ben said, "Hold it . . . focusing . . . yeah, okay . . . rolling." Whirrr . . .

"Good evening. My name is Ima T. Rickster and this is *People in Places*, brought to you by your neighbors in education, the *Encyclopedia Americana*. Looking for information? Well we've got it and you can have it. See the numbers rolling along the bottom of your screen? That's us. Give us a ring, toll-free outside Metro, except, we're sorry, we can't pay for your call from a cell-phone.

"My guest tonight is Professor Adam Brillig, author and explorer, analyst emeritus, an octogenarian of small stature, reputed wisdom and great charm." She smiled at Adam. "Good things come in small packages, I always say."

He glowed. She continued.

"I am speaking from Professor Brillig's loft in Metro, a jungle of

learning, truly a cornucopia of a lived life." She paused. "Or is it? Look around! Is this an illusion, these exotic plants and animals, these prints and paintings, these cards and books; or do they really comprise a compendium of the human mind, a summation of civilization as we know it? And Prof. Brillig himself, this little fellow with an engaging limp, is he simply, as some say, an eccentric old dwarf with a few wisps of hair . . ."

Adam started up. She stilled him with a stern look.

". . . or is he the unheralded genius others claim him to be—a gimp, yes, but one who from humble beginnings and in the face of sizeism has topped his profession and garnered numerous accolades for his pioneering work in the barnyard?"

She paused again. Adam readied himself.

"Well folks," said Ms. Rickster, "we know where we stand, but now it's your say. You out there, what do *you* think? We want to hear from you, and we're waiting! See the numbers rolling along the bottom of your screen? That's us. Give us a ring, toll-free outside Metro, except, we're sorry, we can't pay for your call from a cell-phone.

"Thanks for being there from *Encyclopedia Americana*, your neighbors in education. Looking for information? Well we've got it and you can have it. We'll be right back after this brief message."

"Cut," she said. "Good stuff, Ben, that's a wrap."

She put her clipboard down and smiled at Adam. "That wasn't too bad, was it? A piece of cake, really. Now if someone will just help me out of this truss . . ."

The lights went off. Ben started packing up. Adam didn't move. I untied Ms. Rickster and pulled her aside.

"Now look here," I whispered, "what about Adam?"

She looked blank. "What about Adam what?"

"You know, his song and dance. You didn't ask him anything."

"Oh that. It's all in the can. Stock footage."

"And when people call in?"

"We have the answers. Trust me, I've done this a hundred times."

"So why did you come?"

She looked at me as if I were daft. "Because he was here," she said.

*

I sat by Adam as the light faded. When he stirred I helped him up and steered him to a stool in the kitchen. I brewed a pot of tea and set out some cheese and biscuits. I opened a tin of oysters and in the cupboard I found some olives and his stash of caviar. It all made a colorful plate.

Adam sighed. "I should have known better."

He looked older.

The phone rang. I answered. It was Vanessa, Rachel Two. "Hi, how did it go?"

"About as well as could be expected," I said. I gave her the scene in a few sentences.

"I'm sorry," said Vanessa. "Are you still on for dinner?"

"If you don't mind I'd like to stay awhile with Adam."

"Okay, I will pick up Sunny. J.K. says to say Hi and she loves you. Me too."

"Listen," I said, "Sunny collapsed again last night going up stairs. I forgot to tell the vet."

"I'll check it out," said Vanessa.

Adam had some color back. We snacked for a time in silence.

"I was ready," he said. "I was half awake all night rehearsing."

I suddenly had an idea.

"Let's play pretend," I said. "I'll ask questions as if I were a reporter, and you speak your mind as if you were Jung."

"That's goofy," said Adam morosely. "It's not real."

Goofy? This from a man known to stand on his head and recite the Jabberwocky. A man who counseled people to talk to the wall. A man who idolized a chicken.

"It's real enough to me," I said. "Look, I need material for my book. Are you in or out?"

Adam made a face and I thought I was done for. Then he got up and rummaged in a cupboard. He came back with a turnip.

"Let's pretend it's radio." He managed a smile. "Here's your mike."

Now that's the spirit, I thought. We piled the dishes in the sink and went back to the cushions. Adam got out his pipe. I rolled an imaginary

cigarette and snapped it like a twig. I found a pad of paper and for a few minutes made notes. Adam hummed "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf," or maybe that was me.

"Ready?" I asked, when I was.

"Let's do it," said Adam.

I am not handy with root vegetables, but when I found a way to hold the turnip I thrust it at his face. I tried to look serious.

"Hello out there," I said, in my best mid-Atlantic voice. "I am with Professor C.G. Jung." And to Adam: "Or Carl, may I?"

He nodded. "Why not?"

"Perhaps," I said, "you could start by describing your feelings about Sigmund Freud. From all accounts you were friends and colleagues for some years. What happened to drive you apart?"

Adam looked at the ceiling.

"It is true," he said, "that I started out entirely in agreement with Dr. Freud. I was even considered to be his best disciple. We were on excellent terms until I had the idea that certain things were symbolic. Freud would not agree to this, and furthermore he identified his method with the theory and the theory with the method. To my mind that is impossible. You cannot identify a method with science. But I am perfectly well aware of the merits of Freud and I would not wish to diminish them. I know that many people agree with what he says, and I assume that these people have the kind of psychology he describes. Alfred Adler, who has entirely different views, also has a large following, and I am convinced that many people have an Adlerian psychology, so to speak. Now I too have a following, which presumably consists of people who have a psychology similar to mine."

"Would you say, then," I asked, "that your contribution to psychology is, how shall I put it . . . subjective?"

"Of course!" declaimed Adam. "It is entirely subjective. It is my personal psychology, my prejudice, that determines how I see psychological facts. I readily admit that I see things in such and such a way. Why don't Freud and Adler do the same—confess that their ideas are their subjective point of view? We all instinctively have certain points of view. It

would be neurotic if I saw things in another way than my instinct tells me; my snake, as the primitives say, would be all against me. When Freud said certain things, my snake did not agree. And I must take the route my snake prescribes, because that is good for me.”

He closed in on the turnip.h

“Mind you,” he said, “I have patients with whom I am obliged to go into all the details of sex and childhood that Freud has described. I have other cases that force me to an Adlerian point of view.”

“What is the difference?” I asked.

“Well,” said Adam, “people who have the capacity to adapt and are successful are more inclined to have a Freudian psychology, because someone in that position is looking for the gratification of desires. Those who have not been successful don’t have the time to think about desires, or rather they have only one—the desire to succeed; they will have an Adlerian psychology with all the earmarks of a power complex.

“Personally, I don’t have a power complex because I have been fairly successful and in nearly every respect I have been able to adapt. If the whole world disagrees with me I am perfectly indifferent. I have a good place to live, I enjoy myself, and if nobody reads my books it doesn’t matter to me. I know nothing better than being in my library, and if I make a few discoveries that is wonderful.”

Ah, I thought, probably an introverted thinking-intuitive type.

“And your desires, Professor—you have had some?”

Adam chuckled.

“Quite a lot,” he said, “but I never had difficulties with desires in the Freudian sense. As a boy I lived in the country and took things very naturally. The unnatural things of which Freud speaks were not interesting to me. To talk of an incest complex just bores me to tears. But I know exactly how I could make myself neurotic: if I said or believed something that is not myself. I say what I see, and others can take it or leave it. In all conscience I can adhere to neither the Freudian nor the Adlerian point of view. I can agree only with the Jungian approach to the psyche because I see things that way even if there is not a single person on earth who shares my views. The only thing I can hope for is to present some

interesting ideas and let people see how I tackle things.”

Huh!—introverted feeling!

“Do you think your way is right, or better?” I asked.

“Right? Better?” smiled Adam. “Who knows?”

“You do acknowledge,” I said, “that some people are troubled sexually or have difficulty with power?”

“Indeed,” said Adam, “and others have other troubles. I have mostly other troubles. My problem is to wrestle with the big monster of the historical past, the burden of the human mind, and particularly the problem of Christianity. It would be so much simpler if I knew nothing, but I know too much, through my ancestors and my education. Other people are not worried by such problems; they don’t care about the historical burdens Christianity has heaped on us. But there are those who are concerned with the great battle between the present and the past or the future, and I am one of them. Some people make history and others build a little house in the suburbs. The world is huge and there is no one theory that explains everything.”

I pressed on.

“According to Professor Freud,” I said to the turnip, “the unconscious is chiefly a receptacle for childhood emotions that we’ve repressed.”

“Yes,” said Adam. “He looked at it from the corner of the nursery. But to me the unconscious is a vast historical warehouse. I have a nursery too, but it is small in comparison with the great spaces of history which have always been more interesting to me. Once I thought there were no people like myself. I thought it was megalomania to think as I did. Then I found many who agreed with my point of view, and I was satisfied that I represented at least some people whose basic psychological facts are expressed more or less aptly by my formulations. But I am not an intellectual tyrant, as Freud tended to be. When I am not sure about a patient’s problems I suggest books by Freud and Adler and others and I say, ‘Make a choice,’ in order to see if we are on the right track. Sometimes we aren’t, and it is good to know that.”

He rocked on his heels and wiggled his ears.

“Come on,” he said, “give me a hard one.”

"To whom," I shot back, "do you think your views appeal?"

Adam sucked on his pipe.

"As a rule," he said, "to those who have reached a certain maturity and are philosophically minded, fairly successful in life and not too neurotic. They have conflicts and problems in relationships, but on the whole they get through the day in one piece. They are grateful to learn about the influence of the unconscious and open to an historical and mythological perspective on their situation."

I cupped my hand over the "mike" and whispered, "Well done!" Then I fed him another: "Freud spoke of the Id as a part of the unconscious. What's your view of that?"

Again Adam laughed.

"Jaundiced. I mean, why give it such a funny name? It is the unconscious and that's a mystery. Of course the difference in our temperaments has produced a different outlook. You know, I never could bring myself to be so interested in sex cases. There are people with a neurotic sex life and you have to talk sex stuff with them until you're both sick of it and then finally you get out of that boredom. I like to get through all that as soon as possible so we can get on with more important things, like why they did what they did yesterday, and how they think and feel about that. Any taboo, as sex has certainly been, is the receptacle for all sorts of projections, but very often the real problem is not to be found there at all. Many people make unnecessary difficulties about sex when their actual troubles are of quite a different nature."

"Herr Professor," I said—I could not bring myself to address him less formally, if only to remind myself that deference was due the examined life—"perhaps you could give us an example?"

Adam reflected.

"Once a young man of about thirty, obviously clever and highly intellectual, came to me with a compulsion neurosis. He spent hours a day washing his hands, clothes, utensils, anything he touched. He brought a manuscript of his, a hundred and forty pages, a psychoanalytical autobiography which he said contained the history and analysis of his case.

"Will you read this," he asked, "and tell me why I am not cured al-

though I have had a complete analysis?’

“I agreed to read his material. It was an excellent scientific treatise based on a thorough study of the literature. It was quite perfect according to all the rational rules, good enough to be published.

“At our next meeting I congratulated him and said, ‘I don’t understand it either. You ought to be cured, but when you say you are not I have to believe you.’

“He said, ‘Do you agree I have a complete insight into the structure of my neurosis?’

“ ‘I cannot fault your thesis,’ I said. ‘The whole thing is marvelously well demonstrated. There remains only one question, perhaps quite foolish. You don’t mention where you came from or who your parents are. You say you winter on the Riviera and spend the summer in St. Moritz. Tell me, are your parents wealthy?’

“ ‘Not at all,’ he said.

“ ‘Oh, you have a successful business?’

“ ‘No, I don’t work.’

“ ‘Ah, you have inherited a fortune from a rich uncle.’

“ ‘No.’

“I was puzzled. ‘Then where does your money come from?’

“ ‘I have a certain arrangement,’ he said, ‘with a friend.’

“ ‘He must be a wonderful friend.’

“ ‘It is a woman,’ he said.

“Well, then the full story came out. The woman was considerably older than him. She was forty-six, a teacher with a small salary in an elementary school. She had fallen in love with this fellow at a dance-hall. Presumably she stinted herself so he could live the high life, while she naturally hoped in time to marry, an event this man was not remotely contemplating.

“ ‘And you ask why you are not cured!’ I said to him.

“He replied: ‘Oh, you have a moralistic point of view, and that is not at all scientific.’

“I said: ‘Science be damned. Is it possible that you are not yet cured because you are supported by this poor woman?’

“He protested: ‘No, we agreed upon it. I had a serious talk with her and it is no longer a matter for discussion.’

“I said: ‘Huh. Talk means nothing. You are pretending to yourself that it is not her money, but you live by it and that is immoral. That is the cause of your compulsion neurosis. It is a compensation; your psyche is punishing you for having an immoral attitude.’

To me Adam said: “This man stole a simple woman’s life savings in order to have a good time. He deserved his neurosis, you see, for acting like a pig. He was unclean and he knew it. And that’s why he couldn’t stop washing. He was one of those who believe that morals have nothing to do with neurosis, that sinning on purpose is not sinning at all because it can be rationalized out of existence.”

“Did that not come out in the analysis?” I asked.

“What analysis? I never saw him again. He left in a huff, saying anyone else would have been impressed by his interesting case instead of looking for simple explanations. He belongs in jail, and his compulsion neurosis provides it for him all right.”⁶⁰

“You *are* moralistic, then?”

“I? No more than anyone else,” said Adam/Jung. “But understand, we are not talking here of a particular moral code, a socially sanctioned way of behavior. The psyche has a natural morality. It is simply this: what is right and true for this person at this time. The psyche is self-regulating, you see. It knows when you are deceiving yourself and it tells you. If you don’t get the message consciously, you will get it some other way. No one else may know, but your psyche exacts an appropriate price.”

“Could you not make him see that?”

Adam shrugged.

“Naturally I try to do my best for my patients, but it is very important

⁶⁰ I subsequently came upon a similar case described by Jung in two places (“Analytical Psychology and Education,” *The Development of Personality*, CW 17, pars. 182f., and “The Tavistock Lectures,” *The Symbolic Life*, CW 18, pars. 282ff.) Others might call this an example of cryptomnesia, or hidden memory, whereby something long forgotten comes to mind, without the original source (so that it seems to be one’s own), but I think Adam knew what he was doing. I had asked him to pretend he was Jung, and he did.

that one should not strive to heal at all costs. One has to be careful not to impose one's own will and convictions on others. You cannot wrest people away from their fate, just as in medicine you can't cure someone if nature means that person to die. Sometimes it is really a question whether you are allowed to rescue people from the fate they must undergo for the sake of their further development. We only develop psychologically by accepting ourselves as we are and by being serious enough to live the lives we have. Our sins and errors and mistakes are necessary, otherwise we are deprived of the most precious incentives to change.

“So when this young man went away, having heard something that might have changed his life, and did not pay attention, I did not call him back. Am I un-Christian for that? Perhaps, but I am not in the business of saving people from themselves. I am on the side of nature. The *I Ching*, that old Chinese Book of Wisdom, says: ‘The Master says it once.’ He does not run after people. Those who are meant to hear will understand, and those who are not meant to understand will not hear.”

It was now well past midnight and I was finding it increasingly hard to keep my eyes open.

Adam noticed and said: “I have more to say on this, but you, my friend, have had the biscuit. Stay again, won't you? I do like this conceit; it gets my blood going. But it needs two to play. Here, the honeymoon suite is still warm . . .”

And so for the second night in a row I found myself on Adam's cot. I was rather excited about the evening's work. I wished my Rachel Two was there to share it with, but not for long because her step-sister, Rachel One, was. And Sunny, who after a brief walk curled up at my feet.

8

Neurosis and the Self-Regulating Psyche

It was 7 a.m. and we were at it again. The few birds that hadn't gone south were chirping. I had a cup of coffee in one hand and the trusty turnip in the other. Adam was in a velvet dressing gown, dunking dry toast in herbal tea.

I was silent for awhile; then I said: "I'd like to clarify a very elementary point."

"Please, don't be shy," said Adam.

"What is your working definition of neurosis?"

Adam considered a long while. Maybe this was the hard one.

"A good deal of neurosis," he said finally, "is intimately bound up with the problems of our time; it really represents an unsuccessful attempt to solve general problems in one's own person. Without being aware of it, the neurotic participates in the dominant cultural currents of the age and reflects them in a personal conflict. Neurosis is self-division. In most people the cause of the division is that the conscious mind wants to hold on to its moral ideal, while the unconscious strives after its—in the contemporary sense—immoral ideal, which the conscious mind tries to deny. People of this type want to be more respectable than they really are. The young man I spoke of last night is a case in point.

"But the conflict can easily be the other way around. There are those who to all appearances are disreputable and do not restrain themselves in the least. This is at bottom only a pose of wickedness, for behind that is their moral side which has fallen into the unconscious, just as surely as the immoral side has in the moral person. Both feel the pinch of the shadow."

"A neurosis," said Adam, "is a dissociation of the personality due to the existence of complexes. To have complexes is in itself quite normal, but if they are incompatible, that part of the personality which is too contrary to the conscious part becomes split off. An extreme dissociation is a psychosis—a schizophrenic condition. Each complex then lives a life of

its own, with no ego left to hold the parts together.

“Since the split-off complexes are unconscious, they find only an indirect means of expression, through symptoms. Instead of consciously suffering through a conflict, then, one suffers from a neurosis. Any incompatibility of character can cause dissociation, and too great a split between the thinking and the feeling function, for instance, is already a slight neurosis. When you are not quite at one with yourself in a given matter at a given time, you are approaching a neurotic condition.”

“Is everyone neurotic, then?” I asked.

“Of course,” he laughed, “more or less. Who is undivided, conflict-free? Who among us is One? It is only a matter of degree. The idea of dissociation is the most general and cautious way I can define neurosis. Of course it doesn’t cover the myriad ways in which neurosis manifests; it’s just the most general psychological formulation I can give.”

I scrambled to nail this down.

“Can we assume then, that you regard the outbreak of a neurosis as an attempt at self-cure, an attempt at compensation by, for instance, bringing out the inferior function?”

Adam nodded. “Absolutely.”

“Are you saying,” I persisted, “that neurosis, from the point of view of a person’s development, is favorable?”

“Indeed,” replied Adam. “In many cases we have to say, ‘Thank goodness he could make up his mind to be neurotic.’ It is far more promising than a murky borderline state.”

“Interesting,” I nodded.

“I truly believe that neurosis is an attempt at self-cure,” said Adam, “just as any physical disease is partly that. We can no longer understand a disease as a thing-in-itself, as something detached, which not so long ago was the prevalent opinion. The whole person is involved. Modern medicine conceives of disease as a system composed of a harmful factor and a healing factor. It is exactly the same with neurosis. It is an attempt of the self-regulating psychic system to restore the balance, in no way different from the function of dreams, only rather more forceful and drastic.”

I said: "I'm sure our listeners would be pleased to hear how you think this works."

"May I refer to Jung?" asked Adam coyly.

"Surely," I smiled.

"Well," said Adam, "Jung observed, as many others have, that in a psychological crisis unconscious contents become particularly active—dreams, memories, fantasies and so on. He interpreted this phenomenon as an attempt by the psyche itself to compensate the one-sided attitude of consciousness; that is, to present to the conscious mind information that would be helpful in resolving the crisis. This can happen at any age, but it is seldom necessary in the first half of life. The problems of young people generally come from a collision between the forces of reality and an inadequate, infantile attitude, characterized by an abnormal dependence on the parents. Therapy in such cases usually involves transferring the imagos of the parents onto more suitable substitute figures through techniques aimed at encouraging the development of a strong ego."

"So what happens," I asked, "when you already have a good ego? Say you've long since left the parental home. You hold down a job, you have a mate and maybe children. Everything is going along fine, it seems, and then one day nothing works any more. You just want to hide under the covers. You have volatile moods, dark thoughts and suspicions; fantasies give you no peace. Your life is rosy but your outlook is bleak. You've lost your energy and ambition; you're anxious and feel you've missed the boat. There's nothing you can put your finger on, but life has no meaning. Where before you could cope, now you can't. You hurt and you think of suicide. What then, Professor, eh? What then?"

I helped myself to a bagel and cream cheese.

"I was getting there," said Adam petulantly. "In later life a strong ego is precisely what stands in the way of further development. Do you remember Jung's dictum that the good is the enemy of the better? 'If better is to come, good must stand aside'?"⁶¹

"Yes." I didn't tell him I'd already used it.

⁶¹ See above, p. 69.

“It was Jung’s belief,” said Adam, “that in midlife psychological development no longer depends on the dissolution of infantile ties and illusions, but on coming to grips with the problem of opposites—the disparity between conscious attitudes and what is going on in the unconscious. The ability to hold the tension that arises in a conflict situation is of paramount importance, and for this a firm ego is essential. That is the basis for Jung’s so-called synthetic, or purposive, view of neurosis.”

“That’s quite different,” I noted, “from the Freudian view that psychological problems stem from Oedipal conflicts in early childhood.”

“Yes,” said Adam, “but the two views are not necessarily incompatible. It would be closer to the truth, I think, to say that they are complementary. Freud looked to the past for the cause of psychic discomfort in the present, while Jung focused on the present with an eye to what was possible in the future.”

I sat back and thought of the people I knew. Those in analysis seemed to fit Jung’s model, but I knew many others in midlife, close friends, relatives even, who hadn’t broken down. So they hobbled a bit; their shiny personas were a tad rusty and they were easily upset by things they used to take in their stride. But they weren’t on their knees.

I said to Adam: “It is still a mystery to me why one person falls to pieces, while someone else, perhaps in equally difficult circumstances, or even worse, doesn’t.”

He smiled.

“That’s the 64,000 dollar question,” he said. “Nobody knows for certain, but I think Jung would say that the individual psyche knows both its limits and its potential. If the limits are being exceeded, or the potential not realized, a breakdown occurs. Those who learn the symbolic language of the psyche come out of their funk with renewed energy; the rest stay stuck in a hole. And who is destined for which depends more on motivation and innate potential than on anything the analyst says or does. That’s what I believe.”

His words sparked something in me; I suddenly wanted to be alone.

“I need a break,” I whispered to Adam, and to the turnip: “Thank you, Professor. And you out there, you who hurt, with ears to hear—don’t go

away, we'll be right back after these words from our sponsor."

To Adam I said: "I'm not deserting you."

"Oh don't mind me," he said. "I have lots to do."

I called Rachel One, inside, and described where we were.

"Be careful," she cautioned, "you're getting into deep water."

Then I called Vanessa, Rachel Two.

"Speak up," she yelled. "I can't hear for the hammering."

Damn, I'd forgotten she was in the midst of house repairs. This happens more often than I like. I get so caught up in my own stuff that I don't give a thought to others.

Vanessa heard me out and said, "Go for it. By the way, the vet says not to worry about Sunny; she's just arthritic."

"That makes two of us," I grimaced.

"Three," she replied.

Before going on with Adam I wanted to review a few things. Like any cub reporter, I was afraid of screwing up. That was one of the first things I learned in journalism (after the importance of the Five W's: who, what, why, when and where)—*know your subject*. Now it's true that in this situation I wasn't sure whether my subject was Adam or Jung. Or it could have been myself, a possibility they didn't teach in journalism school. That aside, my focus this day was on facts and theory pertaining to the neurotic personality. With this in mind I retired to the cot with a pile of books and over the next hour or so I cobbled together the following.

Jung did not dispute Freudian theory that Oedipal fixations can manifest in later life as neurosis. He agreed that certain periods in life, and particularly infancy, often have a permanent and determining influence on the personality. He simply pointed out that this was an insufficient explanation for those cases where there was no trace of a neurosis until the time of breakdown. Here's what he wrote:

If the fixation were indeed real [i.e., the primary cause] we should expect to find its influence constant; in other words, a neurosis lasting throughout life. This is obviously not the case. The psychological determination of a neurosis is only partly due to an early infantile predisposition; it must be

due to some cause in the present as well. And if we carefully examine the kind of infantile fantasies and occurrences to which the neurotic is attached, we shall be obliged to agree that there is nothing in them that is specifically neurotic. Normal individuals have pretty much the same inner and outer experiences, and may be attached to them to an astonishing degree without developing a neurosis.⁶²

Together with the hypothesis of fixation, Freud proposed that the incestuous desires associated with the Oedipus complex were the primary cause of the neurotic's characteristic regression to infantile fantasies. Jung accepted this for some years, but in 1913 he broke with Freud when he introduced an energetic viewpoint into the psychology of neurosis:

All psychological phenomena can be considered as manifestations of energy, in the same way that all physical phenomena have been understood as energetic manifestations ever since Robert Mayer discovered the law of the conservation of energy [i.e., entropy]. Subjectively and psychologically, this energy is conceived as *desire*. I call it *libido*, using the word in its original sense, which is by no means only sexual.⁶³

Ah, so here's the deep water. What is the connection between neurosis and energy?

Psychic events, suggests Jung, are analogous to physical events. Both can be viewed from either a mechanistic or an energetic standpoint:

The mechanistic view is purely causal; it conceives an event as the effect of a cause, in the sense that unchanging substances change their relations to one another according to fixed laws.

The energetic point of view on the other hand is in essence final. . . . The flow of energy has a definite direction (goal) in that it follows the gradient of potential in a way that cannot be reversed.⁶⁴

Jung felt that both views were valid, depending on the individual case: "Expediency, that is to say, the possibility of obtaining results, alone de-

⁶² "Psychoanalysis and Neurosis," *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW 4, par. 564.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, par. 567.

⁶⁴ "On Psychic Energy," *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, pars. 2f.

cides whether the one or the other view is to be preferred.”⁶⁵

With respect to neurosis, which both Jung and Freud saw in terms of a blockage of libido, the mechanistic or reductive view traces the problem back to a primary cause—namely, childhood factors—while the energetic or final view asks what is the intention of the psyche as a whole; where does the energy “want” to go?

Now, Jung builds on the idea that the principle of conservation of energy applies to the psyche as well as to the physical world. He refers to the principle of equivalence, the law in physics which states that for a given quantity of energy expended or consumed in bringing about a certain condition, an equal amount of the same or another form of energy will appear elsewhere. Psychologically, this means that where there is an overabundance of energy in one place, some other psychic function has been deprived; conversely, when libido “disappears,” as it does in depression, it must appear in another form, for instance as a symptom. Jung writes:

Every time we come across a person who has a “bee in his bonnet,” or a morbid conviction, or some extreme attitude, we know that there is too much libido, and that the excess must have been taken from somewhere else where, consequently, there is too little. . . . Thus the symptoms of a neurosis must be regarded as exaggerated functions over-invested with libido. . . .

The question has to be reversed in the case of those syndromes characterized mainly by lack of libido, for instance apathetic states. Here we have to ask, where did the libido go? . . . The libido is there, but it is not visible and is inaccessible to the patient himself. . . . It is the task of psychoanalysis to search out that hidden place where the libido dwells The hidden place is the “non-conscious,” which we may also call the “unconscious” without attributing to it any mystical significance.⁶⁶

While Jung acknowledged that reductive interpretations of neurosis can be valuable, he himself favored the energetic or final viewpoint and

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, par. 6.

⁶⁶ “The Theory of Psychoanalysis,” *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW 4, pars. 254f.

considered it indispensable to any theory of psychological development. The causal view of regression, for instance, sees it determined by, say, a mother fixation. But from the final standpoint, writes Jung, “the libido regresses to the *imago* of the mother in order to find there the memory associations by means of which further development can take place.”⁶⁷

The difference between the personal mother and the “*imago*” of the mother is the difference between a complex and an archetypal image. Behind the complex—the accretion of emotional associations with one’s personal mother—there is everything that has ever been associated with “mother,” positive and negative, in the history of mankind; that is the archetype of mother. Thus the regressed energy activates not only personal memories but archetypal images or symbols of “mother” that may never have been personally experienced.

Accordingly, Jung stresses that “what to the causal view is *fact* to the final view is *symbol*, and vice versa. Everything that is real and essential to the one is unreal and inessential to the other.”⁶⁸

An exclusively causal view of neurosis, notes Jung, may actually inhibit development, since it binds one’s energy to the past and to elementary facts (for instance, to childhood and the personal mother). The final view, on the other hand, encourages development by transforming causes into means to an end, “into symbolic expressions for the way that lies ahead”:

Psychic development cannot be accomplished by intention and will alone; it needs the attraction of the symbol, whose value quantum [i.e., the energy invested in it] exceeds that of the cause. But the formation of a symbol cannot take place until the mind has dwelt long enough on the elementary facts, that is to say until the inner or outer necessities of the life-process have brought about a transformation of energy.⁶⁹

The transformation of energy in this way is central to Jung’s idea of what happens in neurosis. It involves both the principle of equivalence,

⁶⁷ “On Psychic Energy,” *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 43.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, par. 45.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, par. 47.

as mentioned, and the principle of entropy, according to which the transformation of energy in a closed system is only possible as a result of differences in the intensity of energy that exists between different elements in that system.

Mix hot water with cold and you end up with water that is warm. The transfer of energy from one to the other leads to an equalization of differences. Within the system there is a transformation; it has balanced itself. Jung applied this principle to the psyche, with specific reference to what occurs in a conflict situation:

We can see this process

at work in the development of a lasting and relatively unchanging attitude. After violent oscillations at the beginning the opposites equalize one another, and gradually a new attitude develops, the final stability of which is the greater in proportion to the magnitude of the initial differences. The greater the tension between the pairs of opposites, the greater will be the energy that comes from them. . . .

Daily psychological experience affords proof of this The most intense conflicts, if overcome, leave behind a sense of security and calm which is not easily disturbed, or else a brokenness that can hardly be healed. Conversely, it is just these intense conflicts and their conflagration which are needed in order to produce valuable and lasting results.⁷⁰

Jung compared the flow of psychic energy to a river: “The libido has, as it were, a natural penchant: it is like water, which must have a gradient if it is to flow.”⁷¹

This is an eminently practical consideration in a psychological crisis, where the energy flow is blocked. The problem in any particular case is to find the appropriate gradient. Here it is not a matter of will power, of rationally choosing an object or direction toward which the energy “ought” to flow. Want to make a commitment, a decision, for all the right reasons but your energy doesn’t? Forget it. The question, again, is where does *it*, your energy, naturally want to go? Jung again:

⁷⁰ Ibid., pars. 49f.

⁷¹ *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5, par. 337.

What is it, at this moment and in this individual, that represents the natural urge of life? That is the question.⁷²

This regularly raises a moral dilemma or heightens an already existing conflict. And that is precisely what is required, for it brings to light psychic contents that have been repressed.

I read on, flipping pages, following threads of thought. Is there a link, I wondered, between adaptation, energy and neurosis?

Jung says there is. He points out that the process of development from child to adult entails an increasing adaptation to the external world. Whenever a person's libido, in the process of adaptation, meets an obstacle, there is an accumulation of energy that normally gives rise to an increased effort to overcome the obstacle. But if the obstacle seems to be insurmountable and the individual abandons the task of overcoming it, the stored-up energy regresses; it reverts to an earlier mode of adaptation. This in turn, writes Jung, activates infantile fantasies and wishes:

The best examples of such regressions are found in hysterical cases where a disappointment in love or marriage has precipitated a neurosis. There we find those well-known digestive disorders, loss of appetite, dyspeptic symptoms of all sorts, etc. . . . [typically accompanied by] a regressive revival of reminiscences from the distant past. We then find a reactivation of the parental imagos, of the Oedipus complex. Here the events of early infancy—never before important—suddenly become so. They have been regressively reactivated. Remove the obstacle from the path of life and this whole system of infantile fantasies at once breaks down and becomes as inactive and ineffective as before.⁷³

For these reasons, Jung declared that he did not seek the cause of a neurosis in the past, but in the present: "I ask, what is the necessary task which the patient will not accomplish?"⁷⁴ In terms of the developmental process, "the psychological trouble in neurosis, and the neurosis itself,

⁷² *Two Essays*, CW 7, par. 488.

⁷³ "Psychoanalysis and Neurosis," *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW4, par. 569.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, par. 570.

can be formulated as *an act of adaptation that has failed*.”⁷⁵

This is quite different from the classical Freudian view of neurosis, but it doesn't substantially change what happens in the process of analysis. The fantasies still have to be brought to light because the energy the person needs for psychic health—and for adaptation—is attached to them. The object in a Jungian analysis, however, is not to reveal a supposed root cause of the neurosis but to establish a connection between the conscious mind and the unconscious. Only in this way, believed Jung, can the split-off energy become available for the accomplishment of the “necessary task” the person balks at. He says:

Considered from this standpoint, psychoanalysis no longer appears as a mere reduction of the individual to primitive sexual wishes, but, if rightly understood, as a highly moral task of immense educational value.⁷⁶

Jung's view of neurosis as an attempt at self-cure, and his application of the theory of conservation of energy to psychological phenomena, are cornerstones in the practice of analytical psychology. When one is depressed, for instance, a basic assumption is that the energy not available to consciousness has not simply disappeared, but is busily stirring up unconscious contents that for the sake of psychological health need to be brought to light and examined. Thus, while a well-meaning friend might counsel distraction—“Get out more, mix with others, stop thinking about yourself”—the analyst sees the depression, or indeed any mood, as a challenge to find out what is going on inside. Hence one is encouraged to introspect, to stay with the mood—go into it rather than try to escape it.

In the normal course of life there is a relatively easy progression of energy, which is to say it can be directed more or less at will. “Progression,” writes Jung, “could be defined as the daily advance of the process of psychological adaptation.”⁷⁷ (This is not the same as development; progression refers simply to the continuous flow or current of life.)

In order to satisfy the demands of adaptation it is necessary to adopt or

⁷⁵ Ibid., par. 574.

⁷⁶ Ibid., par. 575.

⁷⁷ “On Psychic Energy,” *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 60.

attain an attitude appropriate to given circumstances. As long as circumstances don't change, there is no reason to change one's attitude. But since circumstances do change, suddenly or over time, there is no one attitude that is permanently suitable.

Any change in the environment demands a new adaptation, which in turn requires a change in the attitude that was previously quite adequate. But a suitable attitude—that is, one that works in a given situation—is invariably characterized by a certain one-sidedness and is therefore resistant to change. When an attitude is no longer appropriate for the external situation, says Jung, the stage is set for neurosis:

For example, a feeling-attitude that seeks to fulfil the demands of reality by means of empathy may easily encounter a situation that can only be solved through thinking. In this case the feeling-attitude breaks down and the progression of libido ceases. The vital feeling that was present before disappears, and in its place the psychic value of certain conscious contents increases in an unpleasant way; subjective contents and reactions press to the fore and the situation becomes full of affect and ripe for explosions.⁷⁸

Such symptoms indicate a damming up of energy, marked by the breaking up of pairs of opposites.

During the progression of libido the pairs of opposites are united in the co-ordinated flow of psychic processes. . . . But in the stoppage of libido that occurs when progression has become impossible, positive and negative can no longer unite in co-ordinated action, because both have attained an equal value which keeps the scales balanced. . . . The tension leads to conflict, the conflict leads to attempts at mutual repression, and if one of the opposing forces is successfully repressed a dissociation ensues, a splitting of the personality, or disunion with oneself.⁷⁹

The struggle between the opposites would continue indefinitely if the process of regression—the backward movement of energy—did not set in with the outbreak of the conflict.

Through their collision the opposites are gradually deprived of value and

⁷⁸ Ibid., par. 61.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

depotentiated. . . . In proportion to the decrease in value of the conscious opposites there is an increase in value of all those psychic processes which are not concerned with outward adaptation and therefore are seldom or never employed consciously.⁸⁰

As the energetic value of these previously unconscious psychic processes increases, they manifest indirectly as disturbances in behavior, for example in what Freud called symptomatic actions and in the litany of emotional symptoms characteristic of neurosis.

Jung's view is that since the stoppage of libido is due to a failure of the dominant conscious attitude, the unconscious contents activated by regression contain the seeds of a new progression. In terms of his model of typology, the unconscious contents include the opposite attitude which, with the inferior functions, is potentially capable of complementing or even of replacing the inadequate conscious attitude.

If thinking fails as the adapted function, because it is dealing with a situation to which one can adapt only by feeling, then the unconscious material activated by regression will contain the missing feeling function, although still in embryonic form, archaic and undeveloped. Similarly, in the opposite type, regression would activate a thinking function that would effectively compensate the inadequate feeling.⁸¹

The regression of energy thus confronts one with the problem of one's own psychology, as opposed to the initial difficulty of adapting to outer circumstances. In Jung's words, "regression leads to the necessity of adapting to the inner world of the psyche."⁸² Prominent aspects of oneself that one needs to become aware of in such a situation are the persona (the "I" one presents to the outer world), the inner contrasexual (anima or animus) and the shadow (attitudes and inclinations that have either been repressed or never been conscious).

Looked at in this way, the regression of energy is not an abnormal symptom but a necessary phase in the developmental process.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 62.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, par. 65.

⁸² *Ibid.*, par. 66.

It seemed to me from all this that the progression of energy—that is, adaptation to outer conditions—was conceptually analogous to extraversion, and regression—requiring adaptation to inner conditions—was comparable to introversion. But according to Jung this is not the case:

Progression is a forwards movement of life in the same sense that time moves forwards. This movement can occur in two different forms: either extraverted, when the progression is predominantly influenced by objects and environmental conditions, or introverted, when it has to adapt itself to the conditions of the ego (or, more accurately, of the “subjective factor”). Similarly, regression can proceed along two lines: either as a retreat from the outside world (introversion), or as a flight into extravagant experience of the outside world (extraversion). Failure in the first case drives a man into a state of dull brooding, and in the second case into leading the life of a wastrel.⁸³

Well, now I could see the power of Jung’s belief that the psyche is a self-regulating system and that neurosis is an attempt at self-cure.. And it isn’t only theory; it accords with the general experience that in a conflict situation, advice and suggestion have no lasting effect.

“A real solution,” writes Jung, “comes only from within, and then only because the patient has been brought to a different attitude.”⁸⁴ The conflict, he says, must be solved on a level of character where the opposites are taken sufficiently into account, “and this again is possible only through a change of attitude. . . . In such cases external solutions are worse than none at all.”⁸⁵

I had it all down pat and felt ready for Adam. I brandished the turnip like a sword and came down on his wrinkled old cabbage head with the wrath of God.

“Take that, you imp, you elf! And that, and that!”

I was beating him to a pulp when I woke up sobbing.

“There, there,” soothed Adam. “It’s okay. It’s not me.”

⁸³ Ibid., par. 77.

⁸⁴ “Some Crucial Points in Psychoanalysis,” *Freud and Psychoanalysis*, CW 4, par. 606.

⁸⁵ Ibid., par. 607.

“Oh, cripes,” I moaned. “Who are you?”

Adam shrugged. “Who am I, or who are you?”

“I don’t know,” I confessed.

“Let me ask you,” said Adam, “is music composed of notes, or the spaces between?”

“I don’t know.”

“Why does water run instead of walk?”

“I don’t know.”

“Would stars twinkle with no eyes to see them?”

“Search me.”

“Why do sneezes come in threeses?”

I broke down.

“There seems to be a lot you don’t know,” said Adam. “There are things in your head that are not in your heart.”

I had an inkling of what he meant.

“You need a holiday,” he said. “Take time off. Cancel all your appointments and hang out in your new spa.”

And so I did. But not before I went downtown and bought a powder-blue T-shirt at Banana Republic because the fetching Jamaican saleslady said, “It goes well with your deep blue eyes.”

“You’re a charmer,” I smiled, “and so lovely. Are you free for lunch?”

She wasn’t. Just as well; I had enough on my plate.

9

The Me and the We: Vocation, Groups and Inflation

What is it in the end, asks Jung, that induces one to rise out of unconscious identity with the mass as out of a swathing mist? He suggests that it is due to many and various irrational factors, but particularly to something commonly called vocation:

True personality is always a vocation and puts its trust in it as in God, despite its being, as the ordinary man would say, only a personal feeling. But vocation acts like a law of God from which there is no escape. The fact that many a man who goes his own way ends in ruin means nothing to one who has a vocation. He *must* obey his own law, as if it were a daemon whispering to him of new and wonderful paths. Anyone with a vocation hears the voice of the inner man: he is *called*.⁸⁶

To have a vocation (from Latin *vocare*, to call) originally meant “to be addressed by a voice.” Examples of this are to be found in the avowals of Old Testament prophets, but historical personalities such as Goethe and Napoleon made no secret of their feeling of vocation.

When I was studying in Zurich I listened for that voice. Was analytic work truly my vocation? If the voice called, would I hear? What if it did not? Or, almost worse, what if it did? I was mindful of the way the Biblical Samuel became one of the elect:

And it came to pass at that time . . . ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to

⁸⁶ “The Development of Personality,” *Development of Personality*, CW 17, par. 300.

Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. . . .

And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.⁸⁷

That's more or less what happened to me. One night, just like Samuel, I distinctly heard my name called, not once but thrice, and then again.

"Speak!" I cried, leaping out of bed, "I do heareth!" I was ripe for holy orders before I heard my housemate Arnold snickering behind the door. We had a good old pillow fight then. Puers at heart. But having already accepted that God—a.k.a. the Self—moves in mysterious ways, it was not a great leap of faith to imagine my feckless friend as His unwitting messenger.

Jung goes on:

Vocation, or the feeling of it, is not, however, the prerogative of great personalities; it is also appropriate to the small ones all the way down to the "midget" personalities, but as the size decreases the voice becomes more and more muffled and unconscious. It is as if the voice of the daemon within were moving further and further off, and spoke more rarely and more indistinctly.⁸⁸

The wholeness of the group is not an oxymoron; it simply designates the original state of unconsciousness we all are immersed in before we have differentiated ourselves from the collective. Differentiation is necessary because the call to become whole is not heard en masse; in a group the inner voice is drowned out by convention, and one's personal vocation is overwhelmed by collective necessity.

⁸⁷ 1 Sam. 3: 2-10, Authorized Version.

⁸⁸ "The Development of Personality," *The Development of Personality*, CW 17, par. 302.

Nevertheless, doing psychological work with groups has been very popular for many years. In the sixties and seventies, there were so-called encounter groups and not much else. Nowadays there is group therapy for just about everything and everyone, from victims of abuse to abusers, from addicts to their partners, from those seeking collective solace for lost foreskin to those who feel guilty about eating over sinks. Clearly many people find real value in sharing their traumatic or deviant experiences. That is abreaction; it is cathartic and it has a place. However, it is a far remove from what is involved in analysis and the process of individuation.

This is not to deny the widespread desire to change and the genuine search for a transformative experience. But a temporarily heightened awareness does not equal rebirth. You may think you have been forever changed when you are merely inflated with an overdose of previously unconscious contents. Many is the analysand who has come to me high as a kite after a weekend workshop and had to be peeled off the ceiling.

Jung acknowledged that one can feel transformed during a group experience, but he cautioned against confusing this with the real thing. He pointed out that the presence of many people together exerts great suggestive force due to the phenomenon of *participation mystique*, unconscious identification; hence in a crowd one risks becoming the victim of one's own suggestibility. Jung writes:

If any considerable group of persons are united and identified with one another by a particular frame of mind, the resultant transformation experience bears only a very remote resemblance to the experience of individual transformation. A group experience takes place on a lower level of consciousness than the experience of an individual. . . . If it is a very large group, the collective psyche will be more like the psyche of an animal, which is the reason why the ethical attitude of large organizations is always doubtful. The psychology of a large crowd inevitably sinks to the level of mob psychology. . . . In the crowd one feels no responsibility, but also no fear.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ "Concerning Rebirth," *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 9i, par. 225.

Positive group experiences are certainly possible. They can spur a person to noble deeds or instill a feeling of solidarity with others. The group can give one a degree of courage, a bearing and dignity that may easily get lost in isolation. But in the long run such gifts are unearned and so do not last. Away from the crowd and alone, you are quite a different person and unable to reproduce the previous state of mind.

For some people, dealing with what happens to them in the course of an ordinary day is either too difficult or too mundane, perhaps both. Group work and esoteric practices—crystals, vision quests, channeling and the like—are much more exciting. They tempt with promises few of us are immune to: deliverance from the woes of this world and escape from oneself. Hence the power a madman with a God complex and a silver tongue can have on fragile people who can't find meaning anywhere else in their lives. Suicide cults, fundamentalist religions—and indeed all isms—are evidence of that.

Hearing the call is a numinous experience. Such events always have a deep emotional resonance. Hitherto unconscious contents have become conscious. What was previously unknown is now known. That automatically results in an enlargement of the personality. Cults, sudden conversions and other far-reaching changes of mind—like St. Paul on the road to Damascus and St. Thomas Aquinas's change of heart⁹⁰—have their origin in such experiences. Whether for good or ill, only time will tell. Consciousness is temporarily disoriented, life as one has known it is disrupted, and when the ego is particularly weak the entire personality may disintegrate.

The extreme possibility is schizophrenia, a splitting of the mind—multiple personalities with no central control, a free-for-all among the complexes. But the more common danger is inflation, an unavoidable consequence of realizing new things about oneself.

Inflation is a psychological phenomenon that involves an extension of the personality beyond individual limits. This regularly happens in anal-

⁹⁰ See Marie-Louise von Franz, ed., *Aurora Consurgens: A Document Attributed to Thomas Aquinas on the Problem of Opposites in Alchemy*.

ysis as ego-awareness lights up the dark, but it is common in everyday life as well. One example is the way in which people identify with their business or title, as if they themselves were the whole complex of social factors which in fact characterize only their position. This is an unwarranted extension of oneself, whimsically bestowed by others.

Every step toward greater consciousness creates a kind of Promethean guilt, so to speak. Through self-knowledge, the gods are, as it were, robbed of their fire; that is, something that was the property of unconscious powers is torn out of its natural context and subordinated to the whims of the conscious mind. The one who has “stolen” the new knowledge becomes alienated from others. The pain of this loneliness is the vengeance of the gods, for never again can one return to the fold. Prometheus’s punishment was to be chained to the lonely cliffs of the Caucasus, forsaken of God and man; an eagle fed on his liver, and as much as was devoured during the day, that much grew again during the night.

Fortunately, few of us have to go through all that. The ancient notion of the liver as the seat of the soul may linger on, but nowadays common sense and the reactions of others to an assumed godlikeness are usually enough to bring one down to earth.

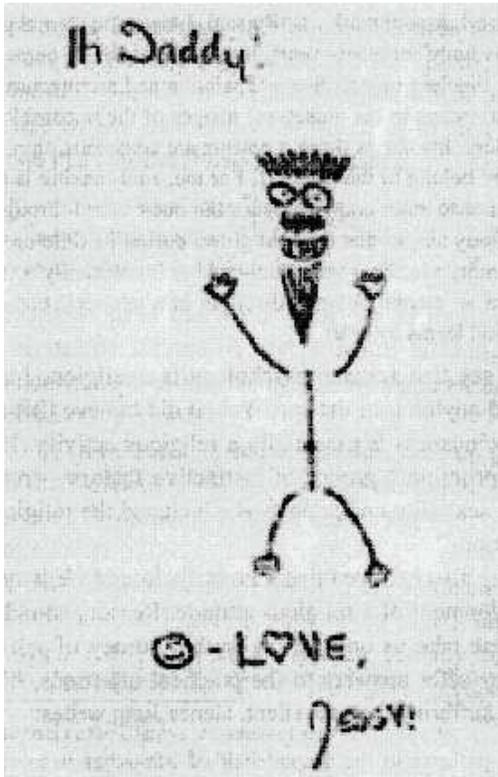
However, there is still the feeling of having been chosen, set apart. Thus anyone who has found his or her individual path is bound to feel estranged from those who have not. This is simply a particular case of what I have generally observed, that those who have worked on themselves don’t care to spend much time with those who haven’t. One might think this to be elitist, but it is only natural. With a sense of vocation comes the realization that your time on this earth is precious. You become reluctant to squander it on those who don’t know who they are or why they are here, and are not inclined to ask.

Those who hear the call and respond become redeemer personalities—leaders, heroes, beacons of hope for others. Individuals with personality have *mana*.⁹¹ But beware of those who seek vaingloriously to capitalize

⁹¹ *Mana* is a Melanesian word referring to a bewitching quality in gods and sacred objects. In individuals, Jung used the term “mana personality” to describe the inflationary result of assimilating previously unconscious contents. *Two Essays*, CW 7, pars. 374ff.

on this aura, including especially yourself. Those with *mana* may seem to be in possession of an absolute truth, but in fact the main thing they have that distinguishes them from others is simply a bedrock sense of themselves and the resolve to obey the law that commands from within. This does not make them saints or gurus.

Above all, beware those who function out of power instead of eros.⁹²



⁹² Jung: "Where love reigns, there is no will to power; and where the will to power is paramount, love is lacking." *Ibid.*, par. 78.

10 The Religious Dimension

There is a spiritual aspect to Jungian psychology that has been called soul-making. The popular writer and Jungian analyst Marion Woodman describes it like this:

Psychological work is soul work. . . . By soul, I mean the eternal part of us that lives in this body for a few years, the timeless part of ourselves that wants to create timeless objects like art, painting and architecture. Whenever the ego surrenders to the archetypal images of the unconscious, time meets the timeless. Insofar as those moments are conscious, they are psychological—they belong to the soul. . . . For me, soul-making is allowing the eternal essence to enter and experience the outer world through all the orifices of the body . . . so that the soul grows during its time on Earth. It grows like an embryo in the womb. Soul-making is constantly confronting the paradox that an eternal being is dwelling in a temporal body. That's why it suffers, and learns by heart.⁹³

This is not to say that Jungian psychology is a religion. Jung himself adamantly denied anything of the sort. Yet he did believe that the human longing for consciousness is essentially a religious activity. In an essay identifying five prominent groups of instinctive factors—creativity, reflection, activity, sexuality and hunger—he included the religious urge as a subset of reflection.⁹⁴

Moreover, Jung also believed that a neurosis in midlife is never cured without the development of a religious attitude. Reason, sound judgment and common sense take us only so far on the journey of self-discovery and healing. They offer answers to the practical questions, but when it comes to psychic suffering they are silent. Hence Jung writes:

Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was

⁹³ *Conscious Femininity: Interviews with Marion Woodman*, pp. 134f.

⁹⁴ “Psychological Factors in Human Behaviour,” CW 8, pars. 235ff.

not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.⁹⁵

Jung, himself a Swiss Protestant pastor's son who decried his father's mindless faith,⁹⁶ stressed that he was by no means referring to belief in a particular creed or membership of a Church, but rather to a certain attitude of mind. He described this attitude in terms of the Latin word *religio*, from *relegere*, meaning a careful consideration and observation of irrational factors historically conceived as spirits, demons, gods, etc.—“the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been changed by experience of the *numinosum*.”—which is to say, the unknown.⁹⁷ Thus someone in a conflict situation, for instance,

has to rely on divine comfort and mediation . . . an autonomous psychic happening, a hush that follows the storm, a reconciling light in the darkness . . . secretly bringing order into the chaos of his soul.⁹⁸

Jung sometimes used the word “soul” in its traditional theological sense, but he strictly limited its psychological meaning. “By soul,” he writes, “I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as ‘personality.’”⁹⁹

Soul-making, in this secular sense, can thus be seen as a natural consequence of differentiating and consciously assimilating previously unconscious contents—particularly those associated with persona, shadow, and anima or animus.

Myself, I am temperamentally prosaic. I am so taken up with what is right in front of me that I seldom think about soul from one day to the next. But when I do, yes, I can readily see my life in terms of soul—

⁹⁵ “Psychotherapists or the Clergy,” *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 509.

⁹⁶ See *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 92ff. For a commentary on Jung's relationship with his father, see John P. Dourley, *A Strategy for a Loss of Faith*, pp. 13ff.

⁹⁷ “Psychology and Religion,” *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 9.

⁹⁸ “A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity,” *ibid.*, par. 260.

⁹⁹ “Definitions,” *Psychological Types*, CW 6, par. 797.

meaningful encounters with my parts unknown. Clearly I have projected my anima-soul onto many women, as they have projected their animus onto me, and subsequently suffered its loss (as have they). Now I experience soul when I stare at the wall in the still of night. Soul is there when I am in conflict with myself, when I struggle for answers. Soul is what I am, as opposed to what I seem to be. Soul is forged in the interactions between me and my inner and outer women, and I see it daily in the material presented to me in my analytic practice.

Gordon, a forty-eight-year-old accountant, brings a dream:

A woman approaches with a child. It's a boy, a year old, maybe a bit more. The woman is vaguely familiar. She asks me for religious instruction. I tell her she's made a mistake, that I'm an atheist. She just smiles and hands me the child.

"I woke up quite mystified. What do you make of it?" he asks.

"You first," I say.

"I suppose the woman is a feminine side of myself I don't know well."

"And the child?"

"New life, new possibilities . . . ? Say, it's just over a year ago that I started seeing you. That would have been the birth of something new, wouldn't it—the child?"

"And conception, nine months before that?"

"Well, let's see . . . that's when I left my wife . . ."

Maria, seventy-year-old artist, German by birth, survivor of an Allied concentration camp and an abusive childhood, taps the latest of the many thick journals in which for more than twenty years she has kept a faithful record of her dreams, thoughts and daily happenings.

"This is my soul," she says. "It is me."

At times of transition from one stage of life to another, traditional religious imagery often appears in dreams. A childless woman in her forties dreams of baptizing her new-born. A man in his fifties dreams of finding a long-lost baby boy under a pile of rubble—in the basement of a church. People dream of being priests or nuns, of celebrating Mass, of family seders, of pilgrimages, of mountainous journeys, fearful descents into black holes, wandering in the desert. A shopping mall becomes a

cathedral. Shrines magically appear in parking lots. Virgin births and divine children—born walking and speaking—are not rare.

The particular significance of such images is inextricably bound up with the dreamer's personal history and associations, but beyond that they seem to derive from a common bedrock, the archetypal basis for all mythology and all religions—the search for meaning. Hence Jung writes that a neurosis “must be understood, ultimately, as the suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning.”¹⁰⁰

Marie-Louise von Franz notes that Jung came early to the recognition that institutionalized religion could give him no answers. Instead, he found the way to illumination in the depths of himself; thus:

The basis and substance of Jung's entire life and work do not lie in the traditions and religions which have become contents of collective consciousness, but rather in that primordial experience which is the final source of these contents: the encounter of the single individual with his own god or daimon, his struggle with the overpowering emotions, affects, fantasies and creative inspirations and obstacles which come to light from within.¹⁰¹

The religious attitude can hardly be pinned down in a sentence or two, but it certainly involves acknowledging, and paying homage to, something numinous, mysterious—something far greater than oneself. God? Nature? The Self? Take your pick. Analyst Lawrence Jaffe writes:

Jung says of his message that it sounds like religion, but is not. He claims to be speaking as a philosopher, whereas on other occasions he rejected even I

Jung's protestations notwithstanding, his psychology can be considered a kind of religion; not a traditional religion with an emphasis on dogma, faith and ritual, to be sure, but a new kind—a *religion of experience*.¹⁰²

Well, I can live with that, for when all is said and done, what is the wellspring of religion if not our experience of the gods? Nowadays we

¹⁰⁰ “Psychotherapists or the Clergy,” *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11, par. 497.

¹⁰¹ *C.G. Jung*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰² *Liberating the Heart: Spirituality and Jungian Psychology*, p. 19 (italics added).

may call them complexes, but by any name they will always be essentially unknown. We may find these gods or complexes inside instead of out, but perhaps that is simply a manner of speaking. The alchemists saw little difference, according to this ancient Hermetic ditty quoted more than once by Jung and his colleague Marie-Louise von Franz:

Heaven above
Heaven below
Stars above
Stars below
All that is above
Also is below
Grasp this
And rejoice.¹⁰³

Who could say better than that? It is deeply poetic and powerful, but what does it mean?

Well, for a start, it means that Jung thought that alchemical procedures were metaphorically analogous to what goes on in the individual psyche during the process of individuation. What an insight! So, let us compare the stages of enlightenment, according to the alchemical *opus*, to what happens as we become progressively more conscious:

Alchemy

nigredo (blackening)

albedo (whitening)

rubedo (reddening)

Individuation

confrontation with shadow

integration of complexes

relationship with the Self

Marie-Louise von Franz describes these stages as follows:

The *nigredo* has its parallels . . . in the confrontation with the shadow. Everything which one has criticized with moral indignation, in others, is “served up” in dreams as a part of one’s own being. Envy, jealousy, lies, sexual drives, desire for power, ambition, greed for money, irritability, all kinds of childishness suddenly stare implacably at one, out of one’s

¹⁰³ See, for instance, “The Psychology of the Transference,” *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, CW 16, par. 384; also Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus*, pp. 140ff.

dreams. Illusions about oneself and the world fall apart, ideals are revealed as desire for power in disguise, “sacred” convictions as hollow.¹⁰⁴

In the alchemical work the *nigredo* is followed by the *albedo*. This phase corresponds in the individuation process to the integration of the inner contrasexual components, the anima in the case of a man, the animus with a woman. . . . Psychologically it is a question of the transference problem, the constellation of a love relation between doctor and patient, or else the problem of a great and passionate love which is just as often constellated outside the therapeutic situation.¹⁰⁵

In the alchemical procedure the *rubedo* . . . follows the *albedo*. In this phase the work comes to an end, the retort is opened and the philosophers’ stone begins to radiate a cosmically healing effect. . . . The Self, too, which is brought into reality in the individuation process, is the wider, inner man who reaches toward eternity, the Anthropos who is described [in alchemical works] as spherical and bisexual and who “stands for the mutual integration of conscious and unconscious.”¹⁰⁶

“That is very heady stuff,” said Rachel One, suddenly by my side.

“Yes, but don’t fret,” I said, hugging her, “I will walk you through it.”

So, here’s what arcane alchemical procedures might look like in a life:

First, the *nigredo*—all those things about ourselves that we don’t like or feel embarrassed about, like watching porn videos or lusting after our neighbor’s wife. And then there’s our unexplored potential, our un-lived life. In Jung-speak, that’s our shadow.

Then the *albedo*, which involves acknowledging that we have a contrasexual side, an inner man/woman with whom we must establish a relationship for the sake of our psychic health.

Next, the *rubedo* involves dealing with the opposites—differentiating good from bad, want from need, personal values from those dictated by the collective. Constellated opposites activate in turn the archetype of the crucifixion, which is ubiquitous in the Western unconscious, whether we

¹⁰⁴ C.G. Jung: *His Myth in Our Time*, pp. 222f.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

adhere to Christian beliefs or not. In short, we are torn between this and that, in conflict with ourselves.

Differentiating opposites always entails suffering. There is no way around it, and those who are not up to it had better not go into analysis, for the analytic process focuses long-term on the integration of opposites. The more conscious you become, the more you are obliged to hold the tension between opposites.

Consciously pursuing individuation also usually involves sacrifice. Jung has written a good deal on the subject, particularly as it relates to the Christian myth in general and the Catholic Church's ritual of the Mass in particular.¹⁰⁷

However, outside the context of organized religion, Jung saw that the basic issue in sacrifice was to give up one's attachment to infantile values and satisfactions. Thus he writes:

Sacrifice means giving up the connection with the mother, relinquishing all the ties and limitations which the psyche has taken over from childhood into adult life. . . . It is not possible to live too long amid infantile surroundings, or in the bosom of the family, without endangering one's psychic health. Life calls us forth to independence, and anyone who does not heed this call because of childish laziness or timidity is threatened with neurosis. . . .

. . . The whole of the libido is needed for the battle of life.¹⁰⁸

As usual, I can't say better than that.

¹⁰⁷ See *Psychology and Religion*, CW 11.

¹⁰⁸ *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5, pars. 461ff.

11

Affairs of the Heart

This chapter contains mature subject matter, including scenes of emotional violence. Reader discretion is advised.

Okay, let me give you a typical scenario. You may laugh because it's such a cliché, but it is a cliché precisely because it happens so often; which is to say it is archetypal. And here it is from start to finish, based more or less on my own experience.

You are 38 years old, or 54 or 62. You have been married for umpteen years to someone you love and respect. You have several children or none, and all in all a pretty good life together. Maybe the sex, if any, isn't as much fun as it once was, but what the hell, you have lots of other interests in common and a social life as a couple that you generally enjoy.

One day, out of the blue, you find yourself attracted to someone else. Maybe it's your teenager's best friend, or a sales clerk at Wal-Mart, or a real estate agent. You can't get him or her out of your mind. Sparks fly when you're together and before long you're nibbling each other's fingers over coffee. You meet again and again in public places, but after a time, "Gee," your shadow says, "I'd sure like to get closer," and before you can say lickety split it happens: you are in bed with someone other than your spouse and you are enjoying it no end. You are high as a kite; you feel in love, and there is no way you will give this up.

That's on the one hand, and it's all very erotic and exciting, but on the other hand there is your long-standing relationship with a person you don't want to hurt and can't imagine leaving just because you have the hots for someone else. What about the kids and what your friends and relatives would say? Holy Toledo, you are really in the soup. You are torn between the old and the new, the conventional and the aberrant, the

good and the possibly better. If you follow your heart and go with this new love, you'd betray every principle you hold dear. And if you don't, would you betray yourself?

Conflict, conflict! Days of roses and great joy. Sleepless nights and the guilt eats you up. You watched and smugly mocked others going through this and never thought it could happen to you. But there you are, giddy as a kid on a swing and ready to change your life. Your soul is on fire, and you hurt something awful.

What is happening psychologically in such a situation is that ego, persona and shadow are all in play and at odds. You are paralyzed until the way forward is clear. You are obliged to hold the tension between two different realities, both of which are true, and you do, though barely, because it's so hard not being the you you once knew, the you undivided in your affections. You dare not make a decision because whatever you decide, the opposite will be constellated and you'll be right back in the soup.

You can love someone and enjoy being with her or him, but you'd better not confuse that with understanding the other, who is always essentially unknown.

"You're not yourself," your mate says over breakfast. "What's on your mind?"

You debate with yourself and finally say, "I've met someone else."

He—or maybe she—flips another pancake and groans, "Is it serious?"

Another internal debate, then you say, "I think so."

The mate asks, "Have you made love?"

You shrug, "Well, that's what people do."

(For the sake of simplicity, let's stick now to one gender's perspective in this fantasy. I give the man's side, for that is what I know best, though it could be the other way around.)

Well, how serious it is soon becomes clear because your partner no longer wants to make love with you. That's a shock. One day she is passion incarnate; the next day it's simply, "I can't do this anymore. . . ." And before long she starts packing to leave.

You press for details and what you get is: “Don’t ask. They’ll hurt you. I just see an opportunity for new life and I am taking it.”

Holy bejeebers! You are bowled over, blind-sided. You want to cry out, with Young Sassy (Sarah Vaughan’s original monicker):

You’re mine you
You belong to me you
I will never free you
You’re here with me to stay
You’re mine you
You are mine completely
Love me, love me strong or sweetly
I need you night and day
Arm and arm, hand in hand
We will be bound together
Heart to heart, lips to lips
We’re chained and bound together
I own you
I don’t need to buy love
You’re a slave to my love
In every way you’re mine.¹⁰⁹

You are patriarchal enough to say as much—that she belongs to you—but too liberal minded to stick to it. After all, you are not a cave man. Her body is her own, she declares, and you agree that of course she can do what she wants with it. You even admire her courage. So you just feel sorry for yourself and moan along with Barbra Streisand:

Comin’ in and out of your life
Isn’t easy,
When there’s so many nights
I can’t hold you and I’ve told you
These feelings are so hard to find
Comin’ in and out of your life
Will never free me

¹⁰⁹ Young Sassy, disc 4; “You’re mine you,” lyrics by Edward Heyman and John W. Green.

'Cause I don't need to touch you
To feel you, it's so real with you.¹¹⁰

You are empathetic and rational. You respect your partner's desires and you stifle your feelings of abandonment. Still, your culture has not prepared you for the pain of being left by someone you've loved for many years as best you could. What did you do wrong, you wonder, what had she been missing with you? She offers no answers, perhaps because she hardly knows herself what has overtaken her. An autonomous *daimon* (= impish content of the unconscious) has surfaced to spoil your idyll, and now there is no going back. You are adrift, lost at sea. You are gripped by the fear of floating.

You are stoic and grieve silently. "Love," you read somewhere, "means letting go." And so you let go with as good a grace as you can muster; you don't play the guilt card and you don't challenge her new man to a duel. You sleep alone but fitfully. You are assailed by images of them making love, and jealousy eats you up. Your days are gray and lonely; your nights are filled with longing for the companionship you've lost. You don't blame her for anything. You blame yourself for taking her for granted. You lose your appetite; you drink too much and you start smoking again; your heart aches and your soul mocks you for being such a weakling. Your compassion unmans you.

You recall James Hillman's observation that betrayal is the opposite, the shadow side, of trust:

We can be truly betrayed only where we truly trust—by brothers, lovers, wives, husbands, not by enemies, not by strangers. The greater the love and loyalty, the involvement and commitment, the greater the betrayal. Trust has in it the seed of betrayal; the serpent was in the garden from the beginning, just as Eve was pre-formed in the structure around Adam's heart. Trust and the possibility of betrayal come into the world at the same moment. Wherever there is trust in a union, the risk of betrayal becomes a real possibility. And betrayal, as a continual possibility to be lived with, belongs to trust just as doubt belongs to a living faith.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ "Comin' In and Out of Your Life." Lyrics by R. Parker and B. Whiteside.

¹¹¹ "Betrayal," in *Loose Ends*, p. 66.

That's pretty interesting, but it doesn't help you out of your funk; in fact you wonder if you can ever love or trust again.

You find a therapist to talk to. You haunt the bars and post your profile on internet match-making sites. You watch porn videos but they just make you sad. Love songs drive you up the wall. You date lovelies but nothing clicks. You think of jumping off a bridge or taking rat poison, but that's so not you. You feel totally bereft and you sing along with Natalie Cole:

Un-break my heart,
Don't leave me in all this pain
Don't leave me out in the rain
Come back and bring back my smile
Come and take these tears away
I need your arms to hold me now
The nights are so unkind
Bring back those nights when I held you beside me

Un-break my heart
Say you'll love me again
Undo this hurt you caused
When you walked out the door
And walked outta my life
Un-cry these tears
I cried so many nights
Un-break my heart
My heart¹¹²

The experience of abandonment is ubiquitous and perhaps the most traumatic that most of us ever undergo. It throws us into a dark hole. It can assail us at any age on the death of a close friend or relative, and also when we are dumped by a lover. Some psychologists have suggested that the original trauma of abandonment occurs at birth when we are expelled from the mother and thereby lose a sense of security,¹¹³ a situation re-

¹¹² "Un-break My Heart," lyrics by Toni Braxton.

¹¹³ See especially Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*.

constellated in later life by the loss of a loved one—but I don't know about that.

We have a visceral attachment to those we love, and vice versa. That is perhaps inevitable, no matter that we know in our heads that the attachment is probably based on complexes and projection. So, given such emotional interdependence, how do we survive the loss of loved ones, their absence from our lives—and conversely, how do we let them go without anger and resentment?

Think on this true fact, as noted by James Hollis: If we live long enough, everyone we love will leave us.¹¹⁴ Ergo: we had best be prepared to be on our own.

How to deal with the pain of it, the suffering, the hurt? Well, I can suggest looking into yourself and differentiating your feelings for the lost loved one from your own potential. You might also try not to confuse love with need. Realize that he or she is now beyond your reach and that you grieve for the parts of yourself that you found in the other.

Otherwise, on a more sophisticated psychological level, you could attend to Jung's view of abandonment as an archetypal event and a necessary condition of individuation—an invitation to find, or rediscover, your personal center, your own precious container.

Initially one's center is projected onto the immediate family, a self-contained unit experienced as wholeness. Without a family, whether nurturing or oppressive, we are apt to feel rootless, at loose ends. The loss of such a container is likely at work behind the emotional distress of orphans or a child whose parents split up, but that same motif is also activated in adults when one ascribes to values other than those sanctioned by the collective, or when any close relationship falls apart. I have experienced that at least twice: first, as mentioned earlier, when I left P & G to be a struggling writer in Europe, and later when I left my wife and children to go to Zurich.

Loneliness feels like one has been abandoned. Mythologically, as previously noted, abandonment is associated with the childhood experience of gods and divine heroes. In fact, the motif is so widespread that Jung

¹¹⁴ See *The Middle Passage: From Misery to Meaning in Midlife*, p. 107.

describes abandonment as “a necessary condition, and not just a concomitant symptom” of the potentially higher consciousness often symbolized by, for instance, images of the child in a person’s dreams.¹¹⁵

Those in the process of becoming independent must detach from their origins: mother, family, society; not necessarily literally, but certainly emotionally. Sometimes this transition happens smoothly. If it does not, the result is twofold: the “poor me” syndrome characteristic of the regressive longing for dependence, and a psychic experience of a potentially creative nature—the positive side of the divine child archetype: new life, exciting new possibilities. The incompatibility between these two often generates a conflict that may precipitate a psychological crisis. The conflict is the price that has to be paid in order to grow up. On the one hand, we long to return to the past; on the other, we are drawn inexorably toward an unknown future.

Initially, this conflict goes hand in hand with the feeling of loneliness, behind which is the archetypal motif of the abandoned child. Thus Jung observes, “Higher consciousness . . . is equivalent to being *all alone in the world.*”¹¹⁶

Fast forward six or eight months, or maybe even a year or two. In the meantime, against all your doom and gloom expectations, you’ve found someone new to love, someone who as it happens is nuts about you too. Well gee whiz!! You’re jammin’, you’re jammin’! You rejoice in your good fortune and sing along with Streisand:

Shadows falling, baby, we stand alone
Out on the street anybody you meet got a heartache of their own
(it oughta be illegal)
Make it a crime to be lonely or sad
(it oughta be illegal)
You got a reason for livin’
You battle on with the love you’re livin’ on

¹¹⁵ “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 9i, par. 287.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, par. 288.

You gotta be mine
We take it away
It's gotta be night and day
Just a matter of time

And we got nothing to be guilty of
Our love will climb any mountains near or far, we are
And we never let it end
We are devotion

And we got nothing to be sorry for
Our love is one in a million
Eyes can see that we got a highway to the sky
Don't wanna hear your goodbye
Oh!¹¹⁷

And then—surprise! surprise!—you realize that your erstwhile partner's defection was an opportunity for new life for you as well. And you are no longer bitter. You are animated again and getting on with your life. Now you can sing to her like Barbra and believe it:

When I wake up each morning trying to find myself
And if I'm ever the least unsure
I always remind myself
Though you're someone in this world
That I'll always choose to love
From now on you're only someone
That I used to love.¹¹⁸

Let me close this on a lighter note, with a cautionary vignette:

A married couple is driving along a highway doing a steady forty miles per hour. The wife is behind the wheel.

Her husband suddenly looks across at her and speaks in a clear voice "I know we've been married for twenty years, but I want a divorce."

The wife says nothing, keeps looking at the road ahead, but slowly increases her speed to 45 mph.

¹¹⁷ "Guilty," lyrics by B. Gibb, R. Gibb., M. Gibb.

¹¹⁸ "Someone That I Used to Love," lyrics by G. Goffin, M. Masser.

The husband speaks again. "I don't want you to try and talk me out of it," he says, "because I've been having an affair with your best friend Lucy, and she's a far better lover than you are."

Again the wife stays quiet, but grips the steering wheel more tightly and slowly increases the speed to 55.

He pushes his luck. "I want the house," he says insistently.

Up to 60.

"I want the car, too," he continues.

65 mph.

"And," he says, "I'll have the bank accounts, all the credit cards, the cottage and the boat!"

The car slowly starts veering toward a massive concrete bridge. This makes him nervous, so he asks her: "Isn't there anything you want?"

The wife at last replies, in a quiet and controlled voice.

"No, I've got everything I need," she says.

"Oh, really," he inquires, "so what have you got?"

Just before they slam into the wall at 70 mph, the wife turns to him and smiles, "The airbag."

Do not try. Professional driver on closed circuit.

12 Blood-Letting

I am thinking of the many who have taken my words, and Jung's, to heart. I am wondering how what they read might manifest in their lives.

Well, all I know is that I receive several accolades a month by phone, post or email from those who say they appreciate the insights they gain from both the books I write and others that I publish. I can tell you that I love to hear it, for I am ever doubtful that I make a difference.

Oh, the desire to make a difference! I hear it so often from my analysts that I think it must be ubiquitous. "What is my role in life, my destiny?" they ask. "Where do I fit in? How can I make my mark?"

These are legitimate questions, but impossible for me to answer. Indeed, answers usually only surface in oneself during a lengthy analytic dialogue that is attuned to what is going on in the unconscious.

Meanwhile, try this mantra: "Without the body, the spirit lacks substance; without spirit the body is an empty vessel." I think that's mine, but it might be a case of cryptomnesia.¹¹⁹

Speaking of the body, once a month, or every week or two, I go to a clinic up the street to have blood taken from my arm in order to assess the level of my INR (International Normalized Ratio). That's a number that tells the doctor how thin your blood is: too thick and there is a risk of a blood clot causing a stroke; too thin and if you cut yourself you might never stop bleeding. . . . My doctor likes my INR to be between 2 and 3. If it's 1.6, say, she adjusts the coumadin/warfarin dose upward; if it's 4.3, say, she tells me to lower the daily dose. If the ratio isn't stable from one week to the next, I am told to go for another blood-letting sooner.

This has been going on for some six years now, ever since I collapsed with an attack of atrial fibrillation—irregular heart beat, shortness of breath—and spent a few days in Toronto General Hospital being monitored for vital signs. I've been told that this is not unusual in older people

¹¹⁹ See above, p. 81n.

who had rheumatic fever as a child, as I did.

I have never become used to the periodic blood-letting. I always tense up and flinch as the needle pierces a vein. I ask for a baby needle, but it doesn't seem to make a difference. And after a few visits it hurts even more because the needle is pushing through scar tissue, so we switch to the other arm for a few weeks. The technicians, dear lovelies one and all, are so patient and compassionate when I wince or seep tears even. "There there, dearie, it's all over now." More than once I've asked a gentle needle-pusher to marry me. They just laugh and box my ears. Then they put a piece of cotton over the puncture site and tape that down. "Press on that for a coupla minutes, I'll be right back." And I do press down, because if I don't I'll get an unsightly under-the-skin bruise that's called a hematoma, or something like that.

My doctor tells me that some five million North Americans are obliged to undergo this procedure regularly. Maybe even more in the rest of the world; as if that's any consolation.

Since I have a chronic heart condition, and because of my avowed commitment to self-examination, it is incumbent on me to investigate the symbolism of blood and blood-letting. In Jung-speak we call this amplification—exploring the mythological and historical significance of an image or experience.

I scour my books on mythology and come up with plenty on blood but nothing on blood-letting. So I go on the Internet and call up Google, as I often do when seeking information. I type in "blood-letting." In 0.29 seconds, up come references to 396,000 web sites with information on the subject.

Whew!—that's overkill for sure, needing differentiation, just as the mythological Psyche was obliged to sort wheat from chaff when Eros left her. I pick and choose after browsing what's on offer. The first thing I learn is that in med-speak blood-letting is known as *phlebotomy*. Now I ask you, who could have guessed? And take this in, if you can:

For many centuries, blood-letting was used as a medical treatment for a range of conditions, including fevers, inflammations, diseases and hemorrhages.

Four common methods were employed to draw blood from the body. Venesection was a method of taking blood by cutting one of the larger external veins, and was the most frequently practiced approach. Arteriotomy was used to draw blood from an artery, usually in the temples, but was quite a difficult and dangerous technique. Leeches were also used; they were attached to the skin to suck blood from the patient. The technique known as scarification involved cutting the surface of the skin and then drawing blood by using a syringe or applying cupping-glasses.¹²⁰

Yuck! I remember the leeches on Bogey and Hepburn in *The African Queen*. I guess I should be grateful for the needle.

Blood-letting is historically associated with satanic practices, according to a number of sources:

One of the oldest and most common satanic practices is cutting of the flesh or blood-letting. The term “blood-letting” originates from the word “let”—“to allow to pass, go or come”; hence “blood-letting” literally means to allow the blood to come, or pass.

Throughout history the cutting of the flesh and blood-letting are rituals performed to unleash demonic and supernatural powers. Because the “life of the flesh is in the blood” [Leviticus 17:11], the blood is highly valued in the occult as the “power source”. And by releasing or letting the blood or the “power source”—supernatural power is unleashed.¹²¹

More:

Blood (occult; satanism). The vitalizing or life-giving agent used in the sacrament of the black mass. Blood is believed to provide power and life and therefore plays a central part in ritualistic sacrifices.¹²²

The *Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft* says of blood-letting:

Blood that is let is believed to unleash power. And as a matter of fact, some modern tattoo artists perform rituals during their tattoo procedure in

¹²⁰ *The Art of Science*, on-line:

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/collection/features/science/blood.htm>

¹²¹ “Tattoo: The Mark of Blood,” on-line: www.av1611.org/tattoos/blood.html.

¹²² George A. Mather and Larry A. Nichols, *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult*, p. 40, on-line, *ibid*.

order to unleash supernatural power. Some even lick the flowing blood bubbling from the tattoo.¹²³

blood: Called the “river of life”, blood is identified with the soul and is the vehicle that carries the vital energy of the universe through the body. In magic, blood is revered and feared for the miraculous power it possesses and confers.¹²⁴

So you might think I’d come away from those pin-pricks feeling empowered, loaded for bear. But not at all, in fact the reverse. I hobble back to my car feeling weak and drained, dying for a nap, craving one of those little blue pills to make me a man again. It feels like every few weeks I have a bit of the river of life drained out of me. How do I renew it? Well, trysting with MP helps, and so does Scotch.

In mythology and literature, blood is associated with the sun (fire, king, lion, gold); passion; the seat of life; sacrifice; war; fertility; food of the dead, the Biblical covenant; protection against evil; guilt; and above all, with witchcraft:

I. menstrual blood: connected with moon-magic: 1. According to Pliny it can: a. blast vine; taint meat; b. fade purple cloth, etc.; tarnish copper, dim mirrors, make knives dull; d. make bees desert their hives, or kill them; e. cause abortions in mares; f. rid a field of pest by [the menstruating woman] walking around it naked before sunrise; g. calm a storm at sea; h. cure boils, erysipelas, nydrophobia, and barrenness; 2. according to the Talmud when a menstruating woman passes between two men, one of them will die; 3. the Thessalian witches’ “baleful moon-dew” was a girl’s first menses, taken during an eclipse; it can be used in a fertility-blighting rite of running around (e.g. a house) counter-clockwise. . . .

II. a. witch-power can be broken by drawing his or her blood; b. blood is often used even in a simple charm for a girl to bring her lover back.¹²⁵

¹²³ Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*, p. 26, on-line, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, pp. 52ff.

“Blast vine? Fade purple cloth? Dim mirrors?” Mused Rachel One, reading over my shoulder. “Hey, that’s pretty awesome! And just what is erysipelas?”

“A rare disease of the skin,” I said confidently.

“And hydrophobia?”

I shrugged. “It’s not in my dictionary. Perhaps it means fear of nydros, the purple people-eaters children dream of.”

Okay, so I was stretching, but what else can you do when you’re a guruNot? I was back to square one on blood-letting, and that’s the truth.

Deflated again, possibly even bewitched; certainly complexed.

13 On Loving

I am thinking of MP, my paramour, first among lovelies. I am thinking that she is so much more to me than a sexual object—though she is certainly that, up front and center. But quite as much, I value her compassion, her loyalty, her insights, her capacity for self-reflection and her bed-rock knowledge of herself. Simply put, she is my *soror mystica*, as medieval alchemists called their female assistants.

I don't feel all that great about our secret liaison. But I don't feel too bad about it either, for it is a plant that blossoms in the shade. And how does MP feel about it? She is married, after all. "Well, there is a lot of tension," she admits, "but I can stand it because what we have together feels true." And then she puts on Barbra Streisand:

Life is a moment in space
When the dream is gone,
It's a lonelier place

I kiss the morning good-bye
But down inside you know
We never know why

The road is narrow and long
When eyes meet eyes
And the feeling is strong
I turn away from the wall

I stumble and fall
But I give you it all.¹²⁶

Clearly, MP is a woman who has differentiated the opposites and come to terms with her shadow. In her presence, my crystal doorknobs dance.

And she is so winsome, my paramour, so quietly sexy, so demurely receptive. In my arms she glows, and in her arms I feel safe (not mother-safe but lover-

¹²⁶ "Woman in Love," lyrics by Barbra Streisand.

safe; there's a big difference). Her unleashed passion thrills me. What more can I say? This old geezer has the love of a good woman. Of course she doesn't save me from myself; that's my job. But she does save me from the Void.

I respond to her Barbra with my Rod Stewart:

Have I told you lately that I love you
Have I told you there's no one else above you?
Fill my heart with gladness,
Take away all my sadness
Ease my troubles that's what you do.

For the morning sun in all its glory
Greet the day with hope and comfort too
You fill my life with laughter
And somehow make it better
Ease my troubles that's what you do.¹²⁷

Falling in love is a very tricky business. All your energy becomes focused on the loved one. You become obsessed. You feel like a fool as the thought of being with her—or him—takes over your life. You might like to put a stop to it, but you are not in control. You muse about the attraction and maybe you try to dismiss it as a youthful folly or projection, but that doesn't work. There's no getting around it: you are besotted and obliged to live it out; and so you should, say I, for we learn so much about ourselves by following our passions.

I recently talked about this love business with my friend Nurse Pam.

Pam: "Perhaps love is something about feeling 'known' by the other."

Me: "In his autobiography Jung talks a lot about not knowing what love is, not being able to describe it or put it into words."¹²⁸

"So perhaps that is love itself," replied Pam, "a feeling that we can't put into words but a feeling that makes us keep trying to describe it to the other, the one we love."

I will tell you true: It is often hard to tell the difference between my dear Rachel One anima and Nurse Pam; let alone Vanessa and MP.

¹²⁷ "Have I told you lately," on *If We Fall in Love Tonight*. Lyrics by Van Morrison.

¹²⁸ See *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 353f.

And isn't that always the way? You do what you do because that is your path, and then you have to learn to live with the consequences.

All that is part and parcel of the process of individuation. Meanwhile, as you digest that, listen to Eva Cassidy's heartfelt salute to a long-term loving relationship:

When we were oh so young
We played those silly games
Never knew about love
Wouldn't know it if it came

We swore we'd never part
Things would always be the same
As we got a little older
All things do change

But that was long ago
Seems a lifetime away
And I bet you didn't know
That I feel the same way today

You are the one (yeah yeah)
My heart goes crazy (crazy for you)
I can't explain
It's just the way that you are.

You are the one that brightens up my day (day)
My heart goes crazy
When I hear your name
I can't explain
It's just the way that you are (oh yeah).¹²⁹

My thoughts stick with Nurse Pam. Fickle, am I? I think not, just honoring another close relationship, another *soror mystica*. Pam and I have rubber-dinghied the rapids of eros and lived to be loverNots. The other day I pressed her for her thoughts on sexuality and older women.

"How older?" she asked.

"How about menopausal and beyond?"

¹²⁹ "You Are," on *No Boundaries*. Lyrics by Tony Taylor.

“Piece of cake,” she said, herself a ravishing brunette in her mid-fifties.

As she deftly arranged the colorful bouquet of flowers she had brought me for our afternoon tryst, she rattled on:

“Collective wisdom has it that older women are free of domestic responsibilities, that they have separated from their mothers and are free to gambol. But that’s not necessarily so. Many are still the major caregivers of their aging parents. And in any case I think it’s only those women who have worked on themselves who genuinely like men, not because they’re married to one—some women are gay, after all—but because they appreciate the strengths of their male friends and their own inner man. And speaking of sex, such women may enjoy it like never before. Unafraid of becoming pregnant, they can abandon themselves to the thrill of discovering their bodies. But they won’t do it with just anyone. They long to be taken seriously and cherished; they seek relationship, and without that, sex is a bust.”

“It sounds like you’ve been through the mill,” I said.

“Hey, and then some,” Pam replied.

“I will not press you for details,” I said, “because you have your own container and some things are sacred.”

Pam reacted to that. “I have been reading *The Sacred Prostitute* by Nancy Qualls-Corbett. She refers to the power of a ‘stranger’ to awaken a woman’s innate femininity. By stranger she means a man who embodies her own inner masculine.” She pulled the book out of her handbag. “Listen to this”:

The stranger’s eyes penetrate the woman’s inner being; his very presence awakens the dormant sacred prostitute and the sensuous feminine nature contained therein. She may hide behind conventional standards, denying her rightful, innate relationship to the goddess of love, but such a screen only delays or aborts her psychic development. . . .

The stranger comes as an emissary of the divine, the moon goddess; if he is not welcomed, the goddess too is slighted and turns her dark side toward the woman. The consequence is that the woman remains cut off from her spirituality, which would contain and enhance her sexual nature.¹³⁰

“That is no invitation to mindless adultery,” said Pam, “but rather a call to attend to one’s deeper Self.”

¹³⁰ *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine*, p. 139.

I huffed: “There are those who would see an inherent contradiction between the terms ‘sacred’ and ‘prostitute.’ ”

“No doubt,” agreed Pam, “but it’s not necessarily so. The sacred prostitute is not a woman of the street but a state of being—an incarnation of archetypal femininity. Qualls-Corbett describes the case of a middle-aged woman she calls Lisa, who after a day of work in a city far from home, meets a man in a restaurant and ends up in bed with him. ‘In their brief time together Lisa was able to experience the sacred prostitute, the dynamic aspect of herself that honored the goddess of love.’ Afterward Lisa wrote in her journal”:

I was somewhat alarmed at what was happening to me. I was not out of control, but my control was not as I’ve always known it, as if something else was intervening. There was some fear and I told him of it. . . . He spoke of the existential fear as if he knew my innermost thoughts. I recall the release I felt in love-making. Release is the only way to explain it. It was a wondrous release! In my shower the next morning, I felt joy. I hugged my body, my beautiful body. I was laughing and singing with a new-found sense of energy and exhilaration. There was no sense of shame or guilt as I often thought there might be, but rather an anticipation of returning home to the man I share my life with.¹³¹

“But a one-night stand,” I objected, “isn’t a relationship.”

“You may think!” cried Pam. “But a relationship can last one night or many years; it all depends on the consciousness of the partners. Qualls-Corbett comments on Lisa’s experience:

Lisa’s real being came alive when her sacred prostitute was constellated by the stranger. She allowed her body to respond naturally to the call of love, instead of retreating into her head for an appropriate or clever response. She honored the spiritual essence of the Self. In so doing, she came to know the beauty of her body and her sexuality in an authentic connection to the goddess. The spirit came to life in the body, and Lisa’s inner woman became a full participant in her life.

. . . Women who are conscious of their true feminine being are attentive to the wisdom of the heart; they do not allow this to be contaminated by

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140f.

collective norms and ideals. This wisdom (in men as well as in women) resides in the body and is related to the principle of eros. Through it women come to realize their true instinctive nature as it unites with the spirit, the male stranger, in the ritual of the sacred marriage.¹³²

Pam sat up straight. “Yes,” she said, “I can see how an older woman might experience the sacred prostitute in herself—but how do *you* experience it? That’s what I’d really like to know. Surely the love of the mother of your children and the love of a paramour are quite different. How do you encompass that in your life, in your feelings? Knowing what you do about yourself and the psyche, how do you relate to a woman? There are ordinary older women and there are wise older women. I expect you know the difference.”

So many questions. I wasn’t quite sure what she was getting at, but I had a go at an answer.

“Well,” I sighed, “I was devastated when the mother of my children lost interest in me. Of course I looked elsewhere, and I found both joy and disappointments. In general, I can say that it is easier to relate to a woman who has worked on herself. My greatest difficulties have been with a woman’s critical animus and his collective opinions. He tends to make my anima cranky, so first I have to tell her—my inner woman, who can be jealous of my outer attachments—to shut up. Then I remind myself that my lover is not my mother. Then, I know only two approaches that sometimes work when confronted with a woman’s animus: 1) laugh at him, and/or 2) by-pass him and surround your loved one with affection. That’s about it—but I have had many failures, as you know. I am no paragon when it comes to keeping a relationship together.”

“Okay,” said Pam, “try this. Romance is all very well, but how do you sustain a mundane life over time? How do you keep the fires burning, the sparkle and fun, the wit and treasure, when you make a salad and sit at the same table day after day, year after year? What makes the sunbeams continue to dance on those crystal doorknobs? Consciousness can sound boring, but jeez, consciousness of our projections, our shadows— know-

¹³² Ibid., p. 141.

ing what's behind the door but not letting it out . . . it's the essence of tease! And when you get two with eyes wide open, then wow! What do you think?"

I shrugged. "To keep the relationship alive, I counsel making love often and playing games together—Scrabble, backgammon, chess, whatever, and keep a journal. Otherwise, you got me, babe, you really do." And that was true.

Here's a Streisand lament that almost breaks my heart:

In a world of anger and lies
I find peace in your eyes,
A flame in the darkness
And all through all space and time
Till every star refuses to shine
You know where my heart is

If you ever leave me will you take me with you
If you're ever lonely
I want to be lonely too,
My home's beside you,
no matter where you may go
My love's inside you even more than you know.¹³³

Well, when it comes to loving it seems there are always more questions than answers. As an elderly Jamaican lady said to me years ago, "You loves and you takes your chances, and if you don't take a chance on love, well, life is pretty boring."

Ain't it the truth. And for myself, all I can add is that if I could write as well as Barbra and Rod and Eva sing (and don't forget Young Sassy, Nina Simone and Frankie Blue Eyes), I'd sleep better than I do.

It is said that there's a cruel world out there, but it can be even crueler inside. Between outer hammer and inner anvil, your task is to become authentically yourself. That is the path of individuation.

¹³³ "If You Ever Leave Me," Lyrics by Richard Max.

14 Aging and Dying

Which is harder: to be executed, or to suffer that prolonged agony
which consists in being trampled to death by geese?

—Soren Kierkegaard.

Kierkegaard presented himself as a parson and serious-minded philosopher. That was his persona. But his shadow was a stand-up comic, to which the above observation in his *Journals* attests. He often said he did not fear death, but he also sometimes joked about it.¹³⁴

Thoughts of my own mortality didn't often occupy my mind until I had that arterial bypass surgery a year or so ago.¹³⁵ But since then, I've never been entirely quit of them.

There are so many things that might down a man of my age—or indeed anyone of any age: heart attack, stroke, diabetes, various cancers (lung, prostate, skin, breast, colon, etc.). Never mind the possibility of being hit by a bus when crossing the street, or driving into a lamp-post. I read of cars hurtling the wrong way on super highways and in an instant wiping out whole families. And then there is road rage, home invasion and random shootings! I mean, what next? Nowadays it is an act of bravery to get up in the morning.

So what is one to do? What attitude to adopt toward the possibility of sudden death in the midst of life? Well, it would be tempting not to think about it at all, for sure; but anyone committed to being conscious cannot so easily evade the questions that thoughts of death raise during life.

Is there life after death? If so, what would it look like? Might we survive in some bodiless, ethereal form? What happens to the soul without a

¹³⁴ Kierkegaard was one of my heroes as a young man. So I was a bit miffed to read that Jung called him “that grizzler” (*Letters*, vol. 1, p. 331), noting that he was neurotic if not actually a psychopath (*Ibid.*, pp. 331f) and lacked “meat” (*Letters*, vol. 2, p. 102).

¹³⁵ See *On Staying Awake*, pp. 7ff.

body? Or is there a soul at all? Should I be buried or opt to be cremated? Donate my healthy organs—if there are any left—or keep them to myself just in case?

This is such a big topic that I felt obliged to conjure up help in the person of Professor Brillig.

“The wine of youth does not always clear with advancing years,” said Adam portentously. “Sometimes it grows turbid.”

We were back in his neighborhood pub, Mayday Malone’s, enjoying a quiet pint of Guinness. It was two o’clock on a Thursday afternoon in February. Adam and I were among the very few patrons. Sunny snoozed at my feet. The TV sets were off; no one was playing pin-ball or video games. In short, there was no noise.

“Statistics show a rise in the frequency of depression in men at the age of about forty,” said Adam, “in women somewhat earlier. In this phase of life, between thirty-five and forty, an important change in the psyche is in preparation. At first it is not conscious or striking, simply indirect signs of a change which seems to rise in the unconscious. Often it manifests as a slow change in a person’s character; in other cases certain traits may come to light which had been dormant since childhood; or again, one’s previous inclinations and interests begin to weaken and others take their place. Conversely, one’s cherished convictions and principles, especially moral ones, begin to harden and grow increasingly rigid.

“All this can best be seen in rather one-sided people, occurring sometimes sooner and sometimes later. Often their appearance is delayed by the fact that the parents of the person are still alive. It is then as if the period of youth were being unduly drawn out. I have noticed this especially in the case of men whose fathers were long lived. The death of the father then has the effect of a precipitate and almost catastrophic ripening.”

“My father was alive when I ripened,” I said. “I was thirty-seven years old. I woke up crying one morning and couldn’t stop. I was a basket case. It was the end of life as I knew it.”¹³⁶

“Yes, I remember,” said Adam. “You were lucky; you had time left.”

¹³⁶ See my *Survival Paper*.

We sipped our beer.

“The psychic life of civilized man is full of problems,” Adam said. “We can hardly think of it except in terms of problems. Our psychic processes are made up to a large extent of reflections, doubts and experiments that are almost completely foreign to the unconscious, instinctive mind of primitive man. As long as we live submerged in nature we are unconscious; we live in the security of instinct which knows no problems. Everything in us that still belongs to nature shrinks away from a problem, for its name is *doubt*, and wherever doubt holds sway there is uncertainty, the possibility of divergent ways. And where several ways seem possible, we have lost the guidance of instinct and are in the clutches of fear—fear of being wrong, of not making the right decision.”

I asked: “But don’t our very problems bring the possibility of a widening of consciousness?”

“Indeed,” said Adam, “but they also require us to say good-bye to a childlike unconsciousness and trust in nature. This necessity is a psychic fact so important that it constitutes one of the most essential symbolic teachings of Christianity. It is the sacrifice of the merely natural man, of the unconscious, ingenuous being whose tragic career began with the eating of the apple in Paradise. The Biblical fall of man presents the dawn of consciousness as a curse. And in fact it is in this light that we first experience every problem that forces us to greater consciousness and separates us even further from the paradise of unconscious childhood.”¹³⁷

“Think how we turn away from our problems. If possible they must not be mentioned; better still, their existence is denied. We wish our lives to be simple and smooth, and for that reason problems are taboo. We want certainties and no doubts—results and no experiments—without realizing that certainties can arise only through doubt, and results only through experiment. The artful denial of a problem does not produce conviction.”

“Back to nature, then, is it?” I joshed.

Adam laughed.

¹³⁷ For an extended commentary, see Mario Jacoby, *Longing for Paradise: Psychological Perspectives on an Archetype*.

“Hardly. Do you remember what Jung said?” He looked off. “Something like: ‘There is nothing to stop you from taking a two-room cottage in the country, or from puttering about in a garden and eating raw turnips. But your soul will laugh at the deception.’¹³⁸

“No, I’m afraid we’re stuck with consciousness as a way out. A wider and higher consciousness is required to give us the certainty and clarity we need. When we have a problem, we instinctively resist trying the way out that leads through obscurity and darkness. But in order to be enlightened and become conscious, we must travel through the darkness. We must even indulge in speculation.

“In treating the problems of psychic life, for instance, we continually stumble upon questions of principle belonging to diverse branches of knowledge. We disturb and anger the theologian no less than the philosopher, the physician no less than the educator; we even grope about in the domains of the biologist and the historian.

“This is not arrogance but necessity; the psyche is a unique combination of factors which are all special subjects of far-reaching lines of research. Out of himself and his peculiar constitution man has produced the sciences. They are symptoms of the human psyche.”

The waiter intruded. “You guys okay here?”

We ordered another round.

“Where’s Winona?” I asked Adam. I recalled that the navel-gemmed Winona was his erstwhile waitress and sometime lover.

“She left last week. They say she went to live in the woods with a hunter.” He chuckled. “And good luck to them.”

“Adam,” I said, “why do we have problems at all, and apparently other animals don’t?”

He hunched forward.

“We can thank the growth of consciousness for the existence of problems,” he said. “There are no problems without consciousness. We should therefore ask, rather, how consciousness arises in the first place.

“Now, no one knows for certain, but we can watch small children in

¹³⁸ Adam was close enough; see *Two Essays*, CW 7, par. 258.

the process of becoming conscious. When the child recognizes someone or something, then we feel it has consciousness. At this level, consciousness is limited to the perception of a few connections between psychic contents. There is no continuous memory in the early years of life; at most there are islands of consciousness, like single lamps or lighted objects in the dark. Gradually the contents of these islands are recognized as belonging to the perceiving subject, the so-called ego. The feeling of 'I-ness' arises; the child begins to speak of itself in the first person.

"In the childish stage of consciousness there are as yet no problems; nothing depends upon the subject, for the child is still wholly dependent on its parents. It is as though it were not yet completely born, but still enclosed in the psychic atmosphere of the parents. Of course the complex psychic life of the child is a significant problem to parents, educators and doctors, and kids suffer tremendously in response to environmental influences, but only the adult human being has self-doubts that manifest as serious life problems.

"Take yourself," said Adam. "You have written about being answerable to no one, yes?"

I nodded.

"And yet, when you have time to think, or just out of the blue, you are troubled by questions, is that true?"

"It is," I admitted.

"That is the price we pay," said Adam, "for being grown up."

I'd never thought of it like that.

"Individual psychic birth," said Adam, "and with it conscious differentiation from the parents, usually takes place only at puberty, with the eruption of sexuality. Until then psychic life is governed largely by instinct and few or no inner conflicts arise. Even when external limitations oppose subjective impulses, we submit to them or circumvent them; one is not at variance with oneself, does not yet know the state of inner tension induced by a problem. This state only arises when what was an external limitation becomes an inner one—when one impulse is opposed by another with equal intensity. Then we have self-division, the dualistic state characteristic of problems and conflicts in the period of youth."

“How long does that last?” I asked. Of course I should have known. I’d read Jung’s essay, “The Stages of Life,”¹³⁹ but that was years ago. One reason I valued my time with Adam was that he remembered so much that I had forgotten.

“Most developmental psychologists,” said Adam, “consider youth to extend for twenty years or so, from just after puberty to middle life, say thirty-five or forty. Many sources of problems in this period are due to the clash between reality and illusions or false assumptions: exaggerated expectations, underestimating difficulties, unjustified optimism, a negative attitude and so on. But just as often it is inner, psychic difficulties that give rise to problems, even when adaptation to the outer world has been achieved without apparent effort. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if those who have had a hard struggle for existence are spared inner problems, while those who have experienced no difficulty at all in adaptation have sexual problems or conflicts arising from a sense of inferiority.”

“Do you think some people are temperamentally neurotic?” I asked.

Adam shrugged.

“Those who have problems due to their own temperaments are often neurotic. But let us not confuse the existence of problems with neurosis. The neurotic suffers because he is unconscious of his problems. A person may suffer from conscious problems without being neurotic.

“In the myriad variety of individual problems found in the period of youth, there is invariably one common factor: a resistance to growing up. Something in us wishes to remain a child, to stay unconscious; to reject everything strange, or else subject it to our will; to do nothing, or else indulge our craving for pleasure or power. In all this there is something of the inertia of matter, a persistence in the childish stage of consciousness that is narrower and more egoistic than the dualistic phase, which offers a widening of the horizon of life. But it is just this that is so vigorously resisted. To be sure, this expansion begins at birth, when the child abandons the narrow confines of the mother’s body. From then on it steadily increases until it reaches a climax in the problematic state, at which point

¹³⁹ *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, pars. 749ff.

one begins to struggle against it.”

I coughed, just to staunch the flow of Adam’s talk, but to no avail.

“Psychology,” he resumed, “teaches us that there is nothing in the psyche that is old; nothing that can really, finally, die away. Even St. Paul was left with a thorn in the flesh. Whoever protects himself against what is new and strange and regresses to the past falls into the same neurotic condition as the one who identifies with the new and runs away from the past. The only difference is that the one has estranged himself from the past and the other from the future. In principle both are doing the same thing—reinforcing their narrow range of consciousness instead of shattering it in the tension of opposites that leads to wider and deeper consciousness.”

“Most people,” I observed, “strive to achieve or to be useful. Is that not enough?”

“Enough? I don’t know,” said Adam. “Clearly many think it is. I once did myself. Now I find such pursuits superficial. But there’s the rub. Society does not value consciousness of oneself; its prizes are not given for personality.”

“Except, sometimes,” I offered, “posthumously.”

Adam ignored me. “Consciousness,” he continued, “can only seek culture or its denial. Achievement, usefulness and so forth are the ideals that seem to point the way out of the confusions of the problematic state. They are the lodestars that guide us in the adventure of broadening and consolidating our physical and intellectual existence; they help us set our roots in the world. In the youthful years this course is the usual one, and certainly preferable to flailing about in a welter of problems. But it does little to develop that wider consciousness to which we give the name of culture.

“The dilemmas we meet in the period of youth are generally dealt with by adapting whatever was given to us by the past to the possibilities and demands of the future. We limit ourselves to the attainable, and this means renouncing all our other psychic potentialities. One person loses a valuable piece of the past, another a valuable piece of the future. Think of those you went to school with and looked up to, promising young

minds destined for greatness, and when you met them years later they seemed dry and cramped, stuck in a narrow mold.”

Several came to my mind. But I wondered: if the same question were put to them, might I come to theirs? To others, Jungian psychology might well seem to be a narrow mold, or even, as some have suggested, a moldy cult. What’s in a mold? Was I in one?

I had no heart to put these questions to Adam. He was on a roll. I listened as he pursued the bee in his bonnet.

“The serious problems in life,” said Adam, “are never completely solved. If ever they should appear to be, it is a sign that something has been lost. The meaning and purpose of a problem seem to lie not in its solution but in our working at it incessantly and living with the tension.”

“Something like Sunny worrying a bone?” I asked. She stirred at her name; I patted her and slipped her a cookie—uncomfortably aware that I was throwing yet another sop, so to speak, to Cerberus, the fearsome hound who guards the gateway to the Underworld.

“A fair analogy,” said Adam. “As a solution to the problems of youth, restricting ourselves to the attainable works only temporarily; it is not lasting in a deeper sense. Of course, to win for oneself a place in society and to transform one’s nature so that it is more or less fitted to this kind of existence is no small achievement. It involves a fight within oneself as well as outside, comparable to the struggle of the child for an ego. That struggle for the most part goes on unobserved because it happens in the dark. But when we see how stubbornly childish illusions and assumptions are still clung to in later years, we can gain some idea of the energies that were needed to form them. And it is the same with the ideals, convictions, guiding ideas and attitudes that in the period of youth lead us out into life, for which we struggle, suffer and win victories. In a certain way we become them and seek to perpetuate them indefinitely.”

He paused for breath.

“The closer we come to midlife,” said Adam, “and the better we have succeeded in entrenching ourselves in our personal attitudes and social positions, the more it seems as if we had discovered the right course, the right ideals and principles of behavior. Thus we suppose them to be eter-

nally valid and even make a virtue of clinging to them, overlooking the fact that social goals are by and large attained at the cost of a diminution of personality. Aspects of life which should also have been experienced gather dust in the woodshed, or are faintly glowing coals under gray ashes."

"You are referring to unlived life?" I asked.

"Yes," said Adam. "Around the age of fifty, a period of intolerance and fanaticism is often reached. It is as if the value of one's principles were endangered and it were therefore necessary to emphasize them all the more. This is another peak time for neurotic disturbances, which now have in common the desire to carry the psychology of youth over the threshold of the so-called years of discretion. Who does not know those touching old folk who must forever warm up the dish of their past, who can fan the flame of life only by recalling their heroic youth, stuck in a kind of sterile nostalgia?"

I knew some. "Are they necessarily neurotic?" I asked.

"Not so's you'd notice," said Adam, "only boring and stereotypical. I would reserve the term neurotic for those who can never enjoy the present, and who can therefore never appreciate the past either, not to mention their fear of the future.

"As formerly the neurotic resisted the move out of childhood, so now he cannot part from youth. He is consumed by gray thoughts of approaching age and is always straining to look behind. Just as the childish person shrinks back from the unknown in the world, the challenge of uncertainty, so the grown-up perceives the second half of life as threatening. It is as if unknown and dangerous tasks awaited, requiring unacceptable sacrifices and losses."

"Is it the fear of death, do you think?" I asked.

Adam shook his head. "I doubt it. I felt those tremors myself thirty-odd years ago, when death was a lot further in the future than it is now. In the meantime I have adjusted and feel nothing of the sort, but that's another story. No, the basic difficulty in the transition from middle life to old age seems to be due to a deep-seated change within the psyche. Jung characterized this change by comparing it to the daily course of the

sun—but a sun endowed with human feeling and our limited consciousness.”

He looked at me slyly and pulled a scrap of paper from his pocket. “I wrote it down so I wouldn’t forget.” And he read:

In the morning [the sun] rises from the nocturnal sea of unconsciousness and looks upon the wide, bright world which lies before it in an expanse that steadily widens the higher it climbs in the firmament. In this extension of its field of action caused by its own rising, the sun will discover its significance; it will see the attainment of the greatest possible height, and the widest possible dissemination of its blessings, as its goal. In this conviction the sun pursues its course to the unforeseen zenith—unforeseen, because its career is unique and individual, and the culminating point could not be calculated in advance. At the stroke of noon the descent begins. And the descent means the reversal of all the ideals and values that were cherished in the morning. The sun falls into contradiction with itself. It is as though it should draw in its rays instead of emitting them. Light and warmth decline and are at last extinguished.¹⁴⁰

“Very poetic,” I said, “but I don’t feel like a setting sun.”

Adam harumphed.

“Do you think anyone your age does? Even I, considerably closer to the nadir, don’t. Whole industries and billions of dollars are devoted to telling us we are still on the rise. That doesn’t change the fact that we aren’t. I agree with Jung that there is something sunlike within us. To speak of the morning and the spring, of the evening and autumn of life, is not merely sentimental jargon. These are psychological truths. More, they express physiological facts, for the reversal of the sun at noon changes even bodily characteristics. Older women often develop deep or rough voices and incipient mustaches, rather hard features and other traits traditionally seen as masculine. The masculine physique is toned down by feminine features—adiposity and softer facial expressions.

“Jung tells of an Indian warrior chief to whom in middle life the Great Spirit appeared in a dream. The spirit told him that from then on he must

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, par. 778.

sit with the women and children, wear women's clothes, eat the food of women and do the work of women. He obeyed and suffered no loss of prestige. His vision was understood by all to be a true expression of the psychic revolution of life's noon, of the beginning of life's decline. Our values, and our bodies, do tend to change into their opposites. That is the law of the psyche we call enantiodromia."¹⁴¹

"I'm not an Indian, either," I said.

Adam sat back. "A bit cranky, are we? Well, suit yourself."

He scoured the bowl of his pipe and set about refilling it.

I grimaced. Again, I was suddenly, and unaccountably, contentious. I flipped through my internal inventory and there was Arnold, leering, wagging his finger. Don't believe anything you hear and only half of what you read, he admonished. Get lost, I said, I will decide for myself. Arnold vanished.

"Sorry, Adam, you were saying?"

He continued: "Think of masculinity and femininity and their psychic components as a definite store of substances of which unequal use is made by either sex in the first half of life. A man consumes his large supply of masculine substance and has left over an amount of feminine substance which must now be put to use. Similarly, a woman runs dry of her own stuff and finds a hitherto unused supply of masculinity at her disposal. He becomes more interested in Eros, and she inclines toward Logos."

Adam eyed me. "Okay so far?"

I nodded. There is some dispute these days over what is masculine and what is feminine, but I can live, as Jung did, with the *consensus gentium*—what people have always and ever believed. However vague or to some minds sexist, the terms masculine and feminine, and Logos and Eros, are still relevant psychologically, as two complementary energies.

"The psychic change at midlife is even more noticeable," said Adam. "How often it happens that a man of forty-five or fifty winds down his business, and the wife then opens a little shop and he takes on the re-

¹⁴¹ Enantiodromia = literally, "running counter to," referring to the emergence of the unconscious opposite in the course of time.

sponsibilities of a homemaker. Many women only awaken to social consciousness after they're forty. In fact the forties are also the years when nervous breakdowns are most common among men in business life. It is as if what has broken down is the masculine style of striving that brought him everything he has, and what is left over is a more relaxed, contemplative man. Likewise, women in the second half of life often develop a masculine tough-mindedness that puts the heart in second place."

"And what that does to a relationship!" I blurted out.

"It can be catastrophic," agreed Adam, "when the man discovers his tender feelings and the woman her sharpness of mind."

"It is a shame we aren't taught about the possibility of such transformations," I said. "Perhaps someone, some day, will start a school for forty-year-olds to prepare them for later life and its demands—like colleges and universities introduce young people to a knowledge of the world."

"Religions were such schools in the past," said Adam. "They prepared the faithful for old age, death and eternity. They still do, of course, but few are there to listen. Now most of us take the step into the afternoon of life wholly innocent of what to expect; worse, we take this step believing that our truths and ideals will serve us as before. We imagine we can live the afternoon of life according to the morning's program. Then we are shocked to discover this fundamental truth—that what in the morning was true, in the evening is a lie."

I said: "What if more people went into analysis? Maybe, in this day and age, that would be the best preparation for later life."

Adam mused.

"I would like to think that analysis is the answer," he said. "It was for me; it worked for you and for many we know. But in my heart of hearts I believe that analysis doesn't take until and unless you've hit a brick wall in your life. As well, I know that many are not suited to the rigorous process of coming to terms with the unconscious. Few have the mind or time for it; friends and relatives scoff. It can be a very lonely journey."

He lowered his head. Of a sudden I realized I knew next to nothing of Adam's personal life, his relationships, his sacrifices along the way. His

ideas were an open book; the rest he kept pretty much to himself. He concealed nothing while containing everything. Quite a feat!

“Aging people,” he said, “should know that their lives are not mounting and growing, but that an inexorable inner process enforces the conservation of energy. When you’re young it is almost a sin to be too preoccupied with yourself, but for the elderly it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to the inner life. Having lavished its light upon the world, the sun withdraws its rays in order to illuminate itself. Instead of doing the same, many old people become hypochondriacs, whining niggards, stingy pedants or else eternal adolescents—puers at sixty!—all lamentable substitutes for self-knowledge, but inevitable consequences of the delusion that the second half of life can be governed by the principles that sufficed in the first. Longevity must have a meaning for us. Why else would nature allow us to live now to seventy, eighty, ninety and more? Granted that medical advances have had a hand in that, but is the afternoon of life merely a pitiful appendage to life’s morning?”

Adam was quite steamed. I loved seeing him this way: heartily decrying the failings of those in his own age group while personally belying them.

“I think not,” he said. “The significance of the morning undoubtedly lies in the development of our individual talents and abilities, entrenchment in the outer world, the propagation and care of offspring. All of nature supports and speaks to this. But what then, when this purpose has been attained and fulfilled? Shall the earning of money, the extension of conquests, the building of status, go steadily on and on, beyond the bounds of all reason and sense? Halt! I say. Look at yourself.”

Now this hit home. In terms of age and position, I was over the hill. Maybe it was time I stopped climbing. But say I did, what would I do instead? I don’t play golf and I am averse to travel. Count my money? That’d be good for about ten minutes. Hot-tubbing? Another 10 minutes. I could knit something else for my Arnold gargoye¹⁴²— but he was eaten by a snow-plow last winter and now I wear his scarf myself. Locksmithing? Sorry, I seem to have lost interest in that. What else? Well,

¹⁴² See *Not the Big Sleep*, p. 77.

there's one of my first loves—Bingo, which I played as a kid two or three evenings a week in church basements with my Russian grandma who could not read or write but often won lamps, blankets and silverware; she stuffed me with hot dogs and taught me how to play euchre, gin rummy and poker. So blue collar, so much uncomplicated fun-in-the-moment.

“Whoever carries over into the afternoon of life the law of the morning,” continued Adam, “must pay for it with damage to his soul, just as surely as the growing youth who carries childish egoism into adult life must pay for his mistake with social failure. Money making, social achievement, family and posterity, these are all nature, not culture. Culture lies outside the purpose of nature.”

I said, “So, do you think culture could be the meaning and purpose of the second half of life?”

“It is possible,” he nodded. “In primitive tribes old people are the guardians of the mysteries and the laws, and it is in these that their cultural heritage is expressed. In our own society, where is the hard-won wisdom of our old people? Where are their precious secrets and their visions?” He fumed. “For the most part, our old people try to compete with the young. The current ideal in our Western culture is for the father to be the older brother of his sons, while the mother does her best to be the sister, or best friend, of her daughters.”

“In olden times,” I observed, “age had dignity.”

“Please,” said Adam, “spare me that bosh. I suspect that the dignity traditionally accorded to old people was deserved by only a few. In that respect, nothing has changed. When my own day is done, I would much rather be set adrift on an ice-floe with a biscuit—a double Oreo, please, if you have a say—as was the traditional Eskimo custom, than be honored simply because I'm old.”

“What about immortality?” I asked. “Life after death?”

Adam took a deep swig of Guinness. He spread his hands. “Concerning such questions there are innumerable contradictory opinions and no convincing proofs, no definite scientific knowledge one way or the other about what does or does not happen to a person after death. We are in the

same position as when we ask if the planet Venus is inhabited or not. And the inhabitants of Venus, if there are any, are certainly not concerned one way or the other with what we think. They may exist or they may not. That is how it stands with so-called immortality and after-life.

“However,” he continued, “I have observed that a life directed toward an aim is in general richer and healthier than an aimless one, and that it is wiser to go forward with the stream of time than backward against the current. An old person who cannot bid farewell to life is little different from a young one who is unable to embrace it. And in fact it is often a question of the self-same childish greediness, the same fear, the same defiance and willfulness, in the one as in the other.”

Adam tamped his pipe. I longed for a cigarette.

“On the whole,” he went on, “I believe that it is psychologically healthy to discover in death a mystery toward which one can willingly move, and that shrinking away from it is what robs the second half of life of its purpose. Although I long ago stopped going to any church, I do believe that religions with a supramundane goal are eminently reasonable from the point of view of psychic health. Thus it is desirable to think of death as a transition, as part of a life process whose extent and duration are beyond our ken. Indeed, by far the greater part of mankind has from time immemorial felt the need to believe in the continuance of life.”

I asked: “Do you mean, then, that in spite of all evidence to the contrary, we should carry on as if we would live forever?”

“Why not?” said Adam. “The psyche does. The dreams recorded by dying people are not grim depictions of an impending end; they are little different from before.”¹⁴³

“Come back for a moment to the comparison with the sun,” said Adam. “The one hundred and eighty degrees of the arc of life are divisible into four parts. The first quarter, to the east, is childhood, that state in which we are a problem for others but are not yet conscious of any problems of our own. Conscious problems fill out the second and third quarters; and in the last, in extreme old age, we descend again into that condition where, regardless of our state of consciousness, we might once more

¹⁴³ See Marie-Louise von Franz, *On Dreams and Death: A Jungian Interpretation*.

become a problem for others. Of course childhood and old age are different, yet they have one thing in common: submersion in unconscious psychic happenings.”

I thought about that for a few minutes. Then I asked, “Adam, do you think consciousness can serve us as well as nature?”

“The verdict is not yet in on that,” he said. “You know that Jung believed that the reason why consciousness exists, and why there is an urge to widen and deepen it, is very simple: things go less well without it.”¹⁴⁴

Yes, I’ve used that too.

“Unfortunately,” said Adam, “the opposite may also be true. Everything depends on how we use our consciousness. We have conquered the earth, but the triumph over nature easily leads to hubris. By becoming conscious we have usurped powers previously reserved for the gods. Whether in the last analysis this is an advantage or a calamity we are not in a position to know.”

We nursed our last drops of beer, as I thought of the Cretan Liar.¹⁴⁵

“Where are you with your book?” asked Adam.

“Almost finished.”

“Am I in it?”

“You have a cameo or two,” I admitted.

Adam leaned forward. “Did you do what you intended? Did you say what you meant?”

I squirmed, thinking of the detours not of my making, dead-ends, unforeseen complications, the bits and pieces that got out of hand. But that’s the way it is: I was at the helm, but my craft was subject to the wind; which is to say, I went where the spirit moved me.

“Honestly, Adam, could you, could anyone, answer an unequivocal Yes to such questions?”

He shrugged. He drained his glass and stood up. I did the same. He donned cape and beret and twirled his cane. Jaunty, rakish. Sunny came

¹⁴⁴ “Analytical Psychology and ‘Weltanschauung,’ ” *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, CW 8, par. 695.

¹⁴⁵ See above, p. 12.

awake and stretched her legs.

Adam hugged her. "There's a good girl."

He turned to me and said, "Thank you for the afternoon. Now the evening beckons. Shall we debouche to my place? I have some new things that might interest you. Just yesterday I came into possession of a rare alchemical text. Pick up the tab, would you? There's a good fellow."

I wished he could have said better, but what the hell, I could afford it. And yes, I knew that Adam had been spouting Jung, more or less, and that I identify with Adam, not to mention my visceral attachment to Jung, but the truth is, I can't say better than them.

I was sorely tempted by Adam's invitation, but I declined and went home, where I settled in with a ham and pickle sandwich and a knuckle of Scotch. I stared at the wall and put on Van Morrison, thinking of MP:

I can hear her heart beat for a thousand miles
And the heavens open every time she smiles
And when I come to her that's where I belong
Yet I'm running to her like a river's song.

She give me love, love, love, love, crazy love
She give me love, love, love, love, crazy love

Yes I need her in the daytime

Yes I need her in the night

Yes I want to throw my arms around her

Kiss her hug her kiss her hug her tight

And when I'm returning from so far away

She gives me some sweet lovin' brighten up my day

Yes it makes me righteous, yes it makes me feel whole

Yes it makes me mellow down in to my soul.¹⁴⁶

Okay, so I'm a romantic, pure and simple. Well, not so pure, but simple for sure. Dummling, even.

Be conscious, serious about your fun and romance your loved ones, for you never know what the morrow will bring.

¹⁴⁶ "Crazy Love," on *Moondance*, lyrics by Van Morrison.

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