

THE CASE OF W B: PARANOIA, DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR AND
UNCONSCIOUS INDIVIDUATION

RUNNING HEAD: W B: Paranoia, Delusions of Grandeur

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ABSTRACT

This essay involves a discussion and a Jungian depth psychological perspective on a relationship with W B, a man that suffered from Delusions of Grandeur and Persecutory Delusions, as well as severe arthritis. Although I was not there as a therapist or healer, we did discuss dreams and other issues regarding his life and there may, as a result, have been some measure of healing. In this case, by healing I mean acceptance of one's place in life, even if it means impending death, which seemed to have been the case of W B. Although there is no gainsaying that W B lived the life he was meant to live it, nonetheless, it represents an extreme example of a life of unconscious individuation.

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Introduction

Some seven [7] months prior to my writing this essay, W B telephoned me on the pretext that he felt we might have mutual spiritual interests. The Sri Aurobindo Centre in Montreal, an organisation with which I had loose connections at the time, referred him to me. It was an unusual occurrence as no one else had ever been referred to me by this organisation. As events transpired I visited W B at a local nursing home, his residence, bringing him a copy of an essay on Purna Yoga by Sri Aurobindo, in which he had expressed an interest. The nurse introduced me to W B, a sixty-three [63] year old bed-ridden arthritic, with somewhat dissociated thinking. Since my first visit, W B phoned me once, sometimes twice a day, outside of the lengthy periods that I was out of town.

W B did not contact me for therapy. Perhaps there was a partially conscious search for Eros and feeling in relationship. Indeed, I eventually learned that he phoned a number of different people, probably out of loneliness and to relieve his boredom. Nonetheless, my personal attitude towards him from the start was therapeutic, although not in the normal sense of the word. At the time, I was not a therapist or any kind of self-styled healer, although I had just begun a programme of studies leading to a Ph.D. in psychology. In fact, I related to W B very personally, while observing both transference and counter-transference phenomena.

If Hillman (1972) is right and the myth of analysis is Eros, perhaps some measure of genuine therapy did take place, despite the unusual circumstances. Indeed, inasmuch as therapy involves attending the cult of psyche (C. A. Meier, 1989), something along those lines might have been possible. From a depth-psychological perspective, the question is whether the archetype of healing had been constellated or not and whether or not a therapeutic alliance had been established.

Contextual Background

W B lived in a nursing home in a little hospital-like room, which included a small bookshelf, a T.V. set, a radio, a pushbutton telephone and two bed tables. He informed me that he was rarely if ever taken outside. There was also a picture of Christ and pictures of two or three spiritual Gurus on the bookshelf.

W.B. was completely bedridden with arthritis, having badly deformed hands and swollen feet and legs. The arthritic condition was so advanced that he once casually informed me that he might have to have both his feet and then legs amputated. He was virtually helpless and had to be fed and cared for by a staff of nurses. He once informed me that his mind, on its own, moved from light to dark like nature. He also spoke from his throat in a curious fashion as if it contained water.

W B told me that he took a number of medications for such purposes as aiding digestion, bowel movement, and blood circulation. He did not, however, take any medication either for alleviating pain or for any psychological reasons. In fact, despite the terrible arthritic condition, he assured me that, generally speaking, he didn't feel any pain at all.

Psychologically, W B appeared to be divorced from his affective nature and, in fact, he exhibited flat affect. Indeed, according to him, in his dreams, he generally had no emotional reactions whatsoever. At this point, I will note that these considerations, along with his disorganised and dissociated thinking, suggested a severe psychological disturbance, possibly a delusional disorder.

Despite this there was a part of W B that seemed to be quite normal. He read a little, mainly spiritual literature, and watched some television. In keeping with his general interests, the T.V programmes he found most satisfying included those with a religious or psychological theme or, generally, those on the nature of human culture and civilisation. His few visitors included a person who occasionally wrote letters for him, a priest and his sister, when they were on talking terms.

My Relationship with W B

Typically, W B phoned me according to his desires and we eventually engaged in a casual dialogue lasting five to ten minutes, sometimes during which we discussed his dreams. A typical telephone conversation took the following form:

W B: With hesitation, "Hello Dave---?"

Me: "Ya, W! Whaddya say? How are you?"

W B: "I got a dream for you."

Me: "O. K., W, Shoot!"

W B recounts dream and we discuss it.

Otherwise, when possible, I visited W B from time to time. He at first resisted divulging anything to me at all over the telephone, expressing concern that the telephone was bugged. As time went on, however, W B opened up more and more, allowing the conversation to flow somewhat. There was even, at times, a humorous repartee that took place between us both on the telephone and in person. With my emotional support he eventually purchased an electronic typewriter, although he constantly feared that the purchase would not be finalised due to R. C. M. P. intervention.

Particularly during the first two or three months, W B spoke a lot about what he referred to as "z" rated [poisoned] coffee, drugged food, that he believed he was constantly under surveillance by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [R. C. M. P.], and that he feared the telephone was bugged. In W. B's mind, the R. C. M.

P. was working in collusion with the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian Organisations in order to stop him from reporting on their activities and exposing the church. He also believed the police suspected him of drug trafficking, which he claimed he had never done in actual fact. Finally, W B was constantly suspicious of doctors, nurses and other authority figures and of French-speaking Canadians in general.

Amanuensis

Since I was not employed as a therapist, I made no attempt to systematically explore W. B's background. Nonetheless I became aware of the following information thanks to our conversations. W B was born, brought up and lived most of his life in rural Quebec, Canada. When he was a youth, there was roughly a forty-sixty percent [40-60%] English mother tongue to French mother tongue mix in the part of Quebec where he was brought up. At the time of our meetings, only about ten [10] percent of the population was English speaking in that part of Quebec. His parents remained together until their death. He had one sister, five [5] or six [6] years younger than him. He was brought up Christian as a member of the United Church of Canada, a middle of the road Protestant church, which considers itself to be on the leading edge of social change. He finished High School, but went no further in formal education. He had a spotty career, working variously as a postman, a security guard, a small town police officer, a customs officer and, during wartime, a soldier.

He never married or lived with a woman, although he was attracted to them. This is, in part, explained by the fact that W B has always been introverted and shy. Indeed, when W B was a young man he fell in love with a young woman from Ontario, some 2000 kilometres away. One day while meditating on the situation he concluded that she could never love him like he loved her and that there was no possibility of forming a an abiding relationship. At that very moment he had a waking vision of a beautiful blonde woman at the entrance of the walkway to the house. She was wearing a green dress and is wearing a golden shawl. She said nothing but looked at W B intently. She then disappeared into the sky. He believed that she was a visitor from a superior plane of being, never making any connection to the projection he had on the young woman from Ontario or on the need to assimilate Eros and feeling values.

Some time later, as a middle-aged man, he was with a woman when they both saw a green light hover over them in the sky and then disappear. He believed it was a flying saucer from another world. Again, he never realized this as an experience of the Self, or the value of aspiring to that reality in a more reliable and conscious way. Nonetheless, both these visions stayed with him and he considered them important milestones in his life and the inspiration behind his sense of mission.

After the second-world war, in which he had been a soldier, he found no sustenance in Christianity and turned to eastern spirituality for guidance,

although only through books. For a period of time, W B also drank excessively in order to blot out his problems.

Moreover, he occasionally dabbled in occult practices on his own and once, he claimed, "I called up the demonic spirits." He contended that he then saw a hoard of demons coming at him over the lake. Although he wasn't frightened he stopped engaging in such activities. However, he often became involved with people whom he felt had evil tendencies. When I asked him why, he replied: "I don't know, I was innocent and curious about evil." In this regard it is relevant to note that Marie Louise von Franz (1967) writes that a frivolous curiosity towards evil is the result of a weak ego and a deficient feeling function and may be, at least in part, responsible for mental imbalance.

As a matter of fact the individuation process and psychological maturity requires one to become more conscious and discerning about evil, but typically not through idle curiosity, indulging or consciously and actively participating in apparently evil acts. It is rather a question of becoming more conscious of the shadow side of one's life and one's own evil tendencies, something that the psyche brings one's way in its own time and place. This ultimately involves the personal shadow and the collective or archetypal shadow, the aspect of the psyche that is repressed due to the spirit of the times. The shadow and the nature of evil are no longer so obvious and the final goal of the individuation process involves consciousness of one's relationship to the opposites in the

psyche including both good and evil, something that was far beyond W B's ethical capacity and knowledge. This requires a differentiated Eros and feeling function whereas, outside of his frivolous dabbling with evil, W B's general tendency was typically to live a one-sided rigid morality, in either case without Eros or consciousness of the feeling function.

When fifty-three [53] years old W B reported that suddenly, when entering a friend's house to do some carpentry, he felt as if his body weighed "two thousand [2000] pounds." He attributed that to a demonic attack by a Roman Catholic Church official. In medical terms it turned out to be the onset of severe arthritis. During the next few years he stayed in his apartment and shuffled around, no longer capable of working. Two (2) years later he was confined to a wheelchair and three (3) years after that he was relegated to bed, where he was during the time I visited him.

Therapeutic Interventions

What originally involved me with W B was synchronicity and careful attention to the psyche. My studies in depth psychology required me to write up a case and, as I wasn't a practicing therapist nor had affiliations with any, I didn't have any way to fulfill this course requirement. I didn't know what to do but, just then, W B phoned me out of the blue. His case was also meaningful to me since the connection was through the Sri Aurobindo Centre, as if to suggest there was

something of interest here with regards to the spiritual life and the individuation process if only, as I learned later, to show its shadow side.

At any rate, during and after my original visit I could only feel repugnance for both W. B's physical condition and apparent psychological state of mind. Despite that, since then I made a point of attending W B's psyche through active and fair witness. Childlike curiosity and love of psyche on my part was also been there from the beginning. In addition, I was spontaneous and natural to the point of engaging in repartee and humorous exchanges with W B. I had no specific therapeutic goals, not only because I was not officially doing therapy, but because of my belief that the psyche itself would direct the process if W B and I allowed it to so. In actual fact this approach did encourage W.B. to open up and tell me about his life along with relevant images and fantasy from the present and the past.

I allowed W B to fully express his paranoid thoughts, without making any external judgement on them. I simply replied: "what is the trouble W B?" Once, in response, he blurted out: "you think I am paranoid or something!" On another occasion, he exclaimed: "you think I suffer from delusions of grandeur!" In either case, I suggested that he strikes me, rather, as having lived a somewhat unique but difficult life. In fact I always showed sympathy for his physical plight and difficulties in dealing with the world.

From the outset of our relationship I advised W B that I had some expertise in dream interpretation. Indeed, I was particularly receptive towards his dreams and visions, including the two waking visions he had as a young and middle-aged man. He also informed me that at times he felt considerable inner contentment. Generally my response to him was that these experiences must be precious and a solace, a sentiment to which he agreed. At the same time as I listened to his dreams and fantasies and talked to him about the nature of the unconscious, I tried to impress him with the need to understand dreams and visions symbolically and not literally.

W B had a negative relationship with the church and he felt the need to take on Christianity in a frontal attack. I asked him why. He replied that it is because, with their overzealous moralistic concerns, Christians completely miss Christ's message. I replied that I too had the same feeling about Christianity but I was not pre-occupied like he is about it. My point was to encourage him to examine some of his projections on institutional Christianity, which seemed to consume so much of his energy. W B, however, was never able to acknowledge that his psyche was affected by the very kinds of rigid moralistic attitudes he so detested in the church.

Concerning W B's paranoid reactions to French-speaking Canadians, I told him that this too is to a degree understandable today, given the minority status of English-speaking Quebecers, laws prohibiting English commercial signs and the

powerful movement within Quebec to separate from the rest of Canada. There was a large hook here for paranoid projections with which I could sympathise. Nonetheless, I tried to impress upon him the fact that there is always a need to check one's paranoid feelings with the reality of the circumstance and the individual French or English speaking Canadian, for that matter, with which one is dealing. As W B had been brought up in Quebec and as he had lived through the Quiet Revolution and the changes that had taken place in Quebec between the English and French-speaking Canadians during that time I did not feel the need for any history lesson. I felt that that could unnecessarily disturb the feeling environment between us.

A Depth Psychological Perspective on W B's Psychological Condition:

Diagnostic Considerations

According to D.S.M. - IV, W B suffered from diagnostic category 297.1 Persecutory Type and Grandiose Type Delusional Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). I made this diagnosis on the basis of evidence of a considerable amount of delusional thinking and beliefs of being persecuted by way of being spied upon, drugged, poisoned and obstructed. Grandiose delusions were also very prevalent especially with regards to him having a special mission and being spiritually advanced in evolutionary terms.

With regards to his persecutory type delusions, W B exhibited many characteristic behaviours of what David Shapiro (1965) refers to as the paranoid

style of being. In fact, he observed that there are two extreme types of paranoids, [1] those with constricted apprehensive behaviour, and [2] those with rigidly arrogant, more aggressively suspicious behaviour. W B fit more the latter category although, to be sure, the former style as well.

Shapiro (1965) makes some other general observations about paranoid individuals, all of which fit the case of W B. They exhibit, he observes, delusions of grandeur and of reference, convinced that what happens to them is caused by others, while believing themselves to be persecuted. Such delusions refer to concerns about threats from external agents to whom they attribute destructive motives, affects or ideas that are clearly based on inner conflicts. The significance of external facts is therefore always interpreted to conform to their delusional preconceptions. Shapiro also reports that paranoids tend to be hypersensitive, in a state of readiness to counterattack, and live as if with an internal police state that controls behaviour, including bodily movements. James Hillman (1968) also contends that paranoid people are typically jealous, which makes sense given the severely constricted nature of their psyche, with its severe repression.

Surprisingly such people can be, to some degree, adjusted to the world, often working successfully in normal occupations. Indeed, if one accepts their premises, their thinking process appears quite normal. This was certainly the case with W B. Despite his delusions, in some ways he seemed quite normal.

Moreover throughout his life, although he seems to have had a somewhat spotty career, he worked in conventional type occupations.

W B's megalomania expressed itself in relationship to his belief that he had superior spiritual understanding and a mission to enlighten the church and its teachings as well as the people he met with his knowledge. His arrogance was evident in his messianic attitude as well as in the irritable and often unfriendly way he behaved towards nurses and others, especially those in positions of authority. His delusions of reference related to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [R. C. M. P.], the Canadian Security Intelligence Service [C.S.I.S.], the Central Intelligence Agency [C. I. A.], and the Federal Bureau of Investigation [F.B. I.] as well as church officials, nurses, doctors, French Canadians and, in general, people in positions of authority. He believed that the vehicles used for their persecutory motives were drugs, telephone bugging and the general surveillance of his activities.

W B and I often engaged in a dialogue initiated by him on spiritual questions. He usually presented rather dubious understanding of these matters that I always counteracted with my background knowledge and insights. The reason I did this was to bring in a sense of reality into our discussions. Generally speaking, W B accepted my reasoning, as he knew that I lived at an ashram in India of a Guru, Sri Aurobindo, whom he respected. He was, however, sometimes hypersensitive and reacted defensively to what I said. Once he came close to suggesting that I

was a member of the R. C. M. P. . Moreover, at the beginning of our meetings and telephone conversations he showed concern that the telephone was bugged, and he continued to do this although, over time, increasingly less frequently.

As a matter of fact, generally speaking, the rapport between us was very good. On two occasions, after having visited him for two months or so, he told me that he was “beginning to really like” me and on two other occasions he said: “you don’t know how much you are helping me.” There were, in other words signs of a potentially positive transference that could augur well for some healing to take place. Indeed, over time our conversations loosened up considerably and W B showed less and less concern over whether or not our telephone was bugged or not. Moreover, as I indicated above, he bought an electronic typewriter, which he was beginning to use. Finally, unlike many people suffering from paranoia or persecutory delusions, he began to show a sense of humour, at times joking and at times laughing. This is a redeeming quality. Indeed, Hillman (1988) cites a case where a return to humour was a sign of a man being cured of paranoia.

The word paranoia is etymologically based on the words para, meaning besides and noia, meaning thinking. At its root, therefore, the word paranoia means besides thinking. This suggests that paranoia involves a fundamental disorder in meaning which, in Jung’s terms, means a disorder of the Self, which is to say one’s integrity and wholeness (ibid).

Hillman rightfully argues, I believe, that the most all-encompassing root disorder of paranoia is delusion of grandeur or megalomania, on which all other aspects of the disorder are based (ibid). He also gives evidence to suggest that the megalomania is often based on an historical extraordinary personal event, often some form of inner experience. In W B' s case the principal event was the waking vision of the beautiful woman with the golden shawl that, several years later, was reinforced by the vision of a green ball of light. W B interpreted the first vision as involving a literal visit by a spiritual being to earth from a higher plain of existence and the second one as a flying saucer visiting earth from another world. In neither case did he understand the visions to be from an inner world and that the task was to develop a psychological relationship with these qualities of being. The woman, for instance, could be taken to represent a compensatory healing soul-figure and, ideally would have encouraged W B to begin to relate to qualities of Eros and spiritual feeling. The green ball of light could be understood as a symbol from the Self that brings healing and a sense of wholeness.

Having such an experience, would, ideally, encourage one to live a genuine spiritual life and consciously individuate, which is to say live a life based on a search for wholeness and spiritual meaning. This did not happen in W B's case although he did dabble with spiritual ideas and some reading of spiritual literature. In fact, these experiences and his spiritual studies convinced him that he had attained a superior level of soul-evolution and that he had a mission to help others progress towards the light.

As Hillman observes, there is nothing wrong with such experiences themselves. The lunacy involves their literalizing as well as the feeling of having a mission. Hillman, therefore, defines paranoia as living a noetic revelation literally. He also rightly contends that Jung's notion of the unconscious can help turn a paranoid way of perceiving the world psychological.

Rather than finding a middle ground, esse in anima, or being-in soul, an in-between space between the dream image and the outer world, the paranoid takes the vision or inner experience as a concrete fact. However, living esse in anima, requires some spiritual and psychological sophistication and is not easy, nor necessary to resolve paranoia. What is necessary is the ability to doubt the literalizing of the inner experience and sense of mission, along with humour and the ability to detach from the experience. Along with this, some understanding of the symbolic nature of the objective psyche and the Self is the road to sanity. The discovery of meaning comes by paranoids being able to replace their false sense of autonomy with surrender to the Self "in a position of submission."

W B, of course, has never questioned his literalizing these inner experiences or his sense of mission. Although I have continually acknowledged the value of these extraordinary experiences, I also tried to educate him on their symbolic significance. On two occasions, I tried to open up a discussion regarding his tendency to literalise them, but to no avail. In fact, on both occasions he reacted

negatively. Encouraging him to dwell on the images themselves never led anywhere either.

Unless one has extraordinary charisma, when there is megalomania and a sense of mission, the world reacts negatively. Even for the charismatic individual the world eventually typically responds negatively. When the world reacts negatively there is an exacerbation of inner conflicts that are projected outwardly on appropriate containers, in W B' s case on authority figures, French Canadians, R. C. M. P., F.B I., C.I A. and C.S.I.S. officers and so on. When inner conflicts are projected, there are feelings of being persecuted along with delusions of reference. Such was the dilemma of W B.

W B's Physical Condition

I will now turn to W B' s physical condition and try to show how that is reflective of his psychological state of being. To begin with, his watery, throaty way of speaking and alternating light and dark mental states suggest a regression to what Jean Gebser (1989) refers to as a deficient magico-religious mentality. It is deficient in that W B is a contemporary Westerner and not consciously in touch with the interconnectedness of all life as are more primal people, nor was he capable of performing rituals involving magic causality like a shaman. Nonetheless, his consciousness, which was of a relatively low state of mental alertness, could have opened W B to experiences of synchronicity, which are, in fact, based on the reality of the interrelatedness of life.

His disease-ridden arthritic body, which required him to lie flat on his back, suggests a forced state of complete dependence and physical surrender. What he had not been able to do spiritually and psychologically has been accomplished physically against his will. As Hillman (1988) observes, with paranoids, there is double literalizing, the second one, in this case the forced physical surrender, which defeats the initial propensity for the concretisation of inner reality.

Inasmuch as W B had made [strenuous] efforts to literalise his inner experiences, the world responds literally, even the physical body. Although Shapiro (1965) observes that the posture of defensive readiness in paranoids is reflected in a rigid body, it does not normally become somatized to the extent that it did in the case of W B. What additional factors, then, could be at work to explain such severe arthritis?

Alfred Ziegler (1983) observes that etymology suggests that all rheumatic loss of joint articulation comes with an attitude of consistency and steadfastness. He goes on to say that arthritics generally complain very little about their condition. He suggests that a kind of spontaneous no towards excessive self-sacrifice is expressed physically so that they can no longer make self-sacrificing gestures to others, which is their natural inclination. The body, in other words, says no through the disease. Zeigler (1983) points to a moralizing stoic philosophy with

its repression of the emotions, impulses and desires, along with disdain for sensual pleasure that contributes to the arthritic condition.

In W B's case, delusions of grandeur came along with a moralistic stoic philosophy of life. His belief, probably based on a dry unemotional puritanical Protestant-Christian worldview, was that the spiritual life involves denial of the flesh. Indeed, typical of arthritics, W B never complained about his fate to me, only mentioning the good side of it, which was that it gave him a chance to observe human nature and to spend time thinking about it. Finally, always being concerned about fulfilling his spiritual "mission" has involved an excessive amount of self-sacrifice on his part.

Earlier in his life, W B's lack of genuine spiritual surrender and his emotional disconnectedness found relief in excessive drinking. As Jung (as reported in Jan Bauer, 1982) observes, alcohol is a substitute for spiritual experience. Thus his grandiosity and inability for authentic surrender to the Self culminated in the condition he finds himself in now, arthritic and paranoid, bedridden and physically in a constant state of surrender, in "a position of submission."

W B, it seems to me, had been forced to hit a psychological place that is as "rock bottom" as anybody can possibly go. Perhaps there could now have been a change in his mental attitude, a profound acknowledgement of what brought him to the state he actually finds himself in, a genuine *mea culpa*. There were, as I

indicated above, some signs that a positive therapeutic transference had set in despite the fact I wasn't officially there as a therapist. However my intense interest in W B, including writing this paper, which could very well have had a positive psychological influence on W B, could not be sustained, as I eventually moved to another part of the country. Moreover, W B was somewhat advanced in age and there had been considerable physical and psychological degeneration. There is, after all, the archetype of the invalid, which is to say a basic pattern of life that involves sickness and eventual death. Indeed there was growing evidence that W B was in the process of a slow devolution into death, the normal outcome of severe arthritis.

W B's Dream Story

As I was not officially engaged in doing therapy with W B, I made no deliberate attempt to systematically discuss shadow elements of the personal unconscious as experienced through family members and other relationships. Moreover, in his stage of life and degenerated psychological and physical condition I didn't believe it would be of much value in any case. I simply awaited dreams and allowed our discussions to flow as they will, taking my cue from both the dreams and our dialogue. By attending dreams and inner images, certain shadow elements as well as more directly archetypal material did come to consciousness. In fact, in our discussions W B did come to the point of recognising some personal shadow, although it is not clear how capable he was of translating his insights into effective action in a sustaining way. My

understanding of his

dreams, of course, was always considered in light of the reality of W B' s physical and psychological condition.

To begin with W B informed me that sometime prior to our meeting he had the following dream:

A fellow is standing at the edge of my bed and clubs me on the legs. I coolly think that he will get what he deserves when I get out of here.

The fellow at the end of the bed has authority, represented by the club. He could represent a chthonic or active masculine side that had turned against W B due to a lifetime of repression. Beating has the symbolic significance of extirpating something that does not intrinsically belong in order too bring self-unification. As legs generally refer to one's standpoint, W B's is potentially being affected here. The dream, in fact, could have mainly referred to his deteriorating body. He once told me, for instance, that he would soon probably have to have his legs amputated. W B's dream ego reacted coolly to the situation, but he was at the mercy of the man with a club, as in real life there was little he could do but accept his physical condition and all the psychological repercussions.

Here is one dream, the discussion of which led W B to purchase an electronic typewriter:

I am beside some water. There is an old log afloat on top. A little green octopus emerges from the water, jumps onto my hand warming it and then lands on my foot. I kick it away. We look intensely at each other.

The old log represents an old slice from the tree of life and knowledge that had never been utilised. The octopus symbolises flowing creative energy that warms and presumably brings life to W B's hand before landing on his foot. This suggests that it potentially not only affected W B's active nature but also his standpoint. In actual fact, W. B's hands were severely arthritic and malformed, suggesting that he had not been able to realise his creative energy at all, and that it had somatized in his body. Were he, in fact, able to let this energy flow, creatively using the typewriter to write and differentiate his understanding of himself and the world, it would no doubt have done him a lot of good. Otherwise the dream would have simply been a compensatory message from the unconscious regarding his present condition.

The first dream W B told me follows:

I am sitting in a tree watching some men who look like Apachees. One of them has a machete and he uses it to split open a man, who is lying on the ground, down the centre of his body. The man is screaming and wailing in pain. The other Apachees are nearby in the surrounding woods. A man I know, who is a United Church minister, comes along dressed in a soldier's outfit including ribbons of recognition. He sits on the ground and places a grenade on top of his head. The grenade explodes and he becomes all on fire.

In this dream, W B seems to have a detached and uninvolved perspective, sitting somewhere on the tree of life and knowledge, witnessing Apachees dismember a shadow aspect of life. Apachees represent aggressive qualities of the natural man, in harmony with the spirit of the earth. The woods represent a place of enchantment, sacrifice and renewal and generally speaking unconsciousness.

The shadow being dismembered is traumatised by the experience and suffering great pain. Dismemberment, however, involves sacrifice and potential discernment. The other shadow figure is a United Church minister-cum-soldier. Presumably he is a soldier for truth as he interprets it in Protestant Christian terms.

Now that the dismemberment is taking place, there is also a reactive response from this aspect of the psyche, first by placing an explosive grenade on top of the head, the seat of meaning and understanding, and then the whole being becoming engulfed in fire. It is as if to say that now that the natural man is on the ascendance, there is a violent explosion, perhaps in the sense of losing one's head in an enraged outburst, along with a pervasive sense of anger as the meaning of life, as understood by the Protestant Christianity of the United Church of Canada, becomes assaulted by the primal man. The fact that there is such pain and unwillingness to accept the required surrender of the first shadow figure along with the explosive rage of the United Church minister-cum-soldier suggests that the experience will have been difficult for W B to assimilate. Add to this the fact that W B, as dream ego, is an uninvolved observer somewhere up a tree, in other words from a centre of consciousness above the earth, where the action was actually going on, the likelihood of assimilating the meaning behind this dream was very slim.

W B then recounted the following dream:

I am at the Canada/U. S. Border. It is dark. There are Royal Canadian Mounted Police [R. C. M. P.] officers as well as F. B. I. and C. I. A. agents there. Both the F. B. I. and C. I. A. agents are in a car when the F. B. I. agent kills the C. I. A. agent, who then falls out of the car. Next I am near the customs house and I see an R. C. M. P. officer on his knees in front of the F. B. I. agent having oral sex.

The Canada/U. S. Border symbolises the borderline between the Canadian and American consciousness. According to W B, Americans are more aggressive and extraverted than Canadians, a belief that is generally held by most Canadians. The dark night indicates W B finds himself in an area that is relatively speaking unconscious, while crossing the border to the United States means exploring these “American” qualities that lie even further in the unconscious. When W B is at this transitional place in the psyche, he sees both Canadian and American federal policemen as well as an American secret service agent. Generally speaking the police officers represent the collective moral authority in the psyche, something like Freud’s superego.

Here it seems that both the American and Canadian ethic are in basic harmony, although the Canadian officer is on his knees stimulating the American, that is to say subservient to American morality. Although the American psyche is more aggressive, extraverted and individualistic than the Canadian, the American way seems to also include as compensation a more severe and inflexible moral conscience than does the Canadian. In W B’s psyche then, the generally

speaking softer and more tolerant Canadian morality is subservient to the harsher American code.

The C. I. A. agent, meanwhile, represents a secret or hidden factor that uncovers moral corruption that is working behind the scenes, in other words in the unconscious, especially concerning “American” values and interests. The fact an F. B. I. officer kills him suggests that this quality is being suppressed by the instrument for collective “American” style morality. Ideally, one is able to become conscious of so-called inner deviance from collective values, some of which can actually be life enhancing. Acceptance of bourgeois collective values, or identification with them, makes this difficult. In the case of W B this was definitely the case and his ability to penetrate more deeply behind surface and repressive moral dynamics is being undermined here. In fact, this is typical of people with a delusional disorder or paranoid style who Shapiro (1965) describes as living with a controlling inner police state.

The difficulty W B had in assimilating the anima, which is to say Eros or relatedness and feeling values is depicted in the following recurring dream:

I wake up to a dream where I am being strangled by a wet brassiere.

A brassiere is a container for female breasts, the organ that secretes milk, which symbolically refers to the quality of Eros and feeling. Wetness refers to unconscious feminine values and the emotions. The part being affected is the throat, which represents the centre of consciousness related to externalisation

and expression of truth. Being strangled by a wet brassiere indicates that unconscious emotions were stifling W B's expression of his individual voice and truth of being.

The next several dreams seem to have been directly related to W B's actual medical situation at the nursing home. In one dream, W B recounted that:

I see four [4] female nurses. They all have the same face although with different bodies.

Four [4] is a symbol of wholeness or completeness. The body generally represents the vital or life aspect of the psyche including the emotions and instincts, as well as the subtle physical nature itself. The head and face is the seat of differentiation, meaning and self-reflection. The four [4] different bodies suggest that there is potentially a fourfold differentiation of the vital, emotional and instinctual life. Only one [1] common face for each of the four [4] bodies, however, suggests that the meaning potentially assessable to consciousness is not differentiated. The nurses represent feminine servants of healing and care. Overall one can say there is a healing presence related to wholeness that W B is connecting to here but that a differentiated discerning consciousness in this regard is not now possible. It may have had to do with the fact that his life was now coming to a completion and that it had been lived relatively unconsciously.

In another dream he reported that:

The Director of the hospital I am presently in is helping me move to another hospital.

The Director of the hospital represents the chief healer. Given W B 's actual physical condition and its gradual deterioration, the fact that he is being moved to another hospital in the dream suggests that different type of care is now required, perhaps palliative care, in preparation for his actual demise.

Indeed the following archetypal dream might, in fact, have portended his death:

I see a vulture hovering nearby in the air, without moving its wings. On seeing me it circled around, interrupting its journey east. I am on a path on a rocky cliff that comes to an end. Then there is wasteland. I end up in a motel and open the door to one of the rooms. There are pictures of demons drawn all over the wall. I open the door to another room, which is normal. I think to myself that I would like to go east for the sake of peace and wellbeing.

Amongst the Parsees of contemporary India the body of the deceased is left in an open tower on top of the Temple for vultures. Vultures, in fact, typically feed of the dead carcasses of animals and humans. In ancient Egypt the vulture was taken as a manifestation of the Divine Mother, Isis as protector of the dead. It is also often depicted carrying the ankh or symbol of eternal life in each of its talons. East is the place of the rising sun and one's spiritual home. The vulture is flying to the east and is interested in the dreamer, who seems to have come to the end of his path [of life]. As it is a rocky cliff there is a suggestion that there is a split between where the dreamer is now in consciousness and what follows.

According to both The Egyptian Book of the Dead and The Tibetan Book of the Dead, one typically encounters wasteland and demons on the journey after death, as in this dream. At least there are pictures of demons in one of the

rooms, suggesting their influence is there. In psychological terms this means a sense of foreboding and depression along with being tormented by worldly attachments and desire. The second room in the motel, which appears more normal, seems to suggest that there is also a possibility of some detachment or, at least, some rest from these tormenting attachments. As indicated in the dream W B's longing is to go east, which is to say to his spiritual home for the sake of peace and wellbeing, in his case, after a troubled life. In fact, according to occult tradition, after death, the soul eventually spends time in a state of blissful repose before re-incarnating for another round. However, as Jung (1965) speculates, there is a good likelihood that one still meets the same emotional dynamics after death as during life, at least at the outset of one's journey.

In actual fact, W B was not interested in entertaining any of the ideas discussed concerning this dream. Moreover, it is noteworthy that there was a noticeable lack of affect for such a numinous dream, which reflected his severely dissociated psychological state of mind. Indeed, rather than seeing the vulture as a symbol of decomposition and death, perhaps impending physical death, he projected vulture-like qualities onto people in his environment. As a matter of fact, such a dream does not necessarily refer to actual death and could rather refer to psychological death and transformation. According to his own account, however, there was, in fact, accumulating deterioration in his physical condition and in his situation at the hospital as well as in his relationship to his sister.

Indeed, his actual physical condition and psychological state of mind indicate that the dream actually could have referred to impending physical death.

The next three (3) dreams seem to suggest W B was beginning to accept his situation and need for care, at least as a compensatory value. In the first dream he said:

I jump out of bed and embrace a nurse, who is in the room.

This dream suggests that W B is actively embracing the nursing care and nurturing that is there for him, a positive sign for whatever the psyche had in store for him. In the second dream he observed that:

I see three naked nurses in my room.

As the nurses are naked, W B is potentially becoming conscious of what the nurses actually represent in terms of nurturing and care, without pretence or persona. The number three [3] represents process and can refer to destiny and fate. Thus, it seems that W B's medical destiny and fate was beginning to be unveiled.

I have a new doctor. He is pattering around with his equipment in my new room. There are two beds there, each of which, are unmade. I go in, flop down on one of them and say to the doctor: "O. K., examine me!" The doctor doesn't pay any attention to me.

As indicated in a previous dream W B was getting a new doctor who, in the dream, is busy with his equipment, which suggests taking a new medical approach to deal with W B's deteriorating physical condition. In actual fact W B informed me that he had been assigned a new doctor who looked like the doctor in the dream. Two indicates that something is now beginning to become conscious, here, symbolically represented by the unmade beds. According to the expression "you make your bed and lie in it," the beds here represent W B's

disorganised state of mind and probably unfavourable medical condition. His flippant comment to the doctor suggests a conscious attitude that is less than seriously concerned about his status. The fact that the doctor did not respond to W B suggests the formers serious pre-occupations with his medical concerns as a healer, whatever they may have been. Presumably W B should have now learned to be more serious and to patiently wait for the new doctor to work in his own way and time.

In the last dream W B told me, he is in a classroom and the actor, James Cagney, is the teacher. Cagney is wearing a black sweater and is standing in front of the classroom teaching. W B reasoned that since James Cagney usually played tough-guy roles and since he is the teacher here and W B the student, he had to learn how to be more assertive and tough. In actual fact because of his paranoia W B often exhibited a kind of gruff defensiveness. Had he been able to act more assertively in a positive and proactive way, his life would have unfolded very differently. In his condition and at this stage in his life such a dream is probably more compensatory than anything else. However, since the real James Cagney was dead at the time of the dream, it might have referred to W B learning an appropriate assertive attitude regarding his portending departure from the physical world, or even in the afterlife.

Generally speaking the dreams seem to have related to the fact that a sacrifice of the ego is being demanded of W B against some resistance. The sacrifice

involved developing a more realistic acceptance of his medical condition and the implications, which may have included impending death. Some dreams did, however, indicate he was potentially capable of embracing his fate. Others indicated that there was a considerable amount of unconsciousness about his actual state of mind along with severe repression. And yet there also seemed to have been a potential new connection to creative energy. Although W B's psyche may have been preparing for his demise, there was no evidence in his dreams that life itself was ending. Indeed, as Jung (1965) observes, dreams of people who are preparing for death don't indicate that life is over but that it seems to continue.

One event allowed us to discuss the reality of the psyche, the interpenetration of the outer and inner worlds and the nature of synchronicity or meaningful coincidences. W B reported to me that the pictures of Christ and of the spiritual Gurus suddenly fell from the bookshelf onto the floor for no apparent reason. He wondered if it meant anything. I replied that it could very well have been meaningful, and I asked him if he had any idea what the meaning for him could be. He didn't. I then suggested that he contemplate what it could mean and to try to relate it to dreams or any other events that have been taking place in his life. W B agreed to do that. It is not obvious to me what the synchronicity could have entailed, if it was, in fact, such an experience. Perhaps it could have related to the insistence in his dreams for him to be more realistic about his condition and the need to come down to earth.

Conclusion

I was drawn to W B through a series of meaningful synchronistic experiences somehow connected to Sri Aurobindo and the spiritual life. There was some evidence that W.B. profited somewhat therapeutically from our meetings, although the fact they eventually had to be stopped due to my moving away could have negated any healing that might have taken place. By healing I mean a more conscious acceptance of life as it is even, as in this case, it seemed to have meant preparation for death.

In addition to the psycho-physical nature of W B's plight, what has been brought to consciousness for me is my own shadow participation in grandiosity and paranoid behaviour. Such behaviour has never been much in the forefront of my life but it is evident to me that such influences can work in the background of my consciousness. In fact, my observation is that many people who have been initiated into a spiritual life or who become members of a special group of one form or another can easily come under such influences in a more or less subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways.

Like all life, W B's individuated according to his nature and neither I, nor anybody else, have the right to gainsay its validity. Despite his spiritual interests, however, his life was a rather extreme example of what can occur when individuation happens in an unconscious way, along with megalomania. Being consciously involved in the individuation process is another matter altogether,

and it inevitably requires coming to terms with one's common humanity as well as all the opposites, including good and evil. It requires conscious surrender to the Self, not forced submission, as in the case of W B. To become starkly aware of the potentially debilitating nature of grandiosity or any sense of feeling special and chosen, as I have observed with W B, can be a real incentive to become more aware of the effect of an inflated attitude. It can encourage one to seek a more humble reality.

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