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Author: David Olsen

Chapter Quote: “Life has its own hidden forces which you can only discover by living,” – Soren Kierkegaard

Life is a gift – A mysterious gift ...

In what is now modern-day Iraq, an epic poem was written in 2000 B.C. by Gilgamesh king of Uruk. The poem is considered one of the first great works of literature.¹

In the poem Gilgamesh laments the death of his friend Enkidu. *“Mortality reached him first and I am left this week to weep and wail for his shriveling corpse which scares me. Won’t I soon be like him, stone cold and dead, for all days to come?”*

In his existential despair, Gilgamesh sets out on a quest. He desires to unearth the meaning of life and death, thus unraveling the mystery of his own mortality. He desires not so much deep mystical knowledge, but to find the simple meaning and purpose to his life.

He decides to seek an audience with Utnapishtim, the god who holds the secret of eternal life. The journey is physically, psychologically, and spiritually difficult. He climbs great mountains in cold and darkness. He endures poisonous scorpions and other dangers. Then he meets Urshanabi a ferryman and together they cross the sea on a raft where they endure additional challenges.

Upon meeting the god Utnapishtim, Gilgamesh collapses from exhaustion. When he awakes Utnapishtim compliments Gilgamesh on his fortitude displayed during his quest for truth, knowledge, and meaning.

Gilgamesh, you labored much to come here.

How can I reward you for traveling back?

May I share a special secret, one that the gods alone do know?

There is a plant that hides somewhere among the rocks that thirsts and thrusts itself deep in the earth, with thistles that sting.

That plant contains eternal life for you.

Gilgamesh travels to the place and dives into the cold waters. He finds the plant and it stings him, but he brings it to the surface. He resolves to bring this plant containing eternal life back to his kingdom where he will give it to “aged men as food” and “eat it and to be made forever young.” But on his journey home while Gilgamesh swims in a pool of water a snake steals the plant dashing his hopes for immortality. In despair, Gilgamesh watches the snake grow young.

As the poem concludes Gilgamesh returns to his kingdom. Arriving on the horizon, he looks upon his city in the distance with new eyes. The journey has changed him. The walls and towers and gates of the city hold a new, special significance for him. Through this journey of personal discovery, he now understands that death is inescapable, an essential part of life – and that the prospect of death should tincture our passing moments here with

¹ The Epic of Gilgamesh is an epic poem from ancient Mesopotamia. Dating from the Third Dynasty of Ur (circa 2100 BC), it is often regarded as the first great work of literature.

sweetness as they are never to return and we should enjoy them. The message of the poem: the most basic human need is to live authentically, true to ourselves, in our present state.

The Mystery of Your Being

In shadow, we live our lives – mysteries to be revealed to ourselves of who we are and from whence we came.

Insert condensed big bang/evolution

Into this world we arrive helpless infants. Then, through experience of unfolding years, we come into our own, passing from one period of life into the next – looking back over our shoulder as it were at each passage never to return to that time. Moving into the next phase you sense the changes that have passed through you. You are not the same person you once were. You feel the tug of bittersweet as well as anticipatory emotion in these moments – surveying your empty dorm room as you sit next to your suitcases in the quiet waiting for graduation ceremony; a bride walking down the aisle; or graveside of your husband or wife as you prepare to enter the final period of your life alone.

“All the world’s a stage,” penned Shakespeare (1564-1616). “And all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages.”

Shakespeare identified seven stages of life where we make an entrance, spend time on that stage, and then exit stage right – and each new stage an opportunity for growth and experience.

Stage 1: Helpless infant “Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms.”

Stage 2: Schoolboy “With his satchel and shining morning face.”

Stage 3: Lover “Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad made to his mistress’ eyebrow.

Stage 4: Soldier “Full of strange oaths, jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel.”

Stage 5: Justice “Full of wise saws and modern instances.”

Stage 6: Old Age “With spectacles on nose and pouch on side.”

Stage 7: Second Childishness “Mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.”

Through these seven stages, we live. And so much passes before your eyes, minute by minute disappearing into moments and memories, day by day vanishing with each setting sun, year after year rolling along like green hills of spring and then time passing the scorch of summer suns weathers the hills and fields, fall slipping into winter cold. Looking back, decade after decade form monuments of your life that linger. Looking forward, those monuments stretch on to the cemetery where you rest quietly and serenely under venerable boughs of oaks and maples, the only movement their mighty branches in soft currents of winds and breezes.

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, Old Time is still a-flying; And this same flower that smiles today Tomorrow will be dying,” wrote poet English poet Robert Herrick (1591-1633). The French poet Anatole France (1844-1924) reminds us “All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another.”

Each of us “plays many parts” as actors on stages not entirely of our making upon which we find ourselves – developing powers of life, gaining new insights and experiences. Psychologist Erich Fromm (1900-1980) instructs, “Who will tell whether one happy moment of love or the joy of breathing or walking on a bright morning and smelling the fresh air, is not worth all the suffering and effort which life implies.”

Within what Socrates (470-390 BCE) called our “prison house” referring to our bodies and minds, we are free to act – somewhat free. In life we act within the context of forces working upon us – proclivities, predispositions, desires, yearnings, culture, thought patterns, heredity, etc. – the things shape us. Then adding an additional layer, on the stages of life we also must “play our parts” among the other actors and constant scene changes – truly improvisational theater as we bump up against each other in wills and egos.

So, nature or nurture? Or a little of both? Or a synergistic relationship – nature affecting nurturing; nurturing affecting our natures?

Modern psychology teaches two main forces are at work upon us that shape personality: biology (nature) and environment (nurture). Psychologist Allen Bergin (1934-) writes, “The more enlightened we become about the shaping forces around us and inside us, the freer we become.”² To Bergin’s point, we are not guaranteed absolute freedom in life. We encounter problems, stressors, injustices, contradictions, paradoxes and more.³ And many of these come about as a result of the many biological, social, mental, and other forces working upon us.

Therefore, given this scenario, living day to day in the internal and external environments we inhabit, how much freedom of thought, and freedom of action, do we have?

My point: We are not entirely free in this world. Yet, we are free, in our quiet moments, to search and grope for the meaning of our minutes, days, years, and decades – to who we are – never quite reaching the summit of understanding. (There is always something more just beyond the horizon. If you haven’t discovered that, you will.) But in our quiet moments, in our freedom there, we can resolve to know ourselves and be better and do better – which makes all the difference in our lives. This striving can be an exhausting and frustrating climb at times, but well worth the ascent. The views and vistas from the mountaintops of life are breathtaking.

The Greeks knew something of this, inscribing on the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi the words “know thyself.” Lord Byron (1788-1824), the English romantic poet mused, “let me but be taught the mystery of my being.” And on this theme the poet John Keats (1795-1821) penned the lines, “We are straining at particles of light in the midst of great darkness.”

Yes, in life we see through a glass darkly. But life has a way of removing the scales from our eyes so we can see the unfolding parts of ourselves. As Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) pointed out, “Life has its own hidden forces which you can only discover by living.”

To find meaning in life and beyond, in spiritual quests we see the Pharaohs of Egypt building cavernous pyramids to entomb themselves, and devising elaborate means of navigating through the stars in the afterlife – even burying their servants alive (now that’s commitment) with them to help the Pharaohs on their mystical journeys. Qin Shi Huang, first Emperor of China, commissioned the Terracotta Warriors and Horses. The purpose of these replicas

² Allen E. Bergin, PhD, *Eternal Values & Personal Growth*, p. 6.

³ Allen E. Bergin, PhD, *Eternal Values & Personal Growth*, Introduction, p. ix.

of Huang's real-life army was to protect Emperor Huang in his journey through his afterlife. (His soldiers got off easy.)

Stonehenge is believed to be a place of pilgrimage and burial ground dating to as early as 3,000 BC. Some archeologist believe the massive pillars were aligned perfectly for astrological gazing into the night sky for these people to take their bearings on the universe. In our day, we do the same. We spend billions of dollars exploring the tiniest parts of antimatter and build better and better telescopes to peer to the farthest reaches of the galaxy searching for distant signs of life. All in search to discover who we are.

The psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961) said that "In every adult there lurks a child – an eternal child, something that is always becoming, is never completed, and calls for unceasing care, attention, and education."⁴ And echoing Kierkegaard's sentiment above of life's hidden forces discovered by living, Jung said the essential thing is the life of individual, "... [t]his alone makes history, here alone do the great transformations take place, and the whole future, the whole history of the world, ultimately springs as a gigantic summation from these hidden source in individuals."

You are that important!

Therefore, what is the mystery of your being and what hidden forces lie within you waiting to be discovered?

Soul of Man or Ghost in the Machine: Rise of Scientific Materialism

From early primitive man through the Greco-Roman world and into the Middle Ages it was widely believed that the soul of man was a spiritual force interior to the body rising from the creative will of God. The soul was the life-force, an objective reality. As a living material substance, it was the prime mover of a person's being assuming spatial and corporeal form. And after death, the soul was timeless and hence immortal.

Beginning with primitive man, because all living humans and animals breathed, the soul was also considered the "breath of life" – God Himself blowing his breath into the dust of the earth to create Adam. And because a human body produces heat, the soul was believed to be fire or flame.

Given the conception of the soul as a ghost-like presence, ancient civilizations believed in a side-by-side, two-world realm where souls went to reside once death had come upon them. (Many moderns believe this today) One world was the physical, material realm that you and I occupy now – the reality we perceive through the five senses. The other realm was an intangible, immaterial spirit world where the dead resided. In ancient cultures, Shaman, religious ceremonies, rites of passage, etc. were centered in this immaterial spirit realm. From this mysterious realm the Shaman or priests could access religious and spiritual knowledge not present in the conscious, everyday world. This high and divine knowledge came in the form of dreams and visions.

Poets visualize their attempts at ascertaining truth in symbols and metaphor. They bring insights and truths not discoverable through logic. To account for the contents of the soul the Romantic Poets (1800-1850) turn to the idea of reincarnation or the transmigration of souls from other previous lives. The poet William Blake was convinced that his mind was filled with "books and pictures of old, which [he] wrote and painted in ages of eternity

⁴ Carl Jung CW17: 286.

before [his] mortal life.”⁵ French novelist Marcel Proust wondered if “Everything in our life happens as though we entered upon it with a load of obligations contracted in a previous existence ... a different world, founded on kindness, scruples, sacrifice ... a world whence we emerge to be born on this earth, before returning thither.”⁶

Henry Vaughn in his poem, *The Retreate*, recalls “Happy those early days! When I Shin’d in my angel-infancy. Before I understood this place. Appointed for my second race.” Samuel Coleridge peering down on his infant son wrote “we liv’d, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore?” And William Wordsworth’s “Immortality Ode” states “Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting: The soul that rises with us, our life’s star, Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar.”

But by the end of the nineteenth century, given the prevailing philosophical and scientific materialism of the day – that everything arises from material causes – a “psychology without the soul” became popular. What anciently was called soul or spirit became psyche (the totality of elements forming the mind) to the scientifically minded.

Psyche was a paradoxical being. It was invisible and incorporeal. Yet, it was a real thing of which nature can attest producing perceptions of reality and experience. But unlike the material soul, the psyche occupied no space. Therefore, there was no ghost in the machine.

At this time, everything spiritual became illusion from the naturalistic standpoint. Mind was an epiphenomenon of matter – the physics of matter – thoughts and perceptions the result of biochemical processes firing at lightning speeds across neural networks. Man had no soul, but instead inside his skull resided a mental framework of the brain and the interplay of electrons.

Moving forward to our day, science has advanced light years from what the 19th century understood about the mind and consciousness. Today, neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, and neural modelling conclude that most of our thought is unconscious, not in the Freudian sense of being repressed, but in the sense that it operates beneath the level of cognitive awareness, inaccessible to consciousness and operating too quickly to be focused on.

However, science continues to be perplexed by the deep connections between psychic happenings and the physiological structures of the brain. Research continues on the degree to which psychic events arise from physical elements of the brain and matter, and which psychic events arise from the personality or spiritual nature of the individual.

For example, is it just as fantastic to assume that brain cells manufacture thoughts as it is to assume an invisible soul is the life force of the body? Can biochemical reactions produce something as complex as human consciousness – with its attendant emotions, passions, dreams, aspirations, intellect, etc., as a person processes all the uniformity and complexity, the beauty and passion, etc. of human experience? Is the biochemical interplay in gray matter of electrons what produced Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* or Shakespeare’s 39 plays and 154 sonnets?

Or, as this chapter points out, are the psychoanalyst correct that there are depths upon depths interior to ourselves that we can draw upon that at times rise into consciousness from the unconscious as a beautiful lotus flower emerges from the dark, rich soil – as Jung pointed out?

⁵ Alexander Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake*, Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880), 150.

⁶ Marcel Proust, in Gabriel Marcel, 1963, p. 8.

Man's Mental States

Despite what you may think, it is an undeniable scientific fact that you are not in full and complete control of yourself or your mind. You may believe you are the master in your own house, but truthfully you only flatter yourself.

Instead, as you look out upon the world at any given moment you stand as it were in a “stream of consciousness” – to borrow a phrase coined by psychologist and philosopher William James (1842-1910). In this stream are rapid fire fragments of images, ideas, emotions, etc. that flow through your mind. “I’m hungry, look at the bird, I should do my homework, I wonder what’s on tv, etc., etc., etc.”

As you stand in the stream of your thoughts so to speak, occasionally you catch hold of something momentarily. It flashes iridescent in the sunlight, like a fly fisherman watching a brown break above the surface. You dwell on the thought giving it meaning, shape, and importance. But then in an instant a new thought catches your attention. You bend down as it were to the stream and release the thought – as a fly fisherman lays the brown back into the stream and it disappears into the dark current.

In reality, here’s what’s going on in your consciousness – the front part of your mind where you entertain thought. Without thinking, thoughts move in and out of your mind with lightning fast precision. If you do not like what is presented on the stage of your mind, by force of will that thought is banished. But once concentration is broken only seconds later, the same thought may return or a new thought appears on the stage and plays out its drama.

But that’s just the nature of reality – the constant change and flux we live in. Your mind is only attempting to process life as it unfolds all around you in all its possibilities. Similar to James’ stream of consciousness, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535 BC - 475 BC), the first doctor of the soul, understood the world to be a place of constant change where nothing remains fixed – everything in flux and constantly being transformed all around us. (We just don’t have the mental faculties to perceive it all.) Heraclitus could see that we inhabit a colorful, moving world where life is pulsating and buzzing all around us – changing second by second.

And fire, for Heraclitus, was the perfect symbol to describe reality – a world in constant, churning, living, thriving, and even dying, processes. “It throws apart and then brings together again; it advances and retires. Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.”

Heraclitus identified fire with God, for him the source of all becoming. And in this relation to God Heraclitus thought it impossible to ascertain a person’s limits or depths. “You could not discover the limits of the soul,” said Heraclitus “even if you traveled by every path in order to do so; such is the depth of its meaning.”

Reflect on how your mind works. As you go about your day you experience an unbounded connectedness to the world – and the structure of the reality of objects, relationships, phenomenon, etc. – perceived through consciousness as well as when unconscious contents rise to the surface. Then unexpectedly, and out of your control, you wander into daydreamy states. Fantasies frolic through your mind where you play the hero. Or emotions from injustices you’ve suffered rise into your mind and dramas play out were you are vindicated in a thousand different ways. Then you snap back to consciousness and the task at hand. Then, all of a sudden again out of your control,

particular sad or happy memories present themselves on the stage of your mind, replaying various scenes of your life – each retelling colored by your current mood and mental state.

Going deeper, under the influence of repressed or unconscious content from somewhere in your mind, out of nowhere emotions arise within you. You try to make sense and even suppress these feelings only to have them resurface now and again, influencing your mood for the day. Or you make slips of the tongue and unconsciously betray your most closely guarded secrets – which are sometimes unknown even to you.

In sleep things get even stranger. You dream from the fantastical to the mundane. Outside your waking control, peculiar dreams come and go in the night, leaving you in the morning with a residue of images and feelings, and confused at the odd dramas that unfolded – many of which you are not even aware. Paul McCartney remembers waking up one morning and the melody of Yesterday was running through his mind. Many songwriters report this phenomenon. As a writer, I often wake up with clarity on how to outline an essay or part of a novel I've been working on the night before.

All of this begs the question. In life, in our stream of consciousness, as we experience this constant flux of change, why are certain thoughts, images, scenarios, etc. thrust upon you? Why do certain contents interest you more than others? What meanings do you attach to certain things and why these meanings? And what does all this say about you and who we really are?

All this a key, perhaps, to helping you discover the mystery of your being.

The Deep Reservoir Within: The Unconscious Within

Another source to discovering the mystery of your being is the unconscious contents of your psyche. According to the psychoanalysts much of the meaning and emotion that rises into your consciousness comes from the stirring of a deep mythic reservoir of unconscious content from somewhere inside you – content not entirely of your making or under your control that plays a significant role in shaping your life and destiny.

Jung wrote that the contents of the unconscious are like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air. If you should see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them. He also likened the process to how unconscious contents rise to influence your thoughts, impressions, intuitions, emotions, etc. as “lotus growing up from the dark depths.”⁷

Jung and Sigmund Freud, (1856-1939) and other psychoanalysts from the 20th century, were not the first to recognize this phenomenon. Kant (1724-1804) and Leibnitz (1646-1716) both postulated an unconscious psychic activity arising in the mind. Nietzsche (1844-1900), Schopenhauer (1788-1860), von Hartmann (1842-1906), and von Schelling (1775-1854) all inserted the unconscious into the psychological debates in their days. Even Shakespeare indicates inherent conflict between the conscious and the unknown aspects of his character's mental processes such as in Hamlet and King Lear.

⁷ Carl Jung, *Approaching the Unconscious*, In *Man and His Symbols* (1964), In CW 18: P. 37.

Jung wrote, “We know that the wildest and most moving dramas are played not in the theatre but in the hearts of ordinary men and women who pass by without exciting attention, and who betray to the world nothing of the conflicts that rage within them.”⁸

Basically, Jung and other psychoanalysts believed these dramas and conflicts within us arise from unconscious content that wells up from our unknown depths triggered by our life events. This content carries messages having a life of their own. To complicate things, these messages are not clear directives. Instead they come as vague feelings, incomplete ideas, symbolic motifs, etc. They are influencers. They take the form of yearnings, longings, interests, drives, desires, etc. and we are left to consciously discern and assign meaning. A person may fight against the content and message of the unconscious, or go along with it.

“Emotion is the chief source of the all-becoming-consciousness,” stated Jung. “There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion.”⁹ Therefore, it is our emotions, the unconscious promptings or feelings, which are mechanisms built into us that drive our expanding awareness and growth in life. It is triggered emotions that help open up in you a desire to understand yourself, and the life flowing and functioning around you. But it is always your decision on which direction to move and act.

From experiences gleaned in therapy sessions with their patients, Jung, Freud and the psychoanalysts that followed them, theorized that unconscious forces are both subjective and objective, and contain content along the polarities of the light and dark, good and evil, etc. Along these spectrums you find the dark and repugnant to the glorious light and fantastically beautiful. (Yes, all of this inside you.) And if you could probe all the depths of your unconscious you would find all sorts of irrational things as well as rational things to aid you in confronting the riddle of your existence. To the psychoanalysts, a roadmap of great importance.

Jung even believed that certain symbolic meanings and unconscious content acquire a quantum value (light/energy) and this produces transformational energy to the individual. Jung believed 90 percent of our energy, good and bad, resides in the unconscious.

Here’s how it works. As unconscious content pushes upwards, an imbalance is felt in the psyche (the totality of elements forming the mind). This takes the forms of happiness, excitement, anxiety, confusion, moodiness, fear, and even guilt. The psyche then tries to correct the imbalance through self-regulation through dreaming, fantasies presenting themselves in waking hours, and even synchronistic experiences – noticing convenient coincidences outside your control that benefit you.

So, these are personalized experiences. Jung described the unconscious as taking the role of the “other” – a part of us that influences and prepares the conscious psyche for interactions with life. “He [the other of the unconscious] speaks to us in dreams and tells us how differently he sees us from how we see ourselves. When, therefore, we find ourselves in a difficult situation, to which there is no solution, he [the other] can sometimes kindle a light that radically alters our attitude, the very attitude that led us into the difficult situation.”¹⁰ Jung explain further

⁸ Carl Jung, *New Paths in Psychology* (1912). In *CW 7: Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. P.425.

⁹ Carl Jung, *Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype*, 1938.

¹⁰ Carl Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, 1958.

that "... the other ... has no knowable boundaries, encompasses you on all sides, is fathomless as the abysses of the earth, and is as vast as the sky."

Collective Unconscious

Going beyond our personal unconscious is something Jung called the "collective unconscious" which is shared among humanity and contains all patterns of life and behaviors inherited from ancestors. In theory, every child subliminally inherits this system to help them adapt to life. In Jung's view, every child comes equipped with an indeterminable number of subliminal perceptions, an immense fund of accumulated inheritance left by one generation after another. And all of this becomes part of the personalized personal unconscious.

"We might call the unconscious a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death, and, from having at his command a human experience of one or two million years, almost immortal," wrote Jung.

"If such a being existed, he would be exalted above all temporal change; the present would mean neither more nor less to him than any year in the one hundredth century before Christ; he would be a dreamer of age-old dreams and, owing to his immeasurable experience, he would be an incomparable prognosticator. He would have lived countless times over the life of the individual, of the family, tribe, and people, and he would possess the living sense of the rhythm of growth, flowering, and decay.

"And this being inside us, the collective unconscious spills out in our dreams.

"The collective unconscious, moreover, seems not to be a person, but something like an unceasing stream or perhaps an ocean of images and figures which drift into consciousness in our dreams or in abnormal states of mind."¹¹

Dreams

Dreams are also inextricably connected to the unconscious and collective unconscious. They are a delivery system of sorts of unconscious content. For Jung, dreams are a specific expression, and impartial, spontaneous product of the psyche – all outside the control of the will. "They are pure nature; they show us the unvarnished, natural truth, and are therefore fitted, as nothing else is, to give us back an attitude that accords with our basic human nature when our consciousness has strayed too far from its foundations and run into an impasse," said Jung.¹²

At another time Jung said, "Dreams may contain ineluctable truths, philosophical pronouncements, illusions, wild fantasies, memories, plans, anticipations, irrational experiences, even telepathic visions, and heaven knows what besides."¹³

Freud took an opposite view. He believed dreams are simply wish-fulfillments from daily waking life (desire for power, release from a difficult situation in one's life, sexual fantasies, etc.) However, for Jung, dreams are spontaneous self-portrayals, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious. In other words, dreams

¹¹ Carl Jung, *The Basic Postulates of Analytical Psychology*.

¹² Carl Jung, *The Meaning of Psychology for Modern Man* (1933). In *CW 10: Civilization in Transition*. P. 317.

¹³ Carl Jung, *The Practical Use of Dream Analysis* (1934). In *CW 16: The Practice of Psychotherapy*. P. 317.

are hidden doors in the secret recesses of the soul, “opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was any ego consciousness.”

For Jung, in dreams we are the universal, eternal woman or man dwelling in the darkness of the depths of the profound realities and meaning of existence. “It is from these all-uniting depths that the dream arises, be it never so childish, grotesque, and immoral.”¹⁴

Dreams are a part of us, and, therefore of nature. “Nature is often obscure or impenetrable, but she is not, like man, deceitful. We must therefore take it that the dream is just what it pretends to be, neither more nor less. If it shows something in a negative light, there is no reason for assuming that it is meant positively.”¹⁵

You may be wondering about your own dreams. Jung also said, not all dreams are of equal importance. “Little dreams are the nightly fragments of fantasy coming from the subjective and personal sphere, and their meaning is limited to the affairs of everyday ... because their validity extends no further than the day-to-day fluctuations of the psychic balance. Significant dreams, on the other hand, are often remembered for a lifetime, and not infrequently prove to be the richest jewel in the treasure house of psychic experience.”¹⁶

Jung’s critics explained away dreams as the byproduct of psychic activity manifesting as conglomerations of unrelated images and story lines as the body sleep with no conscious control of mind.

He answered the charge, “No amount of skepticism and criticism has yet enabled me to regard dreams as negligible occurrences. Often enough they appear senseless, but it is obviously we who lack the sense and ingenuity to read the enigmatic message from the nocturnal realm of the psyche.

“Seeing that at least half our psychic existence is passed in that realm, and that consciousness acts upon our nightly life just as much as the unconscious overshadows our daily life, it would seem all the more incumbent on medical psychology to sharpen its senses by a systematic study of dreams.”¹⁷

Nature’s Intention

So, what is nature’s (or God’s if you like) intention of creating man to live and die in such a reality where he is a mystery to himself, where he is not entirely free with forces he must react to ensure his survival, and where he can sense something great and grand on the summit before him – the infinitude of life – new horizons of discovery always stretching out before him again and again?

And if Jung and the psychoanalysts are right – why would nature (or God if you like) create man with a mind with a built-in mythic reservoir of limitless unconscious content of both light and darkness, good and evil, symbol and reality, stretching back into the mists of time from the collective unconscious and projecting out into a future full of possibilities, and all of this not of his making thrusting indiscernible messages upon him from time to time all out of your conscious control?

¹⁴ Carl Jung, *The Meaning of Psychology for Modern Man* (1933). In *CW 10: Civilization in Transition*, pg. 304.

¹⁵ Carl Jung, *On the Psychology of the Unconscious* (1953). In *CW 7: Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, pg. 162.

¹⁶ Carl Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 1960.

¹⁷ Carl Jung, *The Practical Use of Dream Analysis* (1934). In *CW 16: The Practice of Psychotherapy*. P. 325.

Man is truly a remarkable fleshy machine, capable on the conscious level of scaling great heights of imagination, creativity, and innovation. Consider a Michael Angelo, one of the greatest artists of all time. Or a Stephen Hawkins – formulating 3-dimensional physical structures of possible universes in his mind. (Well, some of us at least scale great heights. But have we really pushed and developed ourselves to our full potential?) Both men ventured far into the infinitude of life.

“A man open to life stands upon a peak, or at the very edge of the world, the abyss of the future before him, above him the heavens, and below him the whole of mankind with a history that disappears in primeval mists ... Every step forward means tearing oneself loose from the maternal womb of unconsciousness in which the mass of men dwells,” said Jung.

Like Adam rising from the dust and finding himself in a strange garden with a beautiful woman by his side, we too find ourselves alive, conscious, able to think and feel and act in a dynamic universe occupied by others – a universe with so many possibilities unfolding all around us as Heraclitus pointed out, yet barely aware of it all.

Even as children we sense a rough outline of the infinitude of life all around us. The possibility for extreme happiness and joy such as on a Christmas morning or a day at the amusement park where we think we will burst from the excitement of it. But then comes along with the awful risks of pain from more than scraped knees, rejection of the other neighborhood children of whom we crave their acceptance for some reason, perhaps real monsters under the bed, the terror of separation from parents when you get lost at the beach, and even death and the heartache a child feels as they cry trying to make sense why the family dog is not moving and then father buries it in the backyard.

As children we begin to see life for what it really is and try to build a framework for understanding. We quickly learn strategies to hide from life and “repress” that which may harm us in order to survive psychologically and emotionally. “Repression is a process that begins in early childhood under the moral influence of the environment and continues through life,” said Jung.¹⁸ Some repressions we outgrow, while others stay with us most of all our lives shutting us off from fuller experiences of life.

The poet Thomas Traherne (1636-1674) captures this beautifully in his *Centuries of Meditation*:

All appeared new, and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. My knowledge was Divine ... The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting ... The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling Angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the street, and playing, were moving jewels. I knew not that they were born or should die; the city seemed to stand in Eden.

But then Traherne describes his fall from “Eden” as he matured into later childhood shrinking back from the beauty of life repressing it.

My soul was only apt and disposed to great things; but souls to souls are like apples, one being rotten rots another. When I began to speak and go, nothing to be present to me but what was present to me in their thoughts.

¹⁸ Carl Jung, *The Personal and the Collective Unconscious*, CW 7, par. 202.

Nor was anything present to me any other way than it was so to them. The glass of imagination was the only mirror wherein anything was represented or appeared to be. All things were absent which they talked not of. So I began among my playfellows to prize a drum, a fine coat, a penny, a gilded book ... who before never dreamed of any such wealth. Goodly objects to drown all the knowledge of Heaven and Earth! As for the Heavens and Sun and Stars, they disappeared, and were no more unto me than the bare walls. So that the strange riches of man's invention quite overcame the riches of nature, being learned more laboriously and in the second place.

Cultural Anthropologist Ernest Becker (1924-1974) writes of the poem, "This splendid portrayal of the child's fall from natural perception into the artificialities of the cultural world shows man's need to fall from grace in order to grow, move about without anxiety, protect himself against the sun, stars, and heavens."¹⁹

Another observation Becker makes in his masterpiece *The Denial of Death*, written as he was dying of cancer at age 50, is that perhaps those people suffering from mental illness and neurosis may just see life for what it really is and our inevitable fate. As children these neurotic people did not develop the ability to wall off those parts of the world that bring the fear and dread upon them that those suffering from mental illness live with every day. That we will live in and feel we belong to a universe filled with awe, wonder, and majesty on an infinite scale and simultaneously a pain-filled universe where great suffering is possible, where we build a name for ourselves, a family and friendships, and yet are all fated to die and for all we know to fade away into oblivion.

For the psychoanalysts, if you were to open yourself to the infinitude, or fulness of life, internally and externally, and all that is possible for both good and evil you would go mad. If we opened ourselves to the true reality of life – the infinite potential of the human soul staring us in the face from the mirror, but also open ourselves up to the harshness of life, the potential for human misery of a holocaust or ethnic cleansing, the thought of our own death, etc. – we would shrink back and say "it tis enough, shut it off."

So, we repress much of the reality of life and smile upon the good state of our affairs blissfully unaware of the true nature of life – and fill our lives with trivial pursuits. (To refer to the film the *Matrix*, may I offer you a blue pill or red pill?) We do this to block the upsurge of vague and indecipherable messages from the unconscious designed to push us to seek out and experience and understand the infinite of which we are a part.

For the person "open to life" as Jung said above, glimpses of the mysterious depths of existence and life may break through. The more awake you are to life and its possibilities the more glimpses are afforded you – both light-filled and darkness. You really can't see them, but you can sense that they are real. You feel something deep moving through you. Of these moments, Adam Durst of the Counting Crows sings in Mrs. Potter's Lullaby, "If you haven't stared off into the distance your life is a shame."

It's difficult, if not impossible, to put these moments of insight into words. They quickly vanish. But for that moment the small flash was as if you were holding solid light. You know that something profound has passed by you. Then all of a sudden, the composition of it changes into golden sand grains that slip through your fingers. You try and put the sweet mysterious thought into words, but you fail to catch the profundity. But it does leave you with wonder. It was like you had stepped onto holy ground with being itself. But then as a reflex you surrendered to the moment of your day-to-day reality and the mystery goes extinct.

¹⁹ Ernest Becker, *Denial of Death*.

You may be saying to yourself that you've never had such an experience. But I bet you have. All I can say is that they are real and possible. You just need to step forward into the light and try to understand life. Meaning will begin to unfold for you. And with much practice it will come. The Yogis throughout India have been practicing Dhyana (meditation) for millennia to expand consciousness into realms even beyond this world. But they had to start somewhere – exactly where you will need to start.

The question at hand is are these glimpses flashes from the unconscious? Jung believed so. "Space flights are merely an escape, a fleeing away from oneself, because it is easier to go to Mars or to the moon than it is to penetrate one's own being."

By penetrating your own being through reflection and meditation, you unlock the unconscious depths inside giving you flashes of insight and intelligence into the nature of who you are, the mystery of your being, and into the light and truth all around you in this world. Messages rise to the surface that if discernible you may learn to use for your benefit to grow into your true self. And perhaps all we can do is unlock certain powers from within and try to fill the measure of our creation. From these depths can well up the source of your identity, drives, enthusiasms, inspirations, and heightened feeling for life. Then you can take control of these things to change your life if that is what you desire. In other words, there is an intelligent, fiery life force at work pulsing through you if accessed will open up to you yourself and this majestic living creation upon which you find yourself.

At the core of his or her soul, every person longs for a meaningful place in the universe that provides purpose, acceptance, and healthy-mindedness. For Jung, this is something that reason and science alone cannot give as one tries to solve the riddle of existence with facts and data. Instead, a person needs something that will take possession of him and give him meaning and purpose to push out the confusion he or she feels. Every psychic advance of man or woman, arising to a new plateau in consciousness, arises from the suffering of the soul – overcoming spiritual stagnation or emptiness.

Jung equates this with an upsurge from the unconscious that can break the spiritual stagnation and emptiness. "It is as a flourishing civilization is abandoned to invading hordes of barbarians, or fertile fields are exposed by the bursting of a dam to a raging torrent," said Jung. "We must tread the path of our conflict hoping that from the psychic depths which cast up the powers of destruction the rescuing forces will also come."

When the rescuing forces do arrive, bringing with them powers from the hidden depths and beyond the person's willpower, the person regains access to the source of healthy-mindedness and purpose beginning the cure and overcoming the spiritual stagnation. The change comes simply as a deep impression that some change should be made in outlook or circumstances. Other times it is a great rush of excitement.

They have emerged from the darkness and confusion thrust upon the person as a result of the spiritual stagnation – the unconscious offering the impetus to the feelings that something is not quite right and the unconscious also providing the solution out of the labyrinthine, or the way out of the darkness. A light now shines through the confusion.

Therefore, if you are brave, desiring to plunge deep into the meaning inside you, you need to awake and arise from the dust of your everyday existence and step into the fiery current of life – in the midst of a flowering and

expanding mystery of a world struggling against itself in opposition to fill the measure of its creation. Creation out of chaos. That is what life is all about!

Perhaps nature's (or God if you like) intention is for you to throw off the shackles of the mundane and false world you have created and step out from behind the walls of repressions you have invented as a child and beyond and now as an adult, move into the flow of life. Admit it, perhaps around the edges, in a very small degree, you are conscious of something that *is* – something of a deep wonderful mystery of life – that has taken root in the midst of your being.

Historian and philosopher Will Durant (1885-1981) has written, “‘Life has meaning,’ we feel with Browning – ‘to find its meaning is my meat and drink.’ ...we strive with the chaos about us and within; but we would believe all the while that there is something vital and significant in us, could we but decipher our own souls.”

C.S. Lewis wrote, “Ah, but we want so much more — something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words — to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves — that, though we cannot, yet these projections can, enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image.”²⁰

So perhaps nature's (or God's) intention of creating man with a mind with a built-in mythic reservoir of what seems limitless unconscious content – of both light and darkness, good and evil, symbol and reality not of your making and that is thrust upon you from time to time all out of your conscious control is all purposeful. It is the systematic process whereby you can begin to open the door and activate powerful forces from within and without that enable you to see and reach out and touch these wonderful mysteries of life and change your very being?

Is this part of the process of the Christian mystics of being born again? Or essential to the cycles of reincarnation represented in the Bhavachakra painted on the outside walls of Tibetan Buddhist temples symbolizing samsara the cycles of existence? As well as something reflected in the cycles of nature with its the four seasons of death and rebirth, the earth springing into new life and awareness as T.S. Eliot points out in the Wasteland?

April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain...

Kierkegaard, considered to be the first existentialist philosopher, believed that individuals, not their culture, society, or religion, give meaning to their lives and then live within the protective walled of version of the reality they create. But then for some, certain people, the poets, artists, writers, philosophers, inventors, etc., discover their false illusions and tear down the pretended walls they have built up and begin to live “authentically” (living

²⁰ C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, P. 16-17.

sincerely and passionately) to truth.²¹ He wrote “When the first self submits to the deeper self, they are reconciled and walk on together.”²²

Kierkegaard compares those of us just existing or standing on the brink of discovery but unable to break free to a “mirror for a life that is stuck in just going through the motions without meaning.” He defined this as the “unrepentant life.” The response to endless repetition and meaninglessness is to move, to change perspectives.²³

To fully open to life is an agonizing paradox and conflict. It is so much easier to live life in our gilded cages instead of opening ourselves up and realizing the infinitude that is life. It is a difficult awakening to learn the harsh reality that we are weak creatures, fallen mortals, humans imprisoned in fleshy bodies challenged by limitations, frailties, and weakness sown in our flesh – ultimately to go into oblivion. (No wonder Marx said religion was the opiate of the masses.) Yet, as poets, artists, writer, philosopher, etc. have pointed out, we stand at the gate of endless possibilities stretching out before us unable to complete it.

The Unconscious before Jung and Freud

Earlier we mentioned Heraclitus, the first doctor of the soul, who around 500 years before the common era believed humans possessed unfathomable depths consisting of unconscious contents that influences your conscious state. He taught inherent to man is a constant, cyclical exchange of positive and negative energy (similar to Jung’s theory of quantum energy). This conflict of opposites in the mind attempts to achieve harmony, crossing over back and forth from the unconscious to the conscious.

For example, sometimes the conscious mind will push that which is painful into the unconscious (repression). But then the matter will insert itself again into the flow of the stream of your consciousness affecting your attitude and influencing your behavior. He labeled this crossing over as *enantiodromia* – the tendency of things to run through cycles of changing into their opposites.

For Heraclitus tension of polar opposites was necessary for life – good or evil, joy or misery, light and darkness, etc. As nature dictates, the existence of both positive and negative realities is required in order for harmony to exist. Justice is the result of one thing fighting against another, which eventually produces agreement or “harmonia.”

To illustrate this Heraclitus uses the example of a bow and lyre. The strings of both the bow and lyre require tension in order to operate properly. If the strings are not tightened, an arrow could not reach its target and the lyre could not produce music. So, the tension between the unconscious and conscious produces harmony in the individual, just as tension eventually produces harmony among groups of people in society. So, in our minds, the discord we experience is the process whereby harmony is achieved. But then, as Heraclitus pointed out, harmony is broken and then through give and take harmony is re-achieved.

Jung based his “theory of compensation” on Heraclitus’ principle of opposition – that consciousness must be balanced by gaining awareness of unconscious content, and vice a versa. “Just as all energy proceeds from

²¹ Steven Crowell, “Existentialism,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, March 9, 2015.

²² Søren Kierkegaard, *Four Upbuilding Discourses*, 1844 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1844).

²³ Søren Kierkegaard, *Endless Repetition*.

opposition, so the psyche too possesses its inner polarity, this being the indispensable prerequisite for its aliveness, as Heraclitus realized long ago.”

During the Enlightenment in Europe in the 17th and 18th century the concept of the psychology of the human soul went in an opposite direction to the belief of unconscious forces rising up through a person to influence emotion and behavior. Instead, a psychology was engendered which emphasized rationality and reason of the conscious over emotions and randomness of thought. Descartes’s “I think, therefore I am” sums up the Enlightenment’s depiction of a human beings as consisting solely of conscious rational awareness.

But at this time in Germany the belief in the effects of the unconscious were rising to the surface of intellectual debate. Kant (1724-1804) spoke of immeasurable field of obscure ideas, and prior Leibnitz (1646-1716) postulated an unconscious psychic activity. And then late, the German Romantics including Carus, Schopenhauer, von Hartmann, and von Schelling reinserted the unconscious into the psychological debate – fifty years prior to the birth of Sigmund Freud (1857-1939), C.G. Jung (1875-1962) and, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900).

The ‘philosophy of nature’ founded by von Schelling (1775-1854) implied the unconscious as “the very fundament of the human being as rooted in the invisible life of the universe and therefore the true bond linking man with nature.”²⁴

Schopenhauer (1788-1860) published *The World as Will and Representation (or Idea)* in 1819 in which he regarded man as being driven by blind, internal forces of which he is barely aware. Centrally these were the instincts towards conservation and reproduction or the sexual instinct. For Schopenhauer, the will – an analogy of the unconscious – not only drives many of our thoughts which are often in conflict with our intellect (ego-consciousness), but also causes us to repel unwanted cognitions from consciousness.

Nietzsche believed the unconscious was the central source for the psyche as a whole, relativizing the centrality of Ego-consciousness. Nietzsche’s emphasis on the fact that “I” do not think thoughts, but “thoughts think me” and how “dreaming is a recreation for the brain, which by day has to satisfy the stern demands of thought imposed by a higher culture.”²⁵

Hartmann in his *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869) brought together the early ideas on the unconscious, relabeled Schopenhauer’s will the ‘unconscious’ and related it specifically to various psychological phenomena such as personality, perception, association of ideas, and the emotions as well as investigating the role of the unconscious in language, religion, history and the life of society. Hartmann also divided the unconscious into three levels. The first level was an absolute, cosmic unconscious which was the source of the other two levels: a physiological unconscious “at work in the origin, development, and evolution of living beings, including man”;²⁶ and a third, more psychological, unconscious which provides the ground for conscious mental life.

C.G. Carus (1789-1869) also distinguished three levels of the unconscious. He stated, “The key to the knowledge of the nature of the soul’s conscious life lies in the realm of the unconscious. This explains the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of getting a real comprehension of the soul’s secret ... But if this impossibility is only

²⁴ Ellenberger, 1994, p. 204.

²⁵ Nietzsche, 1878, pp. 24-27.

²⁶ Ellenberger, 1994, p. 210.

apparent, then the first task of a science of the soul is to state how the spirit of Man is able to descend into these depths.”²⁷

On Carus’ first level is the absolute and unknowable. The second level is a type of pre-conscious which influences emotional life through the body. Carus believed, a person’s face and body can reflect their personality. The third level of the unconscious corresponds to repressed material – once conscious feelings, representations, and perceptions that subsequently become unconscious. These levels are precursors of the collective unconscious. Carus also mentions characteristics of the unconscious that Jung was later to repeat.

Carus wrote that the unconscious is the source of healing for the mind and body, and it is through the unconscious that we remain in connection with the rest of the world and other individuals.

For these German thinkers the unconscious enabled direct understanding of the universe – and therefore of our “original” selves – through dreams, mystical ecstasy and poetic imagination just as mankind from the earliest times – a fact that comes together in the psychology especially of Jung and Freud.

Freud

Freud’s formulation of the concept of the unconscious arose out of his and Breuer’s work with young women suffering from hysterical symptoms – a diagnosis that was popular in Vienna, Berlin and especially Paris. At this time psychiatry was replacing the idea of organic causes for mental problems with the idea that symptoms were psychological in origin.

Through his work, Freud developed what his key patient Anna O. called the “talking cure.” Freud had tried suggestion and hypnosis. But he found that encouraging patients to say whatever came into their minds by a process of “free association” enabled him to make links backward to the source of their symptoms. Once causal links were made and understood, that is, made conscious, the symptoms went away.

This proved there was no organic cause but a cause rising from some mechanism of psychological trauma. The theory was formulated that the traumatic experience had been repressed in the unconscious because it was unbearable to the conscious mind. It was the Freudian psychoanalyst’s task to trace back, discover, and reconstruct the cause somewhat like an archaeologist or detective.

Freud wished to establish psychoanalysis as a science and combined psychological theories with materialistic biological theories. He claimed that the repression of a traumatic experience was linked to the repression of instinct – specifically the sexual instinct. From this hypothesis he developed the idea that human psychology was underpinned by the repression of our instinctual life, exclusively sexual and aggressive instincts. (A thoroughgoing naturalist, Freud did not see mankind as possessing the nature of the angels, but rather as fallen creatures given to sin and darkness)

For Freud, sexual instincts and aggression provided the psychic energy or libido (Latin for ‘desire’) for the psyche which, in its sublimated form, gave rise to human achievements ranging from artistic creativity to intellectual curiosity and scientific inventiveness. Freud then expanded his theories with the model of the ego (partly unconscious but also conscious), the id (unconscious instincts or passions) and the super-ego (unconscious sexual

²⁷ Carus, 1846 quoted in Ellenberger, 1994, p. 207.

instinct). Later in his life he developed ideas on Thanatos (the psychic drive towards inertia or death) in tension with Eros (the life preservative instinct). But this never took the place of the centrality of sexuality.

From Freud's analysis of his patients, and his naturalistic viewpoint, he viewed humanity at the core of their unconscious as dark, depraved, sexually perverse, and even entertaining criminal fantasies. However, all these deviant desires were held in check by the norms of family and society of civilized man. But under the surface of the individual lurked these foreboding desires.

Jung

According to Jung his interest in the unconscious had its roots in three sources: his discovery of the dual-nature of his own personality, his interest in psychic phenomena of his cousin, and the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche.²⁸

Since childhood, Jung was aware of what he called his #1 personality and #2 personality. The first expressed itself in his day-to-day world of friends, school, and family. His #2 personality seemed darker, secretive, and more mysterious. His #2 personality seemed to have its source elsewhere than his everyday world of living in the country and that of a minister's son in rural Switzerland. He felt that his #2 personality related more to his dreams, fears, and fantasies.

Next in his life Jung became interested in psychic phenomena from his cousin Helen Prieswerk, a medium. As he watched his cousin work, he became less convinced of her psychic 'powers' and developed the theory that while in a trance-state she channeled unconscious content from her mark – material unknown to her conscious mind. It was the only possible naturalistic explanation for Jung as Helen was personally unfamiliar with the lives of her subjects. Jung completed his doctoral dissertation on his work with Prieswerk.

While Freud worked on his theories with upper class women in Viennese, Jung worked in the Burgholzi Psychiatric Hospital treating patients suffering from psychotic illnesses. It was here that Jung began to seriously develop his insights into the psyche and ultimately a conception of the unconscious.

Prior to Jung's arrival, the director at Burgholzi, Eugene Bleuler, had come to believe psychiatric problems were not caused by organic diseases – the prevailing medical consensus of the day. Rather they were traumas buried deep within people that could be unearthed and then dealt with on a conscious level. Bleuler theorized that by assigning meanings to the utterances and symptoms of patients, psychological cures could be administered.

Jung observed from his experiences at the hospital, "... the change of character brought about by the uprush of collective forces is amazing. A gentle and reasonable being can be transformed into a maniac or a savage beast. One is always inclined to lay the blame on external circumstances, but nothing could explode in us if it had not been there. As a matter of fact, we are constantly living on the edge of a volcano, and there is, so far as we know, no way of protecting ourselves from a possible outburst that will destroy everybody within reach."

Unlike Freud, Jung, a son of a minister, took a more optimistic look on humankind, retaining his belief in God, or a higher power that existed in the universe. For Jung, people are most happy and at ease in their lives when they feel, if only momentarily, that they have a meaningful place in the universe that provides purpose, acceptance,

²⁸ See Jung's autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.

and healthy-mindedness. Jung believed this sense of purpose and healthy-mindedness is something that reason and science alone cannot provide. You cannot solve the riddle of existence with facts and data alone. Rather, meaning is felt through emotions and experiencing the world and its contents of people and relationships, the beauty of nature, as well as the grand dramas of life. For Jung, to be healthy minded a person needs something that will take possession of him and give him purpose to push out the confusion he or she feels.

But this is easier said than done. Amongst even our most sunshine-filled days, life entails hardships and trials. Through his work, Jung discovered that every psychic advance a person made, raising them to a new plateau in consciousness and meaningfulness, arises from mental or emotional suffering. (Heraclitus' tension inside a person of physis energy being exchanged between two poles.) But before there is a break in the mental suffering, or spiritual stagnation and emptiness, felt by the patient, Jung warned that opening the unconscious through treatment may lead to even more intense spiritual suffering.

"It is as a flourishing civilization is abandoned to invading hordes of barbarians, or fertile fields are exposed by the bursting of a dam to a raging torrent," said Jung. "We must tread the path of our conflict hoping that from the psychic depths which cast up the powers of destruction the rescuing forces will also come."

But when the rescuing forces do arrive, bringing with them powers from the hidden depths and beyond the person's willpower, the person is presented with the chance to regain access to the source of healthy-mindedness and purpose. According to Jung, the changes may come as a deep impression that some change should be made in outlook or circumstances. Other times it is a great rush of excitement. In the end, the patient has emerged from the darkness and confusion thrust upon them. A map out of the labyrinthine is visible. A light now shines through the confusion.

At the Burgholzi hospital Jung sought for a scientific method to establish his theories of the unconscious. He began with a word association test analyzing answers to map emotional blocks. Jung hypothesized that the blocks were evidence of complexes – his word for barriers to normal flow of contents from the unconscious. At the same time, Freud was providing experimental evidence for what he called "unconscious repressions" by requiring his patients to free associate to the first thing that came into their minds when prompted with various words and phrases.

Apart from each other, both Jung and Freud theorized that a patient's associations could lead them to a core experience, the memory of which had been blocked, or repressed, and kept from consciousness. And this was the cause of the psychological difficulty.

Restated, when your consciousness is confronted with ideas, fantasies, memories, impulses, etc. not of your liking, you repress these intruders – displacing them into a sphere of the unconscious. The more uncomfortable you feel, and hence the greater the negativity, the harder you fight to repress these unwelcomed guests. In a way, it is like amnesia where the feelings are there, but in a holding pattern.

According to Jung and Freud, to live a mentally healthy life the repressed contents must be encouraged into consciousness and dealt with. Here the patient makes peace with this new information and moves forward with new understanding. If these shadows of internal conflicts are not resolved, the daily struggles with life continues.

Expanding on this theory, Jung developed the concept of the “shadow self” that dwells in the unconscious. The shadow is man's hidden nature. “The shadow is merely somewhat inferior, primitive, unadapted, and awkward; not wholly bad. It even contains childish or primitive qualities which would in a way vitalize and embellish human existence, but - convention forbids!”²⁹

The shadow personifies everything about a person they refuse to acknowledge about themselves and is a force determined to be reckoned with. “The shadow ... is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly – for instance, inferior traits of character and other incompatible tendencies.”³⁰

The shadow is Jung’s personality #1 and personality #2 that he recognized as an adolescent – but taken to the extreme. “What drives people to war with themselves is the intuition or the knowledge that they consist of two persons in opposition to one another,”³¹

Not necessarily dark or evil in nature, the shadow contains good qualities such as creative impulses and noble instincts. Jung wrote, “To confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judgingly between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle.”³²

C.S. Lewis felt he had two personas as he experienced life. There was his external life and his internal life, which consisted of his imagination, the mystical and mythological world he indulged in his mind. As a child, Lewis’ first creative endeavor was Boxen, an imaginary world similar to India that he created with his brother Warnie. This world consisted of anthropomorphic animals that had a special language, wore clothes, had a government, and an entire flourishing society. This was only the beginning for Lewis. Throughout his life he commented on how he much rather preferred living in his internal world, opposed to the external world of conflict and compromise with other human beings playing out the dramas of their own lives. He mentioned that he was never able to fully connect with the modern world.

Jung based his “theory of compensation” between the conscious self and the shadow self on Heraclitus’ principle of opposition as discussed above. “Just as all energy proceeds from opposition, so the psyche too possesses its inner polarity, this being the indispensable prerequisite for its aliveness, as Heraclitus realized long ago.”

For Jung and Heraclitus, this is a fundamental law of life – enantiodromia or conversion into the opposite – and this makes possible the reunion of the warring halves of the personality and brings the civil war to an end.

But acceptance of the shadow-side of ourselves is difficult for us to acknowledge. “... the acceptance of the shadow-side of human nature verges on the impossible. Consider what it means to grant the right of existence to what is unreasonable, senseless, and evil in us!”

But for Jung, we must do this. We must live with every side of yourself to know who you really are. This is the struggle of psychological growth and arriving at new plateaus of consciousness and understanding. If we oppose

²⁹ Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, P. 134

³⁰ Jung, 1939, CW9, I, para. 513.

³¹ Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 1933.

³² Jung, *Good and Evil in Analytical Psychology* (1959). In CW 10. *Civilization in Transition*. P.872.

this, we are suppressing what is best in us and our daring aspirations to become as the universe is pushing us to do by thrusting us into this world of tension and opposites. For example, what would have happened if Paul had allowed himself to be talked out of his journey to Damascus? Or Martin Luther King Jr. went on to Selma?

Disagreements of Freud and Jung

In psychology, a neurosis is defined as a mild functional disorder where a person experiences some degree of anxiety, obsessional thoughts, or compulsive acts. Freud's theory of neuroses was based on the disturbances of the sexual instinct. Alfred Adler explains neurosis in terms of disturbances of the urge to power. But for Jung it was the lack of perceived meaning and purpose that lay at the root of the problem.

The criticism laid at the feet of Freud and Adler is their theories see man mostly as automaton, or unimaginative. They do not answer how mankind senses and feels there is a profound significance in life experienced by the individual. For Jung people were more complex than to be wholly driven by instincts for sex or power.

For Jung, neurosis was best handled with proper encouragement for the patient to see deeper into themselves and life. Then they could reach beyond the frontiers of the lives to new vistas. Then these new insights into the meaning of life could liberate the individual from their suffering. He coined the term "psychoneurosis" as a diagnosis of a suffering soul who has not discovered its meaning. Jung did not discount that the sexual or power instincts played a role in the dynamics of one's life, but they were not primary, only secondary phenomenon.

Parting Company

Jung (the younger man) and Freud (the venerable father figure) collaborated for several decades, enjoying a productive relationship. However, a break occurred between the two men with Jung becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Freud's dogmatic insistence on the correctness of his sexual instinct theory and belief that infantile sexuality was the sole source of psychic energy or libido. Jung, on the other hand, proposed that sexuality is not the sole source of psychic energy, but that 'libido' is a general psychic energy.

Jung reports a dream when traveling to America with Freud in 1909. The dream involved Jung descending through the layers of a house where each room he entered became progressively older in architectural style. The upper level had "a kind of salon furnished with fine old pieces in a rococo style." Below, the next room seemed from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, "The furnishings were mediaeval; the floors were of red brick." Beyond this "a beautifully vaulted room which looked exceedingly ancient. Examining the walls, I discovered layers of brick among the ordinary stone blocks, and chips of brick in the mortar. As soon as I saw this, I knew that the walls dated from Roman times." The final layer of the building was a cave, "Thick dust lay on the floor, and in the dust were scattered bones and broken pottery, like remains of a primitive culture."³³

³³ Jung, In Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 1963/1983, pp.182-183.

Jung wrote, “My dream was giving me the answer. It obviously pointed to the foundations of cultural history – a history of successive layers of consciousness. My dream thus constituted a kind of structural diagram of the human psyche; it postulated something of an altogether impersonal nature underlying that psyche.”³⁴

The dream inspired Jung to study archaeology, mythology, Gnosticism, etc. and led to the publication of *The Psychology of the Unconscious*³⁵ where Jung introduces his conceptions of the collective unconscious and how repressed contents and material often of an infantile nature derive from biographical history.

Jung’s Archetypes

So, not only is there a personal unconscious, but also a collective unconscious shared by humanity across time and cultures made up of archetypes. Jung recognized that throughout history tribes and civilizations who had no contact with each other formed similar myths, fantasy images, and rituals to explain life and death, rites of passage, give meaning to their existence, etc. These archetypes consist of images that preexist man and are eternally inherited forms. The contents include myths, legends, and fairytales arising from primordial images and motifs contained in the collective unconscious.

For Jung, archetypes are universal but not directly knowable. They express themselves in situations, symbols, and characters and grow out of man’s social, psychological, and biological being, forming the ground of being. In short, it is in a myth through archetypes that there is a meeting of our outer and inner realities.

Just as in biological evolution of the body, Jung believed that the psyche has adapted to physical events in the environment and produced this mythological material inherent in the unconscious.³⁶ Essentially, these archetypal images are deposits representing the accumulated experience of thousands of years of struggle for adaptation and existence.³⁷

Jung wrote that the great problems of life are always related to the primordial images of the collective unconscious. This archetypal content only appears in the course of your life, when personal experience is taken up in precisely these forms.³⁸ For example, if a mother is distant the deeper will be the son’s or daughter’s yearning, awakening the primordial and eternal image of the mother who embraces, protects, and nourishes.

Additionally, Jung believed that “instinct and creative impulses flow from the living fountain of the collective unconscious and these archetypes.”³⁹ They are also the source from which various forms of philosophy and religion have sprung. But as a caution, Jung warned that when these philosophical and religious ideas are systematized to bring order so they can be managed by groups of people they degenerate under the required rationalism and lose their power. When this happens, the psyche has fewer and fewer symbolic or ritual ways in which to express the original ideas.

³⁴ Jung, 1963/1983, p.185.

³⁵ Jung, 1912/1916/1952, CW 5.

³⁶ Jung, 1927, CW8, para. 331.

³⁷ Carl Jung, *Psychological Types* Ch. 5, p. 271.

³⁸ Carl Jung, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

³⁹ Jung, 1927, CW8, para. 339.

Given the concepts of inherited archetypes from the well of the collective unconscious, Jung disagreed with John Locke's idea of "tabula rasa" – that a newborn comes into the world a blank slate ready to be filled with life.

"It is in my view a great mistake to suppose that the psyche of a new-born child is a tabula rasa in the sense that there is absolutely nothing in it ... the child meets sensory stimuli coming from outside not with any aptitudes, but with specific ones ... these aptitudes can be shown to be inherited instincts and preformed patterns, the latter being the a priori and formal conditions of apperception that are based on instinct.

"Their presence gives the world of the child and the dreamer its anthropomorphic stamp. They are the archetypes, which direct all fantasy activity into its appointed paths and in this way produce, in the fantasy-images of children's dreams ... astonishing mythological parallels ... It is not, therefore, a question of inherited ideas but of inherited possibilities of ideas."⁴⁰

For example, Jung believed that every person carries within him the eternal image of woman. This is not an image of a particular woman, but a general feminine image. "This image is ... of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of the man [or woman], an imprint or "archetype" of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman – in short, an inherited system of psychic adaptation ... The same is true of the woman: she too has her inborn image of man."⁴¹

Also, Jung referred to the "anima" as the feminine aspect of the archetypal male/female duality projected in myth, philosophy and religious symbols. This duality is often represented in myth as opposed symbols such as the sun and moon. The "anima" image is active in childhood, the child projecting superhuman qualities on the mother or father.⁴²

In other words, archetypes are complexes of experience that come upon you and you feel their effects in your personal life. For example, to an adult the anima no longer comes across as a goddess. But it may be a personal misadventure, or exciting adventure. "When, for instance, a highly esteemed professor in his seventies abandons his family and runs off with a young red-headed actress, we know that the gods have claimed another victim."⁴³

Another example is the archetypal image of the wise man, the savior or redeemer, that lies buried and dormant in man's unconscious. According to Jung it is awakened whenever the times are out of joint and a human society is committed to a serious error.⁴⁴

Speaking of religious archetypes Jung referred to the unconscious as a "treasure-house of eternal images ... far more beautiful and comprehensive than immediate experience." He said, "Though the Christian view of the world has paled for many people, the symbolic treasure-rooms of the East are still full of marvels that can nourish for a long time to come the passion for show and new clothes. What is more, these images — are they Christian or Buddhist or what you will — are lovely, mysterious, and richly intuitive."⁴⁵

Below is a list of common archetypes.

⁴⁰ Carl Jung, in CW 9, Part I: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. P. 136.

⁴¹ Marriage as a Psychological Relationship" (1925) In CW 17: The Development of the Personality. P. 338.

⁴² Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype, *ibid*" par. 178.

⁴³ Carl Jung, In CW 9, Part I: The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. P. 62.

⁴⁴ Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, 1933.

⁴⁵ The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious p. 7-8.

Archetype symbols⁴⁶

- ☐ Water: Birth-death-resurrection; creation; purification and redemption; fertility and growth.
- ☐ Sea/ocean: Mother of all life; spiritual mystery; death and/or rebirth; timelessness and eternity.
- ☐ Rivers: Death and rebirth (baptism); the flowing of time into eternity; transitional phases of the life cycle.
- ☐ Sun (fire and sky are closely related): Creative energy; thinking, enlightenment, wisdom, spiritual vision.
- ☐ Rising sun: Birth, creation, enlightenment.
- ☐ Setting sun: Death.

Archetype colors⁴⁷

- ☐ Red: Blood, sacrifice, passion; disorder.
- ☐ Green: Growth, hope, fertility.
- ☐ Blue: Highly positive; secure; tranquil; spiritual purity.
- ☐ Black: Darkness, chaos, mystery, the unknown, death, wisdom, evil, melancholy.
- ☐ White: light, purity, innocence, timelessness; [negative: death, terror, supernatural]
- ☐ Yellow: enlightenment, wisdom.

Archetype examples⁴⁸

- ☐ Wise old Man: Savior, redeemer, guru, knowledge, reflection, insight, wisdom, intuition, and morality.
- ☐ Garden: Paradise, innocence, unspoiled beauty.
- ☐ Tree: Life of the cosmos; growth; proliferation; symbol of immortality; phallic symbol.
- ☐ Desert: Spiritual aridity; death; hopelessness.
- ☐ Creation: All cultures believe the Cosmos was brought into existence by some Supernatural Being (or Beings).
- ☐ Spring: Rebirth; genre/comedy.
- ☐ Summer: Life; genre/romance.
- ☐ Fall: Death/dying; genre/tragedy.
- ☐ Winter: Without life/death; genre/irony.
- ☐ The great Fish: Divine creation/life.

Situational archetypes include the following:⁴⁹

- Quest – Search for someone or a talisman which will restore fertility to a wasted land.
- Task – Save the kingdom, win the fair lady, or prove one's rightful position. The hero must perform some nearly superhuman deed. This also restores fertility to a wasted land.
- Initiation – Usually takes the form of an initiation into adult life – rite of passage

⁴⁶ Guerin, Wilfred L., et al. "Mythological and Archetypal Approaches." A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature. NY: Harper & Row, 1979: 157-161.

⁴⁷ Ibid.: 157-161.

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 157-161.

⁴⁹ Ibid.: 157-161.

- Journey – Hero searches for truth to restore fertility to the kingdom; usually he or she descends into a real or psychological hell to discover the blackest truths concerning his or her faults.
- Fall – Descent from a high to low state of being which involves a defilement or loss of innocence; often characters are expelled from a kind of paradise as a penalty.
- Death and Rebirth – Morning and spring are birth, while winter and evening are death.
- Good versus Evil – Battle between two primal forces. The future of the kingdom is often at stake. Good triumphs over evil despite great odds. But often a terrible sacrifice by the hero must be made to ensure victory.
- Unhealable Wound – This wound is either real or psychological and cannot be healed fully. The wound indicates loss of innocence. The unhealable wound often aches, especially in the presence of what caused the wound, and drives the sufferer to desperate measures.
- The Ritual – Actual ceremonies that marks the rite of passage into another state or level of society. A signpost for a character's role in society (a princess becomes a queen, a squire becomes a knight, etc.)
- Magic Weapon – Weapon symbolizes the extraordinary quality of the hero because no one else can use or wield the weapon. It is given by a mentor figure.

Symbolic archetypes include the following:⁵⁰

- Light Vs. Darkness – Light suggests hope, renewal, or intellectual illumination; darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair.
- Water vs. Desert – Water is a symbol of birth, rebirth, or cleansing. A desert is the opposite, or a place of exile. Often the desert is represented by an absence of the expected. Lack of wind or waves on the ocean, lack of rain when there is usually rain, absence of game to hunt in the wilderness, etc.
- Heaven vs. Hell – The skies and mountain tops house the gods; the bowels of the earth or pits hide evil forces.
- Innate Wisdom vs. Educated Stupidity – Instinctive wisdom versus book learned ignorance is emphasized. The hero cannot achieve their goal until he or she learns a hard lesson of life or becomes 'street-wise.'
- Haven vs. Wilderness – Places of safety contrast against dangerous wilderness.
- Supernatural Intervention – Gods intervene on the side of the hero, or act against the protagonist to provide obstacles in accomplishing his or her task.
- Fire vs. Ice – Fire represents knowledge, light, life, rebirth; ice represents ignorance, darkness, sterility, and death.

Character archetypes include the following:⁵¹

- Hero or Heroine – Some or all of the following criteria are present in the life of the hero or heroine.
 - Mother is a virgin or at least pure of heart and spirit.
 - An attempt is made to kill the pregnant mother or kill the child at an early age.

⁵⁰ Ibid.: 157-161.

⁵¹ Ibid.: 157-161.

- He or she is reared by foster parents.
 - (Male) after proving himself (usually defeating a wild beast) marries a princess, becomes king, knight, or warrior of the realm or village. (Female) possess unusual skills (often supernatural gifts) and takes on a special role in the kingdom or positions usually occupied by men in that society (spiritual leader, warrior, judge, etc.)
 - Falls from favor with the gods.
 - Becomes an outcast.
 - Upon death, body is not buried.
- Young One from Provinces – This hero is spirited away and raised by strangers. Later returns to his/her home as a stranger with new solutions to kingdom's problems.
- Initiates – The hero, who prior to their quest, must endure some training or ceremony. Initiates are usually innocent and wear white.
- Mentor Pupil Relationship – Mentors serve as teachers or counselors to initiates. The mentor acts as a role model for the protagonist, and can function as father and mother figures to initiate as well. The mentor teaches by example the skills necessary to survive the quest/task/journey.
- Parent-Child Conflict – Tension often results from separation during childhood, from an external source when the individuals meet as adults, or where the mentor often has a higher place in the affections of the hero than the natural parent.
- Hunting Group of Companions – This band of loyal companions willing to face any number of perils in order to be together or achieve a common goal.
- Loyal Retainers – Often called side-kicks, these individuals are somewhat like servants who are heroic themselves. Their duty is to protect the hero or heroine and reflect his or her nobility.
- Friendly Beast – These creatures aid or serve the hero or heroine and symbolize how nature is on the side of the hero or heroine.
- Devil Figure – This character is evil incarnate who offers worldly goods, fame, or knowledge to the protagonist in exchange for possession of the soul.
- Devil Figure with Ultimately Good Heart – Devil figure who is saved by the nobility or love of the hero.
- Scapegoat – Human or animal whose death in a public ceremony cleans the sin or evil that has visited upon a community. The death of the scapegoat often makes him or her more powerful than in life.
- Outcast – Figure banished from a social group for some crime (real or imagined) against society. The outcast usually wanders from place to place.
- Creature of Nightmare – Monster summoned from the darkest part of the human psyche to threaten the lives of the hero or heroine. Monster is a perversion of the human body.
- Woman Figure – Archetypally, male characters generally play one role at a time: the warrior, the holy man, the villain, etc. Women play very special roles in society, or they can play more than one archetypal role at a time. The following is a list of the most common female archetypes:
 - Earth Mother – Symbolic of spiritual and emotional nourishment, she is often depicted in earth colors. She is usually depicted as having large breasts and hips representing childbearing capability.
 - Temptress – Sensuous in beauty, this woman brings about the downfall of the hero by tempting him to turn away from his goal.

- Platonic Ideal – An inspiring woman for whom the protagonist has an intellectual rather than physical attraction.
- Unfaithful wife – Married woman who finds her husband dull or unattractive seeks a more virile or interesting man. Archetypally, the woman is the center of the family and is responsible for keeping it together. While the role of the father/husband (as provider and protector) can be easily replaced, the absence of the wife/mother (as nurturer and teacher) throws a family into a different kind of chaos than the loss of the male.
- Damsel in distress – The vulnerable woman must be rescued by the hero. She is often a trap by the devil figure or the temptress to ensure the unsuspecting hero.
- Star Crossed Lovers – Love affair fated to end tragically because it receives the disapproval of the society, friends, and/or family. Other times, it is a situation which separates the lovers such as a war, their respective positions in society, where they live, or untimely death.

God & Religion

Jung once remarked that the majority of his patients consisted not of believers but of those who had lost their faith. He referred to these people as the lost sheep. "I have treated many hundreds of patients ... there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook."⁵²

Jung offered the diagnosis of his patients "But what will he [doctor] do when he sees only too clearly why his patient is ill; when he sees that it arises from his having no love, but only sexuality; no faith, because he is afraid to grope in the dark; no hope, because he is disillusioned by the world and by life; and no understanding, because he has failed to read the meaning of his own existence?"⁵³

Jung, a religious man, said, "I could not say I believe. I know! I have had the experience of being gripped by something stronger than myself, something that people call God."⁵⁴ At another times Jung said, "Our whole unconscious is in an uproar from the God who wants to know and to be known."⁵⁵ And Jung wrote of natural desire to know God and things of a holy nature that builds in some people. "... if you are awake to life the heart glows, and a secret unrest gnaws at the roots of our being that yearns for the divine."⁵⁶

C.S. Lewis viewed our powers of reason as the God-given "organ of truth" and imagination as the "organ of meaning." For Lewis, imagination acted as a cosmic pointer to God.⁵⁷ As case in point, one day as an unbeliever C.S. Lewis was traveling by train and bought the book *Phantastes* by the Christian writer George MacDonald. As he read, *he reported that* a "new quality" touched him and his imagination was "baptized." He later recognized the "new quality" as "holiness." He reported of the experience that it took a while for the rest of him to catch up.⁵⁸

C.S. Lewis wrote of his experience gaining new spiritual insights, "'Look out!' we cry, 'it's *alive*.' And therefore, this is the very point at which so many draw back – I would have done so myself if I could – and proceed

⁵² Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*.

⁵³ Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

⁵⁴ Carl Jung, *The Old Wise Man*, published in *Time*, 1955.

⁵⁵ Carl Jung.

⁵⁶ C.G. Jung

⁵⁷ C.S. Lewis, *Bluspels and Flalansferes: A Semantic Nightmare*, *Rehabilitations*, 1939.

⁵⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 1955, p. 180.

no further with Christianity. An 'impersonal God' – well and good. A subjective God of beauty, truth and goodness, inside our own heads – better still. A formless life-force surging through us, a vast power which we can tap – best of all. But God Himself, alive, pulling at the other end of the cord, perhaps approaching at an infinite speed, the hunter, king, husband – that is quite another matter.”⁵⁹

The main character in the Children's novel, *Caroline Meets the Lion*, experiences a yearning curiosity as well as fear for the divine:

“But it wasn't that Caroline was afraid of the lion at all. It was a different emotion she was feeling. She only mistook it as fear. She was too young to recognize it. It was a feeling of awe and light, something alive and moving through her body below the surface of her skin. It was wonder for something great and holy, which the lion definitely was with his beautiful mane and watery blue eyes and strong, powerful body. Caroline could sense that there was something beyond this world in the lion, which only people like Caroline recognize. They recognize it because there is some of the holy light in them.

“However, to people without some of the holy light in them the lion of which Caroline desired to run, but was afraid to do so now, would only look as an ordinary, yet very handsome, fierce, and powerful lion. But to Caroline who had been touched by the holy light, she was feeling awe, which adults know as a delight in something so true and full of light and goodness that you are taken back for a moment or longer trying to understand it – for it is not of this world.

Her courage building, the holy light inside her stirring, Caroline moved out from behind the sand pillar, running towards the lion ...”

Speaking of his religious development Jung said, “Again and again, events occurred that made me out of my normal everyday life [and] also pushed into the unlimited 'God's world' ... “For 'God's World' was everything superhuman, blinding light, and darkness of the abyss, the cold apathy of infinite time and space and the uncanny grotesque the irrational world of chance. God was all for me, not only edifying.”⁶⁰

Jung commented there needs to be a great awakening in a person, a desire to know God (or the infinite), and enter an enlivening relationship with Him. The person must first choose to step in the direction of God's realities – and join with Christ the suffering God, “... the great companion – the fellow-suffer who understands”⁶¹ as the process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead pointed out.

This is not to say that the unconscious is identical with God. But the unconscious is the medium from which religious experiences flow. For Jung, the unconscious houses all the meanings of religious symbolism. “I prefer the term the unconscious, knowing that I might equally well speak of God or Daemon if I wished to express myself in mythic language.”⁶² At another time Jung said, “Myth is the revelation of divine life in man. It is not we who invent myth; rather it speaks to us as a Word of God.”⁶³

⁵⁹ C. S. Lewis, *Miracles*, 1947, p. 93-94.

⁶⁰ Carl G. Jung and Aniela Jaffe, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by CG Jung, Autobiography of Carl Jung, Princeton University Press, June 2006.

⁶¹ Alfred North Whitehead, 1927 Gifford Lectures, published as *Process and Reality*.

⁶² Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1962.

⁶³ Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1962.

Therefore, to the religious, the vast contents of the unconscious are a road map given us by God to all knowledge embedded in our souls. We just need to learn to still the mind and senses, and tap in to it.

Regardless of what some think about religious experience, for Jung, those who possess it hold a great treasure, a thing that has become for him or her a knowledge of the source of life, meaning, and beauty. Put another way, “this spirit is an autonomous psychic happening that reconciles light in the darkness of man's mind, secretly bringing order into the chaos of his soul.”⁶⁴

And in conclusions ... I can't say that Jung and the other psychoanalysts are correct in their views of our internal worlds, but we can all agree that it is a fascinating assessment.

Conclusion

⁶⁴ Carl Jung, "A Psychological Approach to the Trinity," CW 11, par. 260.