

# THE INDIVIDUATION PROCESS AND CARE OF THE SELF

RUNNING HEAD: Individuation and the Self

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about care of the Self. I observe that there is an evolution of consciousness and that, today, we are being asked to make a quantum leap in consciousness. I also make some comments on the contemporary “spirit of the times” and its pathology. I then discuss Jung’s path of individuation which has two aspects, one involving the search for vocation and surrender to a higher will and the other involving alchemy and in-depth transformation of nature with the goal of realizing the chthonic spirit.

## THE INDIVIDUATION PROCESS AND CARE OF THE SELF

### Introduction

My topic tonight is the individuation process. It is essentially about what I have personally found to be important, both in terms of understanding the world around me and my place in it, and the way that I find purpose and meaning. It is also about my understanding of the essence of Jung's message on the individuation process. I present it to you not as dogma, or even as a set of ideas that you should necessarily adopt. I mean it to be rather indicative and suggestive. Indeed, Jung's genius allows us to profit from his work at the level of our interest and in full acceptance of the conditions and concerns of our own lives, whatever they may be.

As a therapist I take people as they are and look for what nature via the unconscious serves up. In such a way I try and assist people to follow their own life's path, not mine. So I welcome the opportunity to present my own views here tonight.

My initial involvement with Jung coincided with being introduced to the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as a young man, when I was living in Switzerland as a Canadian Diplomat. I began reading Jung then and I was amazed at what he had to say in his autobiography, Memories, Dreams, Reflections. As events transpired, I ended up living at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in south India for three years. As synchronicity had it, my next door neighbour was a German woman

who had studied at the Jung Institute in Zurich, and I began my own depth-analysis with her, twice a week for two years. I subsequently studied for about a year at the Jung Institute where I continued my analysis.

At any event, Jung's psychology of individuation and the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother come together for me, putting a certain slant on my appreciation and understanding of Jung. Over time I have learned to my surprise how people, even serious 'students' of his approach to psychology, see Jung in significantly different ways. He himself wrote in a letter to Jolande Jacobi that there are loose ends that need to be systematized, failing which there would be no advancement in his approach to psychology (Jacobi, 1965/1983, p. vii). Although devoted disciples like Marie-Louise von Franz and Edward Edinger have been doing this, in my estimation, more has to be done in this direction. One important area of consideration is Jung and spirituality in the contemporary world. In my view Jung's psychology of individuation is fundamentally an integral spiritual path and nothing less.

As Jung remarked on more than one occasion, in scientifically discovering the Self the centre of the psyche, we have gone as far as to develop a yoga for the West (Shamdasani, Sonu, 1996). Whereas the ego is the centre of consciousness the Self in Jung's way of looking at things, is the centre of the psyche itself. It is a paradoxical reality that represents totality. Not only does it include a portion that is eternal, but it includes all life as well. It is spirit and

nature, both involved in space and time while, at the same time, existing outside of space and time.

### The Evolution of Consciousness: It's Significance Today

In 1973, a group of Amerindians from throughout North America gathered at Wounded Knee in remembrance of their being subjected to a one-sided slaughter 100 years earlier, in order to recapture their lost dignity and spirit. One night seven Hopi women had an identical dream. In their tradition seven is a particularly sacred number. Esoterically, it stands for individuation in both its aspect of eternity and the dynamic unfolding of the Self in life.

The people involved believe that the dream is meant for all of us. So let us try and get into it as if it were a fairy tale or story like we did when we were little children, as if it were real. Indeed, it is real and closer to the source of things than this ephemeral world and social reality we are so attached to. Here is the dream:

A magnificent chief sitting astride a powerful white stallion comes riding up to the seven women. His hair, which was woven into two braids, fell to the ground. In his right hand he carried a staff that had a carving of an eagle on the top. Way above in the sky an eagle flew in the same direction as the chief. The women followed him through large American cities in which the buildings were all aflame. Some people, of all ethnic backgrounds, emerged from the burning buildings and followed the chief and these seven women. Others stayed behind. At the end of the journey, everybody reverted to wearing the costume of their ancestors; the Amerindians in their traditional costumes, the Irish and Scottish in the Celtic costume of their ancestors and so on (Oh Shinnah, 1977, pp. 382-440).

It can help to understand such archetypal dreams by amplifying them with collective and symbolic material from throughout the world. This is possible because the archetypes of the collective unconscious connect us to humankind and have a similar significance everywhere.

By way of amplification then, amongst the Hindus of India, according to tradition there are ten avatars of Vishnu or divine incarnations of God, each of which represents a stage in the evolution of humankind. There is not just one divine incarnation like in mainline Christianity, but ten. In Gnostic Judeo-Christianity, incidentally, there is considered to have been several incarnations of the Messiah, one of which was Jesus Christ, coming closer to the Hindu view. At any rate, the last avatar Kalki comes riding a white horse, with the mission of bringing in an Age of Truth, the Satya Yuga.

According to the dream, the eagle, which symbolises “the Word,” the Logos and the white horse, which is a symbol par excellence of the dynamic or energy portion of the Divine, are perfectly synchronised moving in the same direction, the direction of truth. Instinct and spirit are in perfect harmony. The chief carries the Rod of Power, which gives him spiritual authority. The long braids falling to the ground indicate that, at the same time, there is a descent of psychic energy towards the earth. Braided hair reflects an attitude of care and the spiritualization of Eros. There is depicted here, in other words, a full reconciliation of the opposites, the unification of above and below, the spirit, instinct and matter, all in

addition to movement in the horizontal direction, that is into life., Wearing costumes of one's traditional background imply a return to a more healthy instinctual life style and simple ways.

This is highly significant, and represents a movement of truth into life. In Sri Aurobindo's (1970, p.609) supreme poem, Savitri, in her search for truth, the heroine hears the voice of negation attempting to beguile her with the statement that "truth lives far from the falsehoods of this world." In this context it is interesting to reflect on the biblical Christ's response to Pilate, who referred to him as King of the Jews, that his "kingship is not of this world" (John 18:36). Moreover he enjoined his disciples to "render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). The implication is that truth can only be found in the beyond and that during our sojourn here on earth we have to accommodate the Prince of this world.

We still have to pay our taxes but, according to the dream, such a nihilistic attitude towards life is no longer tenable. Today, life itself seeks spiritual fulfilment despite all appearances to the contrary. To participate in such an endeavour is, to say the least, a difficult task and requires unswerving devotion to truth, courage and strength of will.

Jung (1965) himself recorded a remarkable dream where he and a primitive chief, who could just as well have been 50,000 years old, had just captured a

primeval boar from the depths of the sea after a terrific struggle. The storm and rough sea, however, dragged the boar back into the sea forcing Jung and the chief to recapture it. This time they were able to bring it to shore, cut it up and take it back to the village for a ritual feast. In Jung's own amplification of the dream, he related the boar to one of the early incarnations of Vishnu as a cosmic Boar, and felt that the dream referred to the ushering in of a new cosmic age. His role in the dream, in my estimation, indicates that he and, by implication, his psychology, are important factors in this realisation.

He felt, incidentally, that an artist acquaintance of his, Peter Birkhauser (Birkhauser, Verlag, 1980, p. 49) had, unaware of Jung's dream, painted a picture that referred to the same event. It is of a young man riding a white tusked boar-horse. Von Franz (p. 48) had this to say about the painting: "that it represented the new spirit of the coming age of Aquarius, riding on a white beast (Pegasus) half horse, half boar. Wherever he stretches his hands, new life begins to bloom. This is the boy-god predicted in Revelation as the child snatched up to heaven. He is the complete man of the future."

She then quotes Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, 4, 18:

You eternal youth, endless your agelessness,  
Stand in your bloom at the height of the heavens  
Sun, your head unhorned, virginal  
The east in your thrall out to black India  
Where the Ganges meets the furthest border

There always seems to be an acknowledgement that the source of spiritual renewal is India.



There has been a long evolution of consciousness, which has carried us to the present day, to a critical turning point for humankind. According to Sri Aurobindo (1971, p. 2): "all life ... is a vast yoga of nature attempting to realise... her own divine reality." In the words of Jung (quoted in Adler & Jaffe, 1975, p. xivi) "everything living dreams of individuation for everything strives towards its wholeness. The former defines yoga as simply"... an intensification of general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a more leisurely movement by the Great Mother in her vast upward labour." Meanwhile, for Jung "nature has a spiritual aim and nature seeks to transform itself." In other words, individuation is not elitism, nor is it "dancing in the light," it is an intensification of a natural process.

It is becoming apparent that there are both tremendous forces of disintegration of the old way, of what people generally refer to as the Patriarchy, as well as transformative energies, not so apparent to most people, involving a new way and a new structure of consciousness. As Jung put it, there is a "metamorphosis of the Gods" of the very fundamental principles and dynamics of life. The new consciousness is integral, where all life is seeking organisation around the Self-All life. Its shadow is fragmentation, which has been given birth to by reductive reason and statistical thinking.

The potential transformation is so far-reaching that Sri Aurobindo's spiritual co-worker, the Mother, claimed that even her physical body itself has gone through

a process of transformation at the cellular level.(reported in Satprem,1981,1982)  
Although Jung didn't claim to go that far, he noted that, today, the individuation process means nothing less than a Christification process and the formation of a glorified or spiritualised[subtle] body. As in the dream of the Hopi women it, requires a return to instinctual roots. That is to say, individuation today means fully accepting our more primordial psyche, no easy task given the kinds of demands made on people by the contemporary spirit of the times.

#### Individuation and the Spirit of the Times

In this regard, a Canadian man dreamed that he was winding his way towards the centre of a city with low white buildings accompanied by a Kung! [Bushman] woman. People were throwing garbage at them. Laurens van der Post(1981/1971), a friend of Jung, has written movingly about the South African Bushmen, whom he claims have a direct link to early humankind of the planting and hunting society. According to him, both black and white alike discriminate against these people. In his book The Heart of the Hunter, he describes an incident where he witnessed one Bushman, Dabi by name, withdraw from his [van der Post's] group and visibly "shrivel up" with "loss of spirit" when they came in touch with white society. There is a little bushman in each of us who is affected accordingly.

Indeed, a new branch of academic psychology known as evolutionary psychology is trying to understand the implications of the demands made on

people today in contemporary society given their genetic makeup. There is, they are concluding, a wide gap with devastating effects. So, for instance, our highly-competitive individualism, that is, the emphasis on power, on being empowered and not giving away one's power, ego fulfilment and so on, has had the effect of significantly diminishing the level of trust people have for each other. In one longitudinal survey when Americans were asked if they trusted most people, in 1960, 58% answered in the affirmative, while in 1993, 37% did. As Jung noted, when power reigns, there is no Eros.

Of course, there has long been a considerable amount of social criticism regarding the pathological nature of contemporary society from other quarters. Erich Fromm (1981) has described our society as consisting of a socially defective social pattern, which he defined as generally being marketing oriented "where everybody and everything is for sale." This encourages a liable, ever-changing narcissistic ego concerned more with image than with substance. Leinberger and Tucker (1991) contend that the result of thirty-five years of the so-called human potential movement, a large segment of society is now driven to live a "creative" life of self-fulfilment and "authenticity," the "artist's fantasy," all however organised around a tight self-bound little ego. Now people are increasingly organising their lives around projects with a similar expectation.

In one sense, nothing seems wrong with a project-oriented life or the artist's fantasy and a so-called authentic life. But, the ego-centric individualistic attitude

dominating the West inevitably encourages exploitation of the psyche and using the unconscious for ego purposes. Edinger(1979) has shown how, in the Greek hero myths, the anima is typically “used” by the hero and then abandoned. For example, Theseus eventually abandoned Ariadne on the Isle of Naxos. According to Jung, using the unconscious for anything whatsoever is based on the power principle and is exploitive. The question one always needs to ask is “what does the Self want and not the grandiose ego?” Art, for instance, was originally a sister activity to religion and is, at its core, sacred.

Christopher Lasch (1979) defined our culture as narcissistic I would say that it is increasingly a narcissistic culture with an underlying borderline, or unstable organisational structure. In his seductive song, The Future Leonard Cohen describes it very well as an order that’s “gonna slide, it’s gonna slide in all directions”, along with the warning that “there won’t be nothing you can’t measure anymore.” Again, this is a reference our one-sided fanaticism for reductive, goal oriented and statistical thinking which inevitably gives birth to fragmentation.

Meanwhile, historian, Lewis Mumford (quoted in Franklin, 1980,p.65) reminds us that between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ruling morality changed as the deadly sins became the seven cardinal virtues”, that is as “greed, gluttony, avarice, envy and luxury” and the stimulation of narcissistic desire gained ascendancy the sake of commerce and industry. Sri Aurobindo (1971) claimed we are economic barbarians, where barbarism is defined by identification with

vital or life factors and the physical body - all those so-called “needs” that therapy usually encourages. Jung (1921/1974, p.215) echoed this sentiment observing that “we are still such barbarians with a thin veneer of culture.”

The overpowering engine of technology, fuelled by manipulative marketing and public relations technique, takes us away from ourselves. Although technology is not wrong in itself, there is need for a considerable amount of moral differentiation in order for it to find its proper place in our lives which, as a society, we do not have. Jung went on to say that we live without “any trust in the laws of human nature which seems to us a dangerous and unethical naturalism.” We are afraid to let go to be our deeper Self. What else do you think it means to get along and be adapted and successful in a society that has a pathological structure of consciousness? Although this may be something of an exaggeration, to be successful in normal terms generally means a pathological life-style or ,at the least, too much emphasis on external goals. Putting one’s focus on collectively defined goals carries the cost of a limitation of culture and personality. There is no room there for the Bushman in one’s soul. There is little room for the inner light to shine. I say this, of course, realising that the individuation process begins where one is, wherever that may be. Eventually, however, some people are called to come to terms with the nature of collective consciousness and the pursuit of a more authentic vocation.

The general tendency is for the development of ego, but ego divorced from the Self. Even opening up to the possibility of a “creative life” or one of “self fulfilment”, inasmuch as it is focused on puffing up the ego, usually the case, has nothing to do with individuation. It is individualism pure and simple. Nor does individualism modified by social interest have anything to do with individuation. Without the Self with a capital ‘S’, without relating the ego to the infinite, there is no individuation. Time after time, Jung lamented that people mistake individualism [or individualism modified with social interest] with individuation.

#### The Need for a Consciously Defined Worldview

The question that was put to me many years ago when I first encountered a Jungian therapist in Switzerland was “Do you have a Weltanschauung, - a philosophy of life. At the time I had no idea what he was talking about. How do you think people would answer that question today? How would you answer it?

Over the years I have gradually realised the great importance of having a consciously defined Weltanschauung or worldview, a motivating vision of life. Indeed, it is absolutely central to Jung’s approach to psychology and the individuation process. “Everywhere,” he once wrote somewhat plaintively, “one hears the cry for a Weltanschauung everyone asks the meaning of life and the world.” Weltanschauung can be translated as worldview or world outlook which gives purpose and direction to one’s life. Its loss or lack of conscious definition leads to individual and collective neurosis or worse. As we read in the book of

Isaiah (1952), without a vision, people destroy themselves. Without a vision, people destroy themselves both individually and collectively. The choice of Weltanschauung is important, too, as it can have a major impact on orchestrating one's direction in life. Of course, it does not mean perfect fulfilment. But it does serve the purpose of creating a tension between where one is and where one desires to be and helps to propel one in that direction.

Indeed, what makes life potentially rich and meaningful is a worldview that is wide and generous, not only for the individual, mind you, but one can have more to offer others as well. There are many different worldviews, for example, Romantic, humanistic, capitalist, ethical and aesthetic and so on. There are even destructive ones. In essence, a "Jungian" depth-psychological worldview embraces the following attitudes: the aesthetic, the ethical, the philosophic, one based on pleasure and power in life and the religious attitude. What is most central is the religious attitude by which is meant reflecting upon and taking into careful consideration events or experiences of both the inner and outer worlds.

Holding such a worldview and being genuinely motivated by it makes life meaningful while shifting attention away from the kinds of concerns that usually preoccupy people and therapy. It guides one and one's life towards the possibility of being connected to the infinite which, in Jung's view, is ultimately the only source of salvation and meaning. And this is phenomenologically real,

palpable, and not just fanciful talk. Jung's message is not simply "care of the soul," the title of a popular book on psychology today, but care of the Self.

### The Individuation Process

Individuation means becoming oneself, expressing oneself and living according to one's uniqueness. Inasmuch as it is a natural process, everybody and everything individuates. However, there is a tremendous difference between conscious individuation and unconscious individuation. In the latter case there is no intervention of consciousness, while, with conscious individuation, light is brought into the darkness of the unconscious. In the process, ego awareness gains considerably in scope while there is increasing potential for one's true uniqueness to unfold in life beyond collective ideals and norms. Whereas unconscious individuation may lead to a hardening in life, conscious individuation brings a flexibility and openness.

My experience over the years has led me to realise that there are two principle aspects of individuation which Jung's genius has brought into an integral synthesis. One aspect has mainly to do with the masculine principle of Logos, with discernment, meaning and will, the other with the feminine principle of Eros, that is to say consciousness-force, or intelligent nature. What are necessary are both an ascent of human aspiration for a higher or spiritual light and a descent of light to illuminate the darkness within, allowing for the interweaving workings of nature, which, one must never forget, is intrinsically intelligent. Rather than



worshipping beings of light, as New Age often does, lighting up the darkness within is what is required. And, according to Jung, the end result of such a process is nothing less than what he referred to as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a Christification process (Jung, 1958/1969).

### The Individuation Process and Vocation

One aspect of the individuation process, then, involves the gradual replacement of the ego-directed will with a superior will. When BBC interviewer John Freeman (1977/1980, p.383) asked Jung if he believed in God, Jung replied that, "I don't believe, I know." He later explained that what he meant by that was that often a greater will than his own crossed his path, putting his life on a different course.

Here, I am going to quote Jung extensively. "Only if we know," wrote Jung in his autobiography, "that the thing which truly matters is the infinite, can we avoid fixing our interest upon futilities and upon all kinds of goals which are not of real importance... If we understand and feel that here in life we already have a link with the infinite, desires and attitudes change. In the final analysis we count for something only because of the essential we embody and if we do not embody that, life is wasted. "The feeling for the infinite, however," he went on to say, "can be attained only if we are bounded to the utmost" (p.325). Being bounded to the utmost means being subjected to the conditions of our space and time-bound life,

while seeking for one's vocation, by which I mean becoming conscious of and expressing the law of one's life.

Every individual, wrote Jung (1958/1970), "has the law of his [or her] life inborn in them." Finding one's vocation requires having "trustful loyalty," that is having fidelity in the law of one's being. It means isolation from the collective and its well tread paths. It also means becoming a personality and achieving a degree of wholeness, along with a uniquely lived life. Jung hastened to note, however, that it is not his [or her] own law, but the law for which one is destined, that is not the ego's law, but the law of the Self. Moreover, he warned that "unless one accepts one's fate," by which he means not going along with worldly wisdom or the fate defined by society, and "to the extent that a man is untrue to the law of his being and does not rise to personality he has failed to realise his life's meaning(1974,p.183). One remains locked into a collectively lived life.

Finding one's inner law is no easy task. It requires the warrior-like courage of an Arjuna of India's great scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, who at first threw down his bow and arrow in the midst of battle array, sorrowfully lamenting that he could not kill his relatives and friends as requested by the God Krishna. But, the divine charioteer reminded him that it had already been done and that he had to do it as an instrument of God. Likewise, Christ enjoined his disciples to leave their families and follow him, and told them that he brought not peace but a sword. In psychological terms this means that we need to follow the demands of the Self,

while coming to terms with our complexes and collective “wisdom,” which people usually mistake for common sense. Thus, in chapter 18, verse 47 of the Bhagavad Gita one reads. “Better is one’s Swadharma one’s self-law though in itself faulty than an alien law ill-wrought out. When one does the work regulated by one’s self-nature one does not incur sin (Jhunjhunwala, 1974, p. 225).”

In the present post-modern world where everything goes, where the ego is huge and everywhere, where life is fragmented and aimless, and organised pathologically, organised on commercial values, this means that, eventually, the aspirant for individuation must stand against and struggle with collective standards and conditions. As Christ of the Book of Revelation 15:16 is reported to have said: “So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.” In other words, the individuation process requires an intensely involved life, a kind of Forest Gump type life, only with a passion for the divine life and growing discernment. We can be reminded here of the fact that it is the fool, Parsifal, in the Grail legend who finds the Grail, or the dumb brother in Fairy Tales who finds the path. It is the innocent Psyche, beautiful but rejected by her envious sisters, who finds Eros or love. Norms and ways of doing things and living that go against one’s more natural and instinctive way, including “political correctness”, are obstacles to individuation. At the same time, finding one’s vocation means nothing less than following the voice of the Self. It means being guided by a superior will.

In the final analysis, this means becoming an instrument of God (quoted in Edinger, 1984, p. 85). As Jung put it, "As soon as a more honest and more complete consciousness beyond the collective level has been established, man is no more an end to himself but becomes an instrument of God, and this is really so." This involves not only relating to a superior will or the masculine principle, but also accepting the feminine principle and its upward potential for being spiritualised. Here I am referring to Gnostic speculation regarding a hierarchy from Eve to Helen to Mary to Sophia. Likewise, in India, there is a hierarchy in nature, with the Apara Prakriti being lower and apparently mechanical, while Para Prakriti refers to a divinised nature.

Here is a dream of a contemporary woman which nicely illustrates this aspect of the individuation process:

I am visiting my friend X at his parent's place. They have a pleasant although common looking house with a beautiful view onto the ocean. I am with X's mother and another woman, first inside the house and then outside with the other woman in the garden. There is a black ladder there and the woman tells me that it is Jacob's ladder. X's father is upstairs, but I don't want to see him because I think he is a grump.

X is there with his two brothers, one of whom is a lawyer. Later X and the lawyer brother seem to be discussing something, even arguing. Meanwhile I am feeling lost and frustrated and want X to come and help me out. But he doesn't come. I look for him and find him up in the bedroom where there are two beds. X is asleep in one of them and his lawyer brother in another. They are dressed in soldier's fatigues and each has a dog tag around the neck. They also have short military haircuts. The other woman and I decide to wake them up. I am angry at X for not helping me. We throw water on them and, then do it again, but to no avail. There is an earthenware jar full of prima materia (shit) there. I break it with a stick.

The dream emphasises the spiritualization of nature and the need to become conscious of a higher will and spiritual discernment. Jacob's ladder symbolizes a connecting link between above and below. The dreamer shows some resistance to coming to terms with the demands of a superior masculine principle. For instance, she has, an unfavourable image of X's father and won't venture to see him. She also expects her animus X to help her out of her frustrating circumstances instead of her ego being actively involved in the process.

The fact that X's brother in the dream is a lawyer suggests his relationship to justice and the [inner] law of life. The fact that X and his brother eventually look like soldiers, reminds one of Aijuna of the Gita, who is a warrior destined to serve the Divine will. One of the great messages of the Gita is the need to seek and follow one's own Swadharma or inner law. Presumably X and his brother in the dream are dreaming about what might be involved. As soldiers they are involved in an inner war of opposites that need reconciliation.

The fact that they were arguing suggests that their own views need to be brought into harmony. Presumably the lawyer brother is aware, in general terms, of the nature of the [inner] law of being, while X, who is closer to the dreamer, is conscious of his own nature. The fact that they have short military haircuts indicates the need for a sacrifice of each of their positions to a superior will. As animus figures they will potentially lead the actual dreamer to her own realizations regarding her [inner] law.

The breaking of the earthenware jar with a stick indicates that the dreamer is beginning to actively participate in the process. It reminds one of the Luria Kabala where the individual is eventually required to put back the shards of the vessel again, for the ego to actively participate in assisting God in the redemptive process. In personal terms, it involves learning how to follow a superior will. Both the prima materia and the broken vessel suggest that, to begin with, there is a sense of fragmentation and chaos in one's life. According to alchemical understanding, however, the prima materia contains the gold of truth. The dreamer's frustration and anger are indicative of her emotional involvement and felt-realization that a superior is directly affecting her personal will. As Jung put it, a greater Will than [her] own is crossing [her] path.

#### The Individuation Process and Alchemy

What I have just described is individuation in the first part. There is a second important aspect of the individuation process which, however, involves a more full integration of the feminine and its in-depth transformation. Here we have what can be referred to as Individuation as alchemy. The question of vocation and submission to a higher will involves entanglement in life and ethical deliberation, an approach beautifully articulated in the Hindu Scriptures of the Bhagvaad Gita. Meanwhile, the in-depth transformation of nature and alchemy has decided kinship with Tantra, with its ritual practices designed to harness and spiritualize feminine energy.

In Jung's approach, it involves working with dreams and doing some form of Active Imagination, which is an actively engaged meditative procedure. Whereas the male principle is connected to will, meaning discernment and understanding, and delegates a witness consciousness or Purusha behind life, the feminine refers to consciousness-force or intelligent nature and the energy aspect of the Self. In Hindu thought, it is Shakti, which, with Tantra, is harnessed for effective transformation.

When I was in Zurich some years ago, I had the good fortune of having a session with Marie-Louise von Franz. At the end of it I said that when I got back to Canada I was going to study Schopenhauer, Kant and Nietzsche and so on. You can read in Jung's writings how they influenced him, especially Kant and his position on the subjective nature of the psyche and the epistemological limits of knowledge. But von Franz told me that Jung's true spiritual ancestors are the alchemists. Now, after many years involvement with Jung, I know that she was absolutely right. The depth transformation, which his process of individuation eventually demands, is alchemical.

Although alchemy all but died out in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the alchemists were seekers with a tradition that dates back to ancient Egypt. According to Mircea Eliade there is even a connection to early blacksmiths and shamanism. The psyche for the alchemists was projected into matter, not the metaphysical sky, like with the Gnostics and New Age, but matter. In most cases they failed to

realize the spiritual significance of what they were doing, although some did. Thanks to Jung's voluminous writings on the subject, we can now understand the significance. In fact, people dreams today can sometimes be understood through amplification with alchemical symbolism.

The upshot of the alchemical aspect of the individuation process is the need to fully integrate the chthonic feminine and what the alchemists referred to as the *filius philosophorum* or the son of the philosopher, the spirit of matter. As the chthonic feminine complements the celestial Mary, the son of the philosopher comments the figure of an all light, all good Christ. You might say that the son of the philosopher is a redeemed Lucifer figure. Lucifer was once the most beautiful angel and God's right hand man. He separated himself from God in an act of hubris and became "prince of this world. His redemption comes by his being willingly connected to the Self. This means that the shadow would be consciously in service to the Divine, which is to say, Lucifer's strength and power of realization becomes consecrated to the Self.

One woman dreamed that a church in downtown Victoria now contains [almost completely naked] statues of Aphrodite and that she could go there for coffee. Another dreamed that the belly Goddess Baubo jumped up and down on her own trampoline in front of a sorrowful Christ on a cross, bringing laughter to everyone including Christ himself. Jung reported a dream/vision that "combined the Christ image and figure of *Mercurius* into a unity" (von Franz, 1972/1975, p. 211). He



himself wrote, concerning this image, that it is “an expression of the life-spirit, the *anima mundi* or *filius macrocosmi*, the *Anthropos* which animates the whole cosmos” (quoted in von Franz, 1972/1975, p.211). This spirit,” Jung noted, “has poured himself out into everything even into inorganic matter, he is present in metal and stone.” In *Tantra* there is a similar being, known as *Guha*, the hidden God.

This realisation involves integration of a considerable amount of the dark side of the Self. This opens up the question of evil and the collective shadow, which unfortunately I don't have time to go into this evening. Suffice it to say that coming to terms with the dark side of God is absolutely essential in order for experience of the Self to have any effective power in life. This is only made possible by the descent of a spiritual light.

It goes without saying that there is a need to be mindful here. The danger is always that in the process one can identify with evil and become evil. There are movies and music today, where that does seem to be encouraged, for instance *Natural Born Killers*. Whatever may have been the producer's intent, in my opinion, there is no transformative catharsis in the story itself nor elicited from the audience. This requires a genuine emotional purgation and cleansing. The killers, a Bonnie and Clyde type team, kill wantonly until the very end when they are suddenly and “miraculously” depicted as having become as bourgeois American as apple pie.

In order to illustrate the alchemical nature of the individuation process, here is a dream by a contemporary Canadian woman:

I am on a beach beside the ocean. It is dark. I am with my male friend X. There is a native man there and beside him on the beach a moon mask [exhibit]. It is white, black, green and red although it is predominantly green. There is also a blue wooden horse, which had been broken into pieces. X recites '1, 2, 3, 4' as a puzzle that I have to solve].

The traditional native culture in North America acts as a kind of alchemical compensation for mainline cultural values. The lunar nature of the mask indicates, amongst other things, connection to the spiritual mind and wholeness. The alchemists held the colour green in high regard, calling it the 'blessed greenness' which they connected with the Holy Spirit and the spirit in nature. The recitation of the numbers '1, 2, 3, 4' can be amplified by referring to the alchemical axiom of Maria, which the dreamer was unacquainted with in real life. Alchemical literature is full of allusions to the following enigmatic statement attributed to a legendary early alchemist, Maria Prophetissa: "Out of one comes the two, out of two the three and out of three comes the one as the four."

That the one is also the four is of special significance. This refers to the fact that the realization of the chthonic spirit involves both an in-depth mutation of the chthonic feminine and the active expression of the divine will in a spiritually transformed life. Even if this is a distant goal and a difficult attainment, at least we can acknowledge what is actually involved in the process and allow the psyche to move in that direction.

In fact, Jung's individuation process can be characterized as a psychology of the three and four. Three symbolically refers to both dynamic process and insight into actual life situations and four symbolizes effective realization of the Self in life. The broken wooden horse in the dream reminds one of the Luria Cabala and the need to put back together the shards of a broken vessel. In some ways the blue wooden horse is a more apt symbol for what is involved, as it represents the spiritual (blue) energy portion of the Godhead and is, thereby, not only directly connected to the divine feminine, but involves one's active nature. It involves one's active nature whether it be expressed in an extroverted fashion or harnessed in a more introverted way as a concentration of energy, a tapas or askesis, in some form of meditative exercise. Whether vessel or horse, there is a need for individuals to participate in the redemption of the shadow side of God, which is the meaning of the requirement to put the shattered pieces back together again.

Indeed, Jung often insisted that God needs humankind to co-participate in the work of redemption, which we do by seriously taking up the task of conscious individuation. Today, especially, God needs individuals to help in the resuscitation and transformation of the feminine, that is to say, He needs us to help the Divine Mother in Her labour for world transformation. This requires each of us individually to painstakingly put back together the shards of the vessel or wooden horse, that is, to aim at the re-organization of our life, including shadow

qualities around the Self. This is very different from the popular Christian attitude of saving others while one's own life is scattered and without a centre.

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Firstly, there is a need for a broad and generous worldview that becomes refined and deepened through life experience. Secondly, there is a need to acknowledge the existence of a superior will along with a search for vocation, that is, an individual path of individuation lived in the daily round of life. Then, thirdly, there is the need for an extensive in-depth transformation of nature, with the goal of realizing the chthonic spirit, and the dynamic aspect of the Self. Fourthly, there is the way itself, which involves both 1) tending the fires of the alchemical furnace, that is attending to one's dreams and doing meditative exercises such as active imagination, of which art can be one form, and 2) a fully engaged active life, ethically lived. There is, that is to say, a need to be an artist in the privacy of one's meditative chamber and a warrior in life. This involves both an aspiration for a higher light and a descent of that light to illuminate the darkness within.

EXHIBIT



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