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DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY: ESCAPE FROM THERAPY

At Pacifica Graduate Institute, the course of Mythological Studies is presented with an emphasis in “Depth Psychology.” However, depth psychology has within its conceptual framework a dichotomy that is of particular interest to students of mythology. That dichotomy is between depth psychology as a therapy and depth psychology as a theoretical gateway into a larger study related to mythology. This paper is an exploration into that dichotomy.

If the study of mythology is going to be more than merely a tool of depth psychology masquerading as a therapeutic technique to correct behavior, then students engaged in mythological studies are going to have to participate in the ongoing dialogue and reconciliation of some serious intellectual dilemmas. In the History of Depth Psychology course taught by Dr. Dawn George, the students were continually admonished to hold the tension between opposites. As Jung said (1955), “If a union is to take place between opposites like spirit and matter, conscious and unconscious, bright and dark, and so on, it will happen in a third thing, which represents not a compromise but something new.[536].” I believe that Jung was leading us to that “third thing”, which for lack of a better term I shall refer to as “transcendental phenomenology.”

In other words, it seems that Jung was advocating a process where creative solutions must be discovered or developed along the boundaries of disparate fields of study—at the edge of “chaos.” My contention is that mythological studies are one of

those inter-disciplinary, “non-linear” areas that promises to be a crossroads to deal with some of those conflicts. That’s why the presentation by Ross Woodman about Jung and Pauli, and the last segment of the course regarding quantum mechanics were of such interest to me. While I believe that consciousness is irreducible to any physical basis, there are within the physical/material realm of quantum mechanics some intriguing developments which are of significant interest. I hope to explore a few of those developments within this paper.

My proposal is that we look at the Freud-Jung break up as a starting point in exploring the basic dichotomy of depth psychology. We will then follow some of the areas of development in the Jungian theoretical structure to see where they lead, with particular emphasis on the implications of quantum theory. We will also attempt a sort of reconciliation between Freud and Jung by following some implications of Freudian methodology and see if we can’t arrive at a Hegelian synthesis. Hopefully, we will have suggested a conceptual infrastructure that will make the study of depth psychology a dynamic and essential part of the study of mythology. Along the way, hopefully we will outline some of the essential dilemmas that should be considered part of the modern study of mythology.

A NON-LINEAR ANALYSIS OF FREUD-JUNG BREAK UP

According to Ellenberger, “Eugene Bleuler is commonly credited with having coined the term ‘Depth Psychology,’ which was popular at the time when psychoanalysis was equated with the psychology of the unconscious.” [562 n. 308]. Furthermore, Ellenberger states that:

Depth psychology can be understood as the combined findings from Freud's self-analysis and the analysis of his patients. In his mind the findings confirmed each other and confirmed much of the theory of neuroses and the model of the mind he had previously formulated. The main aspects of depth psychology were Freud's dream theory and his theory of parapraxes, the first two generalizations of the pattern he had worked out for hysteria. [490].

Within the context of Freud, Ellenberger states that "Depth psychology claimed to furnish a key to the exploration of the unconscious mind and through this a renewed knowledge of the conscious mind, with wider applications to the understanding of literature, art, religion and culture" [490]. Perhaps part of the Freud/Jung break may have been related to issues that were actually drawn along the lines of providing that key to exploring the conscious and unconscious mind (see for example *Memories, Dreams Reflections*, [159]). Was the future of depth psychology going to be largely therapeutic or theoretical or both? Freud was obviously concerned about Jung's exploring what Freud called the "...black tide of mud of occultism." Before developing that thought, perhaps we should explore a little non-linear background.

Adopting the schema of Chalmers in exploring the conscious mind, apparently there are two basic types of consciousness: "psychological" and "phenomenological." Limitations of space inhibit what I can say about this important distinction, but let me offer the following brief summary of Chalmers tightly knit logic.

At the root of all this [contradictions] lie two quite distinct concepts of mind. The first is the *phenomenal* concept of mind. This is the concept of mind as conscious experience, and of a mental state as a consciously experienced mental state. This is the most perplexing aspect of mind and the aspect on which I will concentrate, but it does not exhaust the mental. The second is the *psychological* concept of mind. This is the concept of mind as the causal or explanatory basis for behavior. A state is mental in this sense if it plays the right sort of causal role in the production of behavior, or at least plays an appropriate role in the explanation of behavior. [11].

Using the above schema, I propose that Jung and Freud were originally embarked on the same voyage of discovery, but Freud with his therapeutic orientation could not abandon the purely psychological aspect of mind, whereas Jung went deeper into the uncharted theoretical territory of the phenomenological. I think that this can be clearly demonstrated after Jung's "breakdown" when he began exploring the concepts of Pleroma and Psychoid, archetypes, alchemy and the applications of quantum theory to the mind. Such concepts have no particular application in terms of therapy, but took form and developed into ideas of the archetypes and synchronicity. My belief is that the quasi-scientific, materialist Freud would not have been able to accompany Jung on such a journey of discovery and hence the split. So let us look briefly at some of these areas of transcendent phenomenology and suggest some further areas of exploration.

PLEROMA

According to the physicist, F. David Peat, "The key to Jung's cosmogony was the pleroma, an ancient term that has its origin in Gnostic creation myths and signifies a ground or 'godhead' out of which all reality is born." As Jung says, "Hearken, I begin with nothingness." The Jungian sense of the pleroma or creative nothingness is explored more fully in the physicist David Bohm's exploration of the implicate order of reality, as well as others, including Cole, Seife and Barrow.

PSYCHOID

In rejecting the dualism of mind and matter, Jung came up with a somewhat confusing idea he called the “psychoid.” The idea is a type of universal mind that underlies all reality. Jung compares this psychoid to a spectrum of vibrations which become accessible to human perception within a certain range. I think a much fuller and better expression of this possibility is offered by the physicist Amit Goswami. Goswami contends that there is a consciousness that underlies the material universe—a notion which echoes what Jung was theorizing about.

ARCHETYPE

In talking about his discovery of archetypes, Jung described them as a “kind of structural diagram of the human psyche” (MDR 161). Archetype is a term used frequently in mythological studies, however there is little ongoing research into archetypes. However, as an analogy, there is a great deal of work being done in linguistics—which are structural diagrams of language. Not only can linguistics be important from the standpoint of mythological studies, but also I believe related to depth psychology. I highly recommend the book by Jackendoff. Additionally, another area of inquiry that might be stimulating is information theory, as presented by Siegfried.

ALCHEMY

Unfortunately, I am not among those who are enamored with Jung’s explorations into alchemy. However, the new areas of Chaos and Complexity offer analogies that make this area seem more appealing to skeptics, such as myself. Dr. George offered several areas of consideration in regard to Chaos, which is a field of inquiry that can be

richly rewarding. I suggest, in addition to Gleick such authors as Briggs & Peat, Wolinsky, and Davies & Gribbin.

SYNCHRONICITY

One of the fascinating areas of Jungian thought to explore is the whole idea of Synchronicity. Synchronicity is the relationship of seemingly unrelated phenomena achieving a relationship via the vehicle of meaning. A great deal of the information of this paper is based upon the F. David Peat book on Synchronicity. It is the field of synchronicity that leads into the whole notion of quantum mechanics, which we will deal with next.

A QUICK LOOK AT QUANTUM MECHANICS

Modern science may have brought us closer to a more satisfying conception of this relationship [between psyche and physic] by setting up, within the field of physics, the concept of *complementarity*. It would be most satisfactory of all if physic and psyche could be seen as complementary aspects of the same reality. Pauli (1994) [260]

Important fundamental laws of quantum physics were discovered independently in 1925 by Werner Heisenberg and in 1926 by Erwin Schrödinger in response to experiments that seemed to contradict some of the fundamental concepts of classical physics. For example, electrons (which were previously thought to be only particles) were found to exhibit properties of waves. Conversely, light (which was previously thought to be only waves) was found to exhibit properties of particles. This confusion of classical distinctions between particles and waves was resolved by Niels Bohr who proposed the principle of complementarity. According to this principle, the wave and particle concepts are understood to be mutually exclusive but both are absolutely necessary for a complete description of quantum phenomena.

What this means is that all unobserved matter has a wave aspect, and cannot be said to have a definite localized position. Conversely, because of their wave properties, pairs of spatially separated particles sometimes exhibit non-local correlations in their attributes, as if they were waves. Yet another puzzling aspect of this duality regards the nature of observation and measurement in quantum mechanics: how is it that the wave suddenly changes into a particle, and how is this sudden transformation related to observation?

According to quantum physics, the state of any unobserved quantum of matter or light (such as an electron or photon) is a wave and can be expressed by Schrödinger's wave equation. Whenever the quantum of matter or light is observed, however, it is seen to have a definite actual position, and the wave function no longer properly describes the quantum. So, when the quantum is unobserved, it is a non-local wave of probable positions; and when observed, the quantum is a particle having a definite localized position. This means that both the particle and wave concepts are required to completely characterize any quantum: the particle concept is required to describe its particle-like behavior when observed, and the wave concept is required to describe its wave-like behavior when unobserved. The particle and wave concepts are called "complementary" descriptions because they are both needed to characterize either state, the observed and unobserved aspects of any quantum. There is a wonderful explanation of much of this material in the Goswami book, *Self-Aware Universe*.

The point of the foregoing notions, is that as Marie-Louise von Franz observed,

“Jung recognized that this principle of complementarity applied to psychology as well as to physics: Bohr's idea of complementarity is

especially interesting to Jungian psychologists, for Jung saw that the relationship between the conscious and unconscious mind also forms a complementary pair of opposites.[\[14\]](#)

In 1928, the physicist Wolfgang Pauli began a therapeutic association with Jung that blossomed into an ongoing intellectual cross-pollination between the two men. Through that association, Jung became familiar with some of the developments in physics, including the principle of complementarity. The analogy suggested here is that the wave-particle complementarity in quantum physics parallels the unconscious\conscious complementarity in psychology. Indeed, just as the wave is the unobserved aspect of the quantum and the particle is the observed aspect, so the unconscious is the unobserved aspect of the psyche and the conscious is the observed aspect

Similarly, as the wave represents an infinitely large segment of space, Jung states that “The area of the unconscious is enormous and always continuous, while the area of consciousness is a restricted field of momentary vision.[\[15\]](#).” The analogy goes even further. The quantum wave function represents probabilities, as contrasted to the actualized particle. Similarly, the archetypal structures of the unconscious represent fundamental potentialities of psychic manifestation, while conscious contents are actualizations of those potentialities. As von Franz expressed it, “What Jung calls the archetypes...could just as well be called, to use Pauli's term, "primary possibilities" of psychic reactions.[\[16\]](#).”

This suggests that there is one world (*unus mundus*) underlying both psyche and matter that is also a continuous infinite world of potentiality. In a classic example of holding the tension that Dr. George referred to, Jung elaborates by saying:

The common background for microphysics and depth-psychology is as much physical as psychic and therefore neither, but rather a third thing, a neutral nature which can at most be grasped in hints since in essence it is transcendental. The background of our empirical world thus appears to be in fact an *unus mundus*. ... The transcendental psychophysical background corresponds to a 'potential world' in so far as those conditions which determine the form of empirical phenomena are inherent in it.[\[17\]](#)

Another principle of quantum mechanics related to observation and measurement is what has become known as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. Essentially, this principle means that one can be certain of the speed (momentum) of a quantum, but cannot be certain of its location, or by measurement one can establish its location but the information about momentum is lost. Another corollary between physics and psychology is the uncertainty related to the unconscious. Jung established a correspondence between the indeterminacy inherent in quantum measurement and the attempt to consciously determine unconscious contents:

Any attempt to determine the nature of the unconscious state runs up against the same difficulties as atomic physics: the very act of observation alters the object observed. Consequently, there is at present no way of objectively determining the real nature of the unconscious.[\[20\]](#)