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Twilight - as one who endured the evening.
Love

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A Jungian Critique of Harry Slochower's Paper

It was a pleasure for me to be asked to serve as discussant for this provocative paper. Contributions to dialogue among psychoanalysts with very different assumptions and preconceptions about the psyche can only be of value, even at those times when they serve mainly to highlight what may be unbridgeable differences in interpretation. There is no reason for us to agree where we do not agree, but there is every reason to compare our points of focus. Ever since the publication of the Freud-Jung letters a few years ago, there has been a new wave of interest in the analysis of the Freud-Jung relationship; Dr. Slochower's essay belongs to this overall genre. The fascination of this material is rather obvious, since it serves as a kind of laboratory for studying aspects of the father-son and son-father relationship where father and son are the two psychoanalytic giants. So the availability of these letters is like having possession of an Ur-text, of the original stuff.

A basic relationship like that of father-son is lived and acted out between persons without ultimately being personal. That distinction between personal and non-personal is at the heart of Jung's idea of the archetypal, and failure to observe this distinction always represents the attempt to reduce the archetypal to the personal, which is like trying to put a substance in a container that is too small for it. Dr. Slochower's paper falls into just this category. Its way of using personal life data is bound not to work, not on account of specific errors of fact or interpretation but because its reductionism leaves out too much that is relevant and therefore must make too much of what remains.

Recently the researches of Levinson and his collaborators were published under the title *The Seasons of a Man's Life*.

As the work surveys the phases of male adulthood from late adolescence to early middle age, it demonstrates how particular issues and crises occur at very close to the same age in people of very different types and very different educational and socio-economic levels, that in the simplest sense, there are psychological things that happen at 40 that simply could not occur at 30. Again, the data permit the observation that it is always persons who are having the experience that are not simply personal, just as all of life's great initiation experiences: birth, puberty, marriage, death—and the various surrounding rites and rituals—are the most intense and least individual of experiences.

Thus we are not surprised to find in biographical terms that for both Freud and Jung the years on either side of 40 were exactly the time when they began to function as secure independent thinkers. At that point their relationship with former mentors—for Jung primarily with Freud, as for Freud primarily with Fleiss—underwent drastic changes accompanied by a fair amount of emotional outburst, especially on the part of the one claiming the freedom. This is as much part of the pattern of intellectual and spiritual maturing as it is of emotional maturing. There is the old story of the father who stations himself at the bottom of the stairs and says to his son at the top, "jump, and I'll catch you." Twice he catches him, but the third time he steps aside and the boy falls. The emotional meaning of the action parable is of course that trust can never be absolute, but this can also be seen as an image of how received knowledge can only be trusted up until a certain point, at which it inevitably and fatally falls short. At that point the creativity of the next generation must be mobilized if there is not to be intellectual stagnation. The son must feel betrayed by the father's answers in order to then betray the father. For this pattern to be enacted, father and son need and therefore find each other. When in a given instance the interlocking and then disengaging of two geniuses is involved the sounds are widely audible, as when giants go at each other. The son murders the father so as not to be swallowed by him, as in the Cronos-Zeus story. The father hands down his sacred commandments (Freud's sexual doctrine) as in the Yahweh-

Moses story. The father images the son as part of himself, and the son the father as an older version of the self he is in the process of becoming, as in all king-prince stories (the whole theme of Jung as Freud's heir apparent). All these patterns are played out on the human stage again and again; without understanding this, we overestimate specific personal data, viewing the data as responsible for the outcome rather than the pattern as responsible for the data. If a man is in prison, he may attempt to free himself with a bribe, or a rope, or a gun, or a knife, or a nail file. We can neither understand the tool without an awareness of its purpose nor fail to see what is common to the tools when we know the purpose.

Suppose one granted Dr. Slochower's thesis as to the origins of Jung's image of Jahweh as a carrying forward of the psychic image of Freud over many decades and that one also granted the legitimacy of the supporting evidence drawn from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*—that Jung remained preoccupied with Freud. To know the origins is to know nothing of the meaning or the purpose; everything has to start somewhere, every idea that finds expression begins somewhere as an inner image. Every life has its own combination of significant components, personal and social. Certain concerns and certain key questions come, at least in hindsight, to typify the thinking of an age or generation, as has been the case with depth psychology for most of a century now. For example, Sulloway's major recent study, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* demonstrates beyond question that Freud's preoccupation with sexuality was widely shared by numerous contemporary luminaries, and we today are already sufficiently distant from that late-Victorian generation to see how these thinkers—not just psychologists, of course, but philosophers like Nietzsche—were beginning the process of restoring to western consciousness the consciousness of the body, which has proved to be so troublesome within the Judeo-Christian traditions, the body being the trouble, the fact that it somehow unfortunately had to be included in the package with the soul. Similarly, with Jung at its intellectual center, there has been the movement towards restoring to western consciousness a sense of the

psychological meaning of religion as something much greater than what is contained in specific dogmas and institutions. The attempt, then, through reference to selective biographical data to account for the emergence of a world view fails to consider the role of the social and intellectual background and fails to take account of the ways in which personal and collective issues interact. Consider the recent dream of a young male patient:

I am facing two pools of water, a cooler and a warmer one. There is the question of which to enter first and I decide to go into the cooler first. I dive in as I normally would and swim around the bottom to get my bearings. As I prepare to surface I begin to feel trouble breathing, which surprises me considering that I am a secure swimmer. Eventually I surface, and the dream ends without my entering the second pool.

There is of course some personal background to the dream. The dreamer was reminded of a particular tropical resort where there had been two such pools side by side, of being at the resort with his sister, of some of the psychological issues between them, and so forth. Unless at a very early stage in an analysis, this kind of material will tend to bring up familiar stuff, basically telling us little we do not already know. The decision to plunge into the cooler pool first does remind the dreamer of a familiar aspect of his own attitude, but even here it is no longer purely personal, as the fact that one would normally enter the two pools in that order (since the cool one would seem much colder after the warm one) is a general truth, of the sort having to do with what represents a sensible way to proceed with a task. Then there is the fact that being cool, playing it cool, cooling it, are phraseologies of generational significance: that the attitudes implied in these formulations might not be as secure as those who hold them sometimes think is also brought up as an issue, along with the psychological potentials which they may inhibit. Much more could be said as elaboration, but there is already enough here to show us how wide the gap is between the dream's origin and its significance. This gap is equally true for behaviors. A woman in early middle age

was needing to find a relationship to the image of death. En route to the funeral of an older woman with whom she had shared a hospital room a few years before and whom she had been wanting to visit in her last illness, never quite getting there, she got lost near the funeral home; it was getting later and later and she couldn't find it. She was once more not quite getting there. Next thing she knew she had banged into another car (at night in Harlem in winter) and an unpleasant incident began to happen. It took all the cash she had to soothe some ruffled feathers (there had not been much damage), but she also left with the directions she needed and made it to the funeral. This was in truth her route to the funeral and she had found a way to find her guide—and you always have to pay the guides into the underworld.

There were many potent reasons for the denial mechanisms she had been using, but, as with the dream, the reasons are utterly inadequate to account for what took place. There was the readiness to cross a hitherto closed boundary, with consciousness needing some key help from the unconscious. This is one paradigm of how psychic movement takes place, just as it does on another level in relation to transpersonal images, which evolve through historical time, as personal images do within the unfolding history of the individual life.

What I have been pointing to are some of the pitfalls in an overly personalistic approach to psychological material. The idea that specific life events are all-determining in their nature is one-sided, obscuring the inner developmental aspect. From the vantage point of individual development, the outer world is a stage on which the psyche finds and onto which it projects the figures it needs to play out its drama. The rhythms it goes through, such as that of attachment and separation, are not personal, even as early forms of basic experiences, e.g., attachment-separation of the child from the mother, are as much prototypical as they are causal. We experience the magical level of existence first in relation to specific bodily functions, without that meaning that urination or defecation necessarily remain forever life's key experiences.

Altogether, without one's being able to claim in any literal sense that life is purposive in nature, its as-if purposiveness becomes quite apparent clinically. A life will have a ruling motif for a period of time, during which everything which happens that is experienced as significant appears to reinforce the same theme. Someone obsessed with fear of abandonment may face one confirmation after another: a lover chooses elsewhere, parents move, a therapist dies. Just when the person feels totally ready to give up on life, the unconscious may offer a new theme, often through a dream:

A plane is flying and I realize I can control where it lands. Here a person to whom things kept happening is made aware of what it would be like to be in the position of directing the way things happen. And it frequently occurs that when a different inner chord is sounded a seemingly unvarying outer sequence is broken. The capacity of the unconscious to set new orientations and concerns, for old wells to run dry and new ones to be dug, explains how personal problems are sometimes worked out: less through solution than through giving way to other priorities.

I would consider this the kind of framework that accurately describes what evolved in Jung about the image of Freud. The passion for Freud's approval very gradually dissipated; the importance of Freud's limitations became less crucial as the need for a personal intellectual father receded. Ultimately Jung's early years as a pioneer psychoanalyst proved but a prelude to the life task he discovered through what he called his "confrontation with the unconscious." To read *Answer to Job* and *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* as though Jung could not escape the power of the Freud image is absolutely to obscure the principle of psychological development.

Thus, loaded personal issues or, put more technically, complex-tones material, do not remain stagnant in a creatively evolving life. Erich Neumann, probably the most brilliant of all Jung's followers, put this point as follows in "Creative Man and Transformation":

All psychoanalytic theories permit us to connect a possessed consciousness with a complex of the personal

unconscious and reduce the complex to a feeling of inferiority . . . an anxiety constellation, etc. But the problem must be put differently if the complex releases an achievement. Wherever a complex of the "personal unconscious" has led to an achievement and not to a neurosis, the personality has succeeded spontaneously or reactively in going beyond the "merely personal and familiar" element in the complex to attain a collective significance, i.e., to become creative. But actually, when this happens, the personal complex . . . was only the initial spark that led to the achievement.

Where there is no consciousness of the distinction between neurosis and creativity, the typical Freudian error occurs: inadequate differentiation among phenomena caused by an overconcern with their supposed starting points.

A blindness to the developmental unfolding of individual life does not foster the appreciation of the evolution of consciousness either. One can view Jung's *Autobiography* and his *Answer to Job* as complementary descriptions of modern man's experience and interpretation of the archetype of God: where that archetype led one individual in his own life and how his experience made possible the reinterpretation of a standard religious text from a new angle. This pattern of religio-mythic reinterpretation—familiar since Freud's revisioning of the Oedipus myth—is a strikingly modern way of combining a man's life history with a man's living history.

Edward Edinger, a leading contemporary Jungian thinker, in a recent interpretive essay on *Answer to Job* outlines a directional movement in the archetype of God, from the Old Testament Yahweh as lawgiver, where God is infinitely higher than man and wholly other, to be obeyed absolutely because he is the lawgiver to the New Testament Jesus, in whose figure God is part human and comes down to earth, to be followed absolutely as an act of faith to the modern God image, no longer adequately carried by traditional systems of organized symbols—dogma—and needing to be experienced freshly through the individual confrontation with the unconscious. Here law and faith give way to

experience, and an extension of scientific empiricism to the experience of the self becomes possible. The God image is to be reintegrated within the psyche rather than lived through projection.

In the passion with which Freudian defenders seek to reduce Jung in stature—whether by accusations of anti-Semitism, by charges of mysticism and obfuscation (as Peter Homans does in his recent book, *Jung and the Making of Modernity*, where the amplificatory principle Jung first systematically employed in *Symbols of Transformation* is misinterpreted and misrepresented), or by exploration of the negative effects of Jung's personal complexes, we can watch the operation of the power of the traditional God archetype trying to read the new out of existence, calling on dogma to read the heretic out of the church.

In our received knowledge of human history, man from cave times onward has always had a connection to the sacred. Not for nothing the old saying that if God had not created man, man would have had to create God. It is exactly that which man does when he no longer feels securely connected to transpersonal powers; one need not think beyond such pivotal modern writers as Kafka and Beckett to appreciate how central this thought is. In our time, as is well known, alongside the surviving theological religions, we have state religions, such as communism and capitalism; cult religions of every imaginable kind, from Jonestown to EST; flourishing gurus, yogis, and maharajis of every shape and color, and by now of both sexes. Furthermore, among those who no longer believe in the inherited religions, are not drawn to state religions, and are not guru prone, we have the tendency to search out God in the various places where intimacy is lived, as with mates and analysts, all of whom eventually disappoint them. Whatever form the search takes, there is the common denominator of looking outside of new dogmas, like psychoanalysis, in the course of which the first and second religious stages described above are lived through again, and the individual way opposed with the same blind authoritarianism directed recently by the Papal chair against Dr. Küng. Again, it is more than a merely personal reaction for Jung to have experienced a

turning point in his attitude toward Freud when Freud was unwilling to "risk his authority" in associating to a dream.

It is fascinating to note how Sulloway in his attempt to set Freud in his time shows the Freudians depicting the master as a purely psychological—rather than biologically influenced—and entirely scientific thinker. The unexpressed premise behind the passion to paint this picture concerns what Neumann calls the identification of the highest human type with a radically rational consciousness, while the symbol-creating man, when not simply neurotic, is seen as a atavistic type. Worship of rationality in this form is profoundly un- and anti-psychological, however filled its jargon may be with psychological language. A wise and wonderful woman recently remarked to me of the time when as a child, shortly after World War I, she had come from a church service profoundly moved by her first encounter with the story of Lazarus raised from the dead. Emerging from the same morning worship, her father, a celebrated physician, remarked: "probably a case of hysterical paralysis."

The effect of this deadly piece of knowledge is not at all like having the story of Santa Claus spoiled, as happens sooner or later for everyone; this is a violation of the sacred. The archetype of faith cannot be brushed aside with a label because faith *does* again and again determine what happens next. We need only remind ourselves of Orpheus' quest for Eurydice in the underworld, and his loss of her when he looks back in violation of the command, the victim of a faith that falters rather than sustaining him. Such stories are neither mystical nor mysterious, and they are anything but primitive; the learned doctor is the psychological primitive. The stories that make up mythology are the objective versions of everyday bread-and-butter psychological realities. The boy who pursues his girl friend for a commitment before she is ready, even as she is inwardly readying herself to accompany him, and then loses her to another is acting out the story of Orpheus. The story indicates precisely how one is to behave in this situation and where deviation takes one. The irony is rich: the teller of tales has the scientific, factual attitude, while the doctor is blinded by dogma.

When Jung dealt with such questions as the psychology

of the Jewish people or of National Socialism (inevitably becoming involved in contemporary historical experience and perhaps unwisely occasionally putting pen to paper in a form that invited misunderstanding), it was with a truly scientific attitude. He wished to show how certain historical phenomena cannot be comprehended in the absence of the hypothesis of the collective unconscious. Can anyone, for example, looking at the current Iranian situation and the American bewilderment in the face of so much obvious irrationality seriously doubt the importance of considering the historical, and therefore psychological, grounds out of which this Moslem theocrat emerged as a new leader? Can anyone hope to understand the most basic contradictions in western man, his weekday and Sunday selves, without pausing to ponder the effect of the grafting of a near eastern religion of renunciation on the individualistic warrior spirit of the Germanic tribes? In this sense the historical is precisely the psychological, and it is this that Jung means when he looks at the history of a race. When the sleeping giants of an unacknowledged heritage awake and stretch themselves, then the terrible price of unconsciousness is exacted from the world. As surely as in the destiny of the individual unconscious conflicts will be acted out destructively, those unassimilated collective aspects that remain outside the ruling structure of symbols will always work disintegratively, against a false unity.

The collective truths expressed in mythology are themselves forever being created and discovered again in individual dreams and in artistic works of all kinds. The very early dream in which Jung found himself in an underground temple which housed a ritual phallus might from one perspective be understood as a premature—in the sense of at that stage incomprehensible—intuition of the reality of the psyche. The phallus symbolizes the generative energy of the collective unconscious, and the reduction of that energy to the sexual potency of the male organ, or to any other specific potential, distorts the symbol through the bias of consciousness. It has long been understood, as in the case of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream after all the dream experts of ancient Egypt has been baffled, that cor-

rect interpretation, especially of what primitive tribes often call "big" dreams, requires an openness to the symbolism of the dream rather than the forcing of it into a favored conscious structure. Dr. Slochower's so-called interpretation of this dream is a travesty.

The "big" dream would often appear to represent a kind of rumbling in the psyche, like the stirrings of a dormant volcano getting ready to erupt. Those big dreams which signify movement in the collective psyche are dreamed for everyone, just as an important dream in the ordinary individual may herald a significant personal reorientation; an example of this process follows below. As it was Freud who succeeded in bringing the perspective of rationality to unconscious material, it was Jung's achievement to bring the symbolic perspective to bear on it. That basic psychological truths are a kind of natural wisdom is continually being reformulated in creative work.

The recent Peter Sellers film *Being There*, based on the Koszinski story, demonstrated almost perfectly what the corrective perspective of the total psyche is all about. The hero, Chauncey Alexander, is a pure fool figure, a man who has lived into middle age without ever having been in the outer world. His connection to the outside has been only through the back door into a garden which it has been his work to maintain; he has never emerged through the front door until the film opens. All his relationship, then, has been to the unconscious world, in its rhythmic cyclic aspect, for the needs of a garden change with the seasons; this world he knows well. When circumstance forces him into the world, he is totally unequipped to cope on any practical level, nor is he even literate; yet he has access to the wisdom of Ecclesiastes, that there is a time for all things, which image of recurring order compensates rational consciousness's emphasis upon the idea of progress, just as the rooted image of plant growth and decay compensates that of movement in the human realm. He brings into the world the principle of rootedness, and everyone who meets him is moved by this, without knowing what it is, for this principle has been lost to consciousness. Finally through the workings of the plot he becomes the intended next President—our

version of a king—succeeding the incumbent, who is portrayed as literally sexually impotent to indicate he has no psychic link to any roots.

As if to clinch the point about what faith in the natural order produced, Chauncey is able to walk safely across a body of deep water by lighting on a log that carries him across, proving able, like Christ, to walk on the waters. Thus an eternal image of the possibilities of faith recurs, and the idea that the man who is in right relationship to himself is also in right relationship to his fellow men is confirmed. The unconscious sends the missing element, as Job, as Christ, as Chauncey, and it is up to consciousness to recognize the messenger.

Without Freud to react to, Jung could certainly not have done his work in the same way. Through Jung's insistence on the creative power of the unconscious, Freud's emphasis on repression, personal trauma, and family psychology is brought into a potential balance with a greater whole. An attempt such as Dr. Slochower's to see Jung's analysis of Job through the foci of repression (his presumed homoerotic fixation on Freud), personal trauma (the early sexual attack), and family psychology (Jung's inadequate relationship to his own father) without an understanding of the redemptive humanization of the son figure is finally not psychological at all, but actually profoundly anti-psychological. The erect phallus, the shining object with the single eye at the top in Jung's very early dream, prefigured his mission of exploring the inward-turned eye so that the light of the unconscious would have a chance to flow upward. The short but potent encounter with Freud, the patriarchal lawgiver of the new doctrine, provided Jung the essential psychological space within which to realize over the decades where his early childhood phallic image was pointing. Through the gradual process of rejecting Freud's concretistic emphasis on sexuality, Jung found his way to the symbol. Once this largest step was taken, it became relatively easier for him to focus on the symbolic as such and on how the symbol-making capacity of the psyche faces the light of consciousness with a different light.

The split-off, dark, seemingly evil side of God has tra-

ditionally been carried by the devil, who is sent to test Job's faith; at that time God was separated from his own darkness and not yet humanized. After Job, his humanization is produced in the Christ-figure, but Satan is still left to carry the darkness. As Jung saw it, modern man has inherited the task of reuniting the two sides of God, failing which the dark forces erupt in collective insanities that are the revenge of the neglected element, as predictable as the witch's revenge when she is omitted from the wedding guest list.

Under the ruling Judeo-Christian aegis of the last millennia, the roster of missing guests read like a nearly complete Who's Who of psychological forces: from Pan and Apollo, to Dionysos and Wotan, to Artemis and Aphrodite. All these personifications serve to indicate the religious nature of the psyche, whose basic forces are transpersonal. The re-emergence of these forces in the modern psyche is the archetypal foundation for the idea of the "return of the repressed." Surely the time of viewing psychological phenomena through the single lens of personal trauma and family constellation ought to be behind us by now; we cannot work on with tools as primitive as these.

Once the ego is penetrated by the forces of the unconscious, a widening of the personality becomes possible. A dream of a young man in early middle age who had been in a long-standing therapy of a basically ego-supportive and ego-building nature signalled a change of direction:

I'm half asleep. I could feel total death and destruction. I felt that I could no longer control my being. At that point I felt an explosion like an atomic bomb. I could see the mushroom cloud. I felt an intense fear. I said to myself, that's what destruction is: you are no more. I thought of someone near death and how frightened they must be. Then I thought that to believe in something, in a religion, must be the only thing that can save you.

Coming at a time when the outer life of this individual was the best it had ever been, the marriage its most fulfilling, a second child recently born, the dream has some of the typical markings of a "twilight of the gods" situation, where a

ruling principle is being overthrown. He is at the point where a life lived without the fertilizing energy of the unconscious seems a half awake state only. The huge force of the collective unconscious erupts, in the central contemporary symbol of atomic energy, the energy at the nuclear core. Such an explosion can overwhelm the personality, unless it is met with precisely the right response. Fortunately, the dreamer has such an answer in his fear reaction, fear being entirely appropriate in the presence of cosmic power; in the "Book of Job" God even descends to remind Job of all the reasons for Job to fear God. In the presence of a power which can only be feared, or wondered at, but neither faced or challenged directly, the dreamer is humbled. The belief that is called for is no longer the subordination of experience to dogma, but the valuing of the experience of the autonomy of the psyche. That is why for Jung it is idle to imagine that we can contain that power within any system or set of symbols for very long. We can, however, seek to understand the place of the symbol within human experience generally. As Jung put it in the *Visions Seminars*:

I am trying to approach it [the symbol] through empirical material, and one gets an understanding in that way of already existing religions or philosophical systems that are analogous. In the long run perhaps we will be able to postulate certain fundamental facts from the comparison of a mass of material much greater than we have now. But that material will not be accumulated for centuries. . . We will have certain convictions about it, which may last for two years—or two thousand—but eventually they will always be overturned, because the creative spirit cannot be caught in any formula. . . .

Jung's dream of the underground phallus is rightly viewed by Dr. Slochower in combination with his later childhood dream, in which an enormous turd shatters the cathedral. These two dreams were Jung's first glimpse of that central development in modern consciousness which he was to devote his life to explicating: that the archetype of God was again in transition, and that God now required of man to become conscious of God's dark side so that the age-old

exile of the Devil could be ended. Cathedrals which only celebrate the light and the triumph over darkness are as passe as a merely rational, because entirely personalistic, approach to the psyche.

The perception of the religious dimension of the psyche came to Jung in his earliest years. How and whether he would have seen the meaning of his early dreams without his Freud struggle we can never know, but the task of differentiating his thinking from Freud's surely helped him to consciousness of his own standpoint. To look at Jung's mature work, as Dr. Slochower does, as though it were a working out of unresolved father material is an unacceptable form of Procrustean thinking. In the name of psychological reflection, it conveniently ignores the most basic psychological dimension: that we all suffer the problems of the times in which we live and that it is the consciousness of a few rare individuals which carries us to an awareness of our own time. Freudian psychoanalysts don't seem open to an understanding of the transpersonal roots of psychotherapy.

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