

**THE PEARL WITHIN**  
**DISCOVERING THE RICHES**  
**OF THE UNDERWORLD**

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# Chapter Six

## Exploring Our Inner World

*In our ordinary life we are limited and bound in a thousand ways—the prey of illusions and phantasms, the slaves of unrecognized complexes, tossed hither and thither by external influences, blinded and hypnotized by deceiving appearances. No wonder then that man, in such a state, is often discontented, insecure and changeable in his moods, thoughts and actions. Feeling intuitively that he is “one,” and yet finding that he is “divided unto himself,” he is bewildered and fails to understand either himself or others. No wonder that he, not knowing or understanding himself, has no self-control and is continually involved in his own mistakes and weaknesses; that so many lives are failures, or are at least limited and saddened by diseases of mind and body, or tormented by doubt, discouragement and despair. No wonder that man, in his blind passionate search for liberty and satisfaction, rebels violently at times, and at times tries to still his inner torment by throwing himself headlong into a life of feverish activity, constant excitement, tempestuous emotion, and reckless adventure.<sup>1</sup>*

**W**HEN YOU LEAVE THE FAMILIAR “HOME” of what you know and who you think you are—your certainty and your pet beliefs and cherished traditions—you are like the European explorers who were willing to sail off the “edge of the world” in order to see what was out there. Except they had no one to tell them from experience what they could expect, no one who had been there already. We are more fortunate.

We mentioned at the opening of this book that our outer world and the objects found in it are commonly agreed upon by most of us as existing in “real life.” We have names we share to label these objects: “book”, “woman”, “skunk”, “truck”. When we cannot agree on the label, trouble can ensue—even warfare. We consider the objects of the outer world to be made up of atoms and of substance, material substance that can be measured, weighed, analyzed and agreed upon.

*We so commonly undervalue the deeper aspects of the human psyche that we hold self-examination or preoccupation with ourselves to be almost morbid.<sup>2</sup>*

You and I are bipolar—not like the “disease,” but we exist as dual, not singular beings. You are an individual, separated from others by your skin and your inner thoughts and feelings. And you are a participant, united with others possibly as joint members of a couple (two), a family (more), a neighborhood, community, race, nation and species. As a participant you share common values, goals, and activities with the other members. You have a common identity. Life is the challenge of

maintaining both poles without having either one consume the other, and the balance is a moving one, dancing from one pole to the other depending on the moment and the circumstance.

Some of us spend more time around the individual pole and others around the collective or communal pole. If we get too attached to either pole, the other one can start to appear threatening. Or perhaps the other pole already is threatening because of some kind of early trauma and we find our favorite pole more secure. For example, the individual pole when too strong makes belonging to groups seem dangerous, as if they might swallow us up and engulf us (including a group of two). Intimacy becomes too much.

If the communal pole dominates to an extreme degree, we are terrified at the prospect of separation or being alone. We suppress our anger or assertiveness, fear saying “no” or disagreeing because it threatens to rupture the bond between us and others. Some of us prefer to live by values and ideals that are communal. As valuable as this can be, it does endanger our ability to have our own mind, to stand alone when in the midst of group delusion or an unhealthy environment.

Others of us are mavericks or outlaws, preferring to rely on what feels right as individuals. This is the source of heroism, but it also can be the source of mental illness, including schizophrenia. It can be very scary to find yourself the only one who thinks a certain way. What do others call it? Quite often: “crazy.” But we all know many stories of amazing individuals whose solitary vision and courage to stand alone have brought about most of what we call human advancement. Strangely the collective advances through its individuals, while those who live primarily as collective beings shore up the status quo, and often resist to the end the potential for progress.

A collective person is highly unlikely to brave the very individual challenge of exploring his or her inner world. There is no authority present inside of us at first to tell us what the rules are and what is real and what is not. It seems that perhaps our human evolution is meant to take us from the security of the tribe (which does not require any solid sense of individuality) or group<sup>3</sup> to the security of being a separate individual. The danger of this individualism is that one can get caught in that stage and refuse to rejoin the collective.

The tribal or collective person is not yet really an individual, but rather a member of the herd. It would be dangerous and probably disastrous for this person to suddenly think that what they feel on the inside is always preferable to collectively held values. But the individual who has outgrown the religion and belief system of their family or community has to forge their own way at great risk, because the security of outer validation has been left behind. The only “group” left to rely on is the group of other individuals who have taken the same step already.

It is not certain that we will find such a “group.” The alchemists were a group of individuals, pursuing a common journey very much alone. The Hindu hermits in the forest were another such group, meditating after leaving most of the material world behind, discovering the secrets of the inner world. Teachers like Buddha and Jesus also are part of a “group,” teaching us the personal sacrifice necessary if we are to grow further into our True Nature. The tribal shaman (“a priest or priestess who uses magic for the purpose of curing the sick, divining the hidden, and controlling events”) is also a very individual member of a “group.” These “groups” may never meet, and their members may never know of each other, but the stories of the individual people who belong to these “groups” can serve as inspiration and reassurance to the one who is called by his or her soul.

*No wonder that unearthing the psyche is like undertaking a full-scale drainage operation. Only a great idealist like Freud could devote a lifetime to such unclean work. It was not he who caused*

*the bad smell, but all of us—we who think ourselves so clean and decent from sheer ignorance and the grossest self-deception. Thus our psychology, the acquaintance with our own souls, begins in every respect from the most repulsive end, that is to say, with all those things which we do not wish to see.*<sup>4</sup>

If you are ready to explore the inner world because you feel a call, or because you have become dissatisfied with only the outer world to sustain you, or if you are already probing WHAT you are, then let us look at what you are likely to find on your way inward and downward.

During the course of the day you have many visitors in your inner world. Perhaps the day begins with a dream, a vague feeling, a depression or feeling of well-being. At any time throughout the day you may experience a mood, a feeling, or a fantasy. These are things we all commonly experience. Everyone knows what we mean by having had a dream, feeling a mood or daydreaming. Yet you have made none of these. They appear unbidden on your inner “screen” and may go unnoticed. Or perhaps a mood or fantasy grips you and you cannot let it go. You feel yourself under its spell. You are “identified” with it. You think its thoughts, see the world through its eyes. A tribal native would describe your being gripped by a mood as being “possessed.”

We find such terms quaint and naïve, but the truth is, you DO feel as if you are being possessed by something alien, something not you. You make an error, call the wrong person, place your keys someplace other than where you always do and then cannot find them. You do these things against your own will, and feel thwarted by them. What is going on? Who is really in charge?

The typical response is to say it’s nothing, just a slip, maybe you’re tired. But how can it be—if you are so sure you are the only inhabitant in your lonely inner world—that something other than you and your will can slip in and disturb you, operate against your wishes, make you feel ways you definitely do not choose to feel?

Admit it: you are not alone in there.

Which is really more troubling—to be so isolated and alone in the internal world of your dreams and feelings, or to realize that you are *not* alone and that there are inhabitants that you do not know, cannot control or understand, and that some of them seem not even to like you very much?

Consider what C.G. Jung, who coined the term “objective psyche” to describe the interior which we do not rule, articulated on this mysterious concept:

*Here, it [a vision or daydream] is a fact. It happens. Such a vision just comes to a person. That is the point of the whole technique [of dream and fantasy observation]. The psyche is liberated from merely arbitrary management and is given over to itself, to a factor no longer identical with our conscious will or with our conscious intention. We train the patient to let things happen so that he can see what his psyche is; otherwise he labors under the impression that his psyche is exactly what he wants it to be, that he makes it. But if his relation to it is such that he is able to experience it as an objective fact, then he will know about the truth and the value of psychical events. Such a vision just occurs; it is not made up, it is not sought for, it is not elaborated. It just happens in a form like this and has the character of objectivity. . . If you can train yourself to the point of being able to experience psychical contents as objective, then you can feel a psychical presence, for then you know that the psychical contents are not things you have made. They occur, and so you are not alone in the psychical world. You can be in perfectly good company, most entertaining company, if you will train yourself to take such things as objective. . . Naturally, all people feel alone in the world of the psyche because*

*they assume that there is nothing there that they have not made up... Then one is all alone in one's psyche... But through a certain training, a certain exercise—which is, of course, a yoga practice—something suddenly happens which one has not created, something objective, and then one is no longer alone... That is the object... to train people to experience something which is not their intention, something strange, something objective with which they cannot identify... This experience of the objective fact is all-important, because it denotes the presence of something which is not I, yet is still psychical. Such an experience can reach a climax where it becomes an experience of God.<sup>5</sup>*

This is a very important statement, central to our theme, and worth considering.

## A Mood and a Feeling

What is more common than a mood (“emotional state; also, a conscious state of mind or predominant emotion, distinctive atmosphere”)? Yet where do they come from? You do not decide to have a mood. They are clearly not-you and come at will, able often to overpower you and your best intentions. You are going out on a date, looking forward to it for days. You have gotten new clothes and have a great plan. Can’t miss. Then your mother calls and chats innocently with you for a few moments. After that, you find yourself angry and depressed, though she said nothing discouraging. Where did this mood come from?

Moods—when we examine them—seem almost to operate the same way as spells and voodoo magic, as if they were sent as arrows or gifts (there are good moods too!) from someone else. We need to fully recognize and to acknowledge that this common experience shows that we are definitely open to being influenced by something totally contained within us yet which does not submit to our choices and control. Think about that. Either your mind is a tool of your will, or it is not. Sometimes it is, and you can choose to think about whatever you want to, and sometimes it is as if it thinks on its own, prompted by strange and alien thoughts and feelings that make you uncomfortable, or excited, and you have to wonder, “Where did THAT come from?”

Jung said that our feelings are like the weather, that there is nothing you can do about them. Rather than examining and engaging with a visiting mood, how often do most of us choose instead to falsely believe that we are in charge of our feelings? Can you admit that you ARE NOT your feelings? Are your feelings the same as you, or aren’t they?

When you choose to enter your inner world of subjective (in here) experience, as opposed to the outer world of objective (out there) experience, it quickly becomes apparent with any reflection that there is an objective (out there) realm IN HERE! Stop and think about that: you think that what is in here, i.e., subjective, is you, and that what is out there, i.e., objective, is not-you. Yet when you really look, you cannot avoid seeing that many of the things that are known only to you because they are part of your inner subjective world, are not really you, but “thought-objects” and “feeling-objects” that arise on their own and attract or attack or influence you.

Such a crucial fact, so obvious when you look at it, and yet the opposite of prevailing opinion.

So there is you here inside and not-you in the outer objective world, which everyone knows, but there is also you here inside and not-you in the inner subjective world, which everyone pretends not to know. This realization has made contemplatives throughout the ages ask themselves, “If





I am not my mood, my feelings, this thought, that fantasy, then WHO AM I??” And the same contemplatives have responded “I am the one who observes.” The self as witness, nothing else. This is the goal of most meditation—to realize the self as being simply the witness and all else of inner contents to be objects of observation, and *not-I*.

Before this starts to sound too abstract and impractical, remember that we are discussing this because we are trying to learn more about the inner world, in order to gain access to some of its secrets and to experience the Mystery that lives within us and can serve as our Companion on our way back to our Home, our True Self or Nature, or original core Being. And we do that so that we may reconnect with our inner sources of vitality and guidance in order to find our way from the lost place we are now in.

What if you found yourself possessed by a mood, and instead of fighting it or becoming completely identified with it (identified means believing at the time that you are it, and it is you), you asked it “Who ARE you? What do you want?” To ask such questions is to imply that the mood is an “I,” that it too has a subjective self, just as we do. How strange is that! NOT ONLY ARE THERE THINGS INSIDE OF YOUR PRIVATE WORLD THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW AND CANNOT CONTROL, BUT THEY THEMSELVES HAVE CONSCIOUSNESS, GOALS, IDENTITIES, WILLS, AN INNER WORLD OF THEIR OWN!!!

Maybe you want to let that sink in a little. Sounds like I’m just trying to drive you insane perhaps, doesn’t it?



Perhaps instead we may want to re-examine our idea of what sanity really means. Sane: “proceeding from a sound mind : RATIONAL.” Now we’ve reached the crux. Somewhere along the way a sound and healthy mind became the same thing as a rational and logical mind. Where does that leave us when we want to discuss anything irrational? And surely we are fairly well into the irrational in our discussion at this point. If the definition of a sane mind is that it is rational, and our culture is based totally on the idea that rational is the only way to be sane, then where does that leave us?

Look around. Read the paper. Watch the news. How’s the rulership of rationality going? In our world of science and law based entirely on the rightness of logic and suspicious doubt of anything else, it should be working like clockwork, shouldn’t it? Of course the explanation is typically that in spite of our best intentions to live rationally there are primitive untamed jungles within the human soul as vestiges of our outgrown prehistoric past that just have not submitted to the wisdom of enlightened thought. Ask Freud: our problems are the result of an attempt to pave over the wild vegetation of the animal soul within the human being with the civilized parking lots of uniform rows of parking spaces so that the world will be a better place—more order, less chaos.

But what do we have if we actually pave over every inch of our earth with concrete? A better world? The natural world of vegetation just won’t give it up and cooperate. The blade of grass grows up through the crack in the sidewalk. The world of logical mind just cannot win. And in you and me, this translates to the fact that the wild and uncontrollable side of our souls that is not-I remains, and must be dealt with. Our culture does not do this, other than to try to shock, medicate or incarcerate the irrational. Where it cannot do this, because someone does not voluntarily submit “for their own good,” our society simply marginalizes as eccentric, insane or mentally ill. This is not to say that some people AREN’T truly mentally ill. It is just a question of whether everyone who is labeled that way truly is ill, or maybe just not able or willing to fit in with the rational ideal.

The mood or fantasy or dream is that blade of grass, even in the most sane and logical of people. So let's be up front about it: dreams, moods, feelings and fantasies ARE NOT RATIONAL—do not pretend to be, never were and should not be. We are left with the question: is there any value in the irrational? Is it just a primitive left-over threat to our sanity, or is it perhaps a valuable treasure that has been misplaced and overlooked, like the orphan? Is it perhaps like the fairy tale character, the rejected dumb one, ugly one, or foolish one who in the end saves the princess and marries her, while the handsome and clever brothers end up the fools?

Did you know that the word “rational” comes from “ratio” which means to calculate or compute? This means that the goal of rationality is to deal only with things that can be precisely measured. A worthy goal if calculation is your intent, but not necessarily a great way to evaluate the health of a human being. There are other valuable aspects to life besides just being able to measure, are there not? We sometimes call these other things “heart,” as compared with “head.” But not everything that is felt and irrational comes from the heart. Sometimes feelings and impulses come from the hungry belly or the lusting genitals.

So we are speaking here of the things that “do not compute.” You must be careful to realize how much of the above state of affairs regarding sanity and rationality has been conditioned into you since your first days. Remember being told to color only “inside the lines?” Remember what it felt like to imagine that you might be one of those people who went OUTSIDE the lines? There is a judge inside most of us doing daily evaluations on each and every thought to see whether it means we are certifiably insane. And as soon as you decide to consider the irrational (not rational: “not endowed with reason or understanding; lacking usual or normal mental clarity or coherence; not governed by or according to reason”) as something of any value, you know that soon after someone who wears an aluminum hat to foil(?) the CIA in their attempts to read his mind will be welcoming you to the fold.

But there is irrational and there is Irrational. Just because you think that there might be something worthwhile beyond that which is only logical and measurable does not mean that you will start wearing that hat. But of course, you could! It is definitely a step in that direction. And all the rational people will certainly see it that way, and the irrational ones will see you as joining their little party. So you can see, there's a lot at stake when you start thinking about your moods as other subjectivities with minds of their own. If science can accept the fact of irrational numbers and imaginary numbers—and it does—then perhaps there can be value in irrational ideas as well.

But as we said before, to do so means that you need something other than collective opinion (which believes only in rational) to keep you from going completely off the deep end. What will do that for you? Perhaps a partner like a therapist or counselor, though many of them are already off the deep end. It's a scary proposition. This is no easy thing, to delve into the unconscious, and some have gotten lost in the process. Disclaimer: Anyone reading this book who cannot find their way back has been warned. We need something like the thread that Ariadne gave to Theseus when he entered the labyrinth to hunt the minotaur, something that we can hold onto and follow back to the rational world after our journey.

So here you stand, face to face with a mood, and you dare to ask: “Who are you? What do you want?” As if that weren't crazy enough, you actually expect an answer! And worse, if you wait, YOU WILL GET ONE! The thread of Ariadne is woven from the aspects of your life that tie you to the “normal” world: your job, your family (if they are sane), hobbies belonging to the natural world like sports, collecting butterflies, hiking etc. These must be cultivated and continued in order to balance your expedition into the labyrinth of the irrational.

In a dialog with your mood, you may discover that this mood is the result of the presence in your psyche of a “complex,” an autonomous collection of thoughts, feelings and memories, even physical sensations and posture, that has been there all along, having been created long ago by an event or difficult situation which caused you to split or dissociate from it, to sever your conscious connection and to try to bury it (repression) so as not to feel its constant pain or threat to your survival. Yes, this is psychology, but psychology as study of the soul, not the feeding habits of rats as taught in universities. This is an endeavor to understand and fathom who you really are and what makes you this way.

In your first early forays into the underworld of the unconscious you can expect to find the most recently deposited inhabitants, just as if you were excavating an archaeological dig in Egypt. The most recent items will be found nearest the surface, and the more ancient treasures are deeper down. So what we find first in ourselves are the things put there most recently. These include aspects of self that have been rejected as undesirable (shadow) like feminine sensitivity in a man brought up to be only strong, dependency needs in an heroic individual, artistic sensibilities in an ambitious business person, and childhood traumatic memories like sexual and other forms of abuse, shame, or experiences of the “primal wound”<sup>6</sup> when our caregivers treated us as if they did not really see us or really care, when we felt treated more like “objects” than a loved participant in a safe and empathic connection.

Because Freud was the pioneer who opened the way into the unconscious and because he did so solely from the study of pathological (something abnormal: “the structural and functional deviations from the normal that constitute disease or characterize a particular disease”) patients, he mistakenly assumed that the unconscious consisted totally of these buried memories and shadow qualities. But consider what his follower Jung had to say:

*Yet if we are conscious of what we conceal, the harm done is decidedly less than if we do not know what we are repressing—or even that we have repressions at all. In the latter case we conceal it even from ourselves. It then splits off from consciousness as an independent complex, to lead a separate existence in the unconscious, where it can be neither corrected nor interfered with by the conscious mind. The complex is thus an autonomous portion of the psyche which, as experience has shown, develops a peculiar fantasy-life of its own. What we call fantasy is simply spontaneous psychic activity; and it wells up whenever the repressive action of the conscious mind relaxes or ceases altogether, as in sleep. In sleep this activity shows itself in the form of dreams. And we continue to dream in waking life beneath the threshold of consciousness, especially when this activity is conditioned by a repressed or otherwise unconscious complex. It should be said in passing that unconscious contents are by no means exclusively such as were once conscious and, by being repressed, have later grown into unconscious complexes. Quite otherwise, the unconscious has contents peculiar to itself which, slowly growing upward from the depths, at last come into consciousness. We should therefore in no wise picture the unconscious psyche to ourselves as a mere receptacle for contents discarded by the conscious mind.*<sup>7</sup> (emphasis mine)

The emphasized portion of this quote represents the dividing difference that caused Jung to leave his association with Freud, who had hoped Jung would be his heir to the leadership of the psychoanalytic movement.

Since this is the chaotic state of affairs awaiting any of us when we enter into conscious exploration of the unconscious—rejected and embarrassing personality traits and painful memories—it is understandable how resistant we are to the task. At this stage we are often inundated with very

unpleasant dreams of tidal waves and messes we have to clean up. We don't always have a choice in this. Symptoms and anxiety often announce the upwelling of the unconscious, which, as we have been saying, can make moves on its own.

But our real purpose here is not psychotherapy—necessary as it may turn out to be if our early layers are hard to manage—but to discover the path to our Home. The Pearl which we seek is buried in “the middle of the sea” and guarded by the serpent which consists of our repressed material. With that Pearl, having remembered our Origins and Who We Really Are, we can return to our Home. That Pearl is to be found in the deeper layers of the unconscious, which Jung refers to as *“contents peculiar to itself which, slowly growing upward from the depths, at last come into consciousness.”*

So when we encounter a mood, and we take it seriously and treat it with respect, asking who it is and what it wants, it can open up this archaeological world in our psyche. It may take years to do thorough investigation, which is healing. And on the way, we may have glimpses of something beneath or behind our personal tragedies and failures, our neglected gifts and partial self-images. Behind them all may shine a greater Light, a radiance emanating from the Wholeness of our Being, the Personality which can include contradictions and opposites, and which holds the Center for us, while it protects us from the disintegrating forces also within the psyche. That Center, that Light, that Self, is our Home and, most importantly, that Home is a Mystery. The darkness within us and around us is as much part of our path Home as is the Light.

## Deeper Layers of the Unconscious

In several places we have used the term “unconscious,” either to describe a way of being unaware, or as if there were such a territory inside of us. People tend to think the unconscious is something only of interest to the psychologist. In fact, many are no more interested in exploring this realm than they are in investigating death. There are actually similarities between the two, in that they are both unknown and unknowable, a void into which we project our fears and fantasies.

But let us consider for the moment this idea of the unconscious which was only discovered in the 19th century. Once again, the use of a term with which we have become somewhat familiar tends only to mislead us into thinking we really understand something because we have given it a name. Where unexpected behavior such as compulsions and symptoms were attributed to the gods or spirits in ancient times, now we refer to them as being from the unconscious. Why can't we see that wherever dreams and symptoms come from, the important fact is that they do come, not what we name their source?

Their source is a Mystery. We are not on speaking terms with the gods, nor can we “see” the unconscious. They may be one and the same thing, or misnomers for something entirely different. Our place should be where *we* stand, and there we are the recipients of strange messages and images in our dreams, our symptoms and fantasies. We should take these seriously, as much as we would take radio messages from outer space seriously even though we might not have any idea of their source.

We can imagine the “unconscious” like a repository of mysterious contents, revealing themselves to us in our sleep and mistakes, our fantasies and compulsions. Whatever the unconscious is, it deserves respect and consideration, because no matter how logical we may like to think we are, our thoughts have their source in the unconscious. Why do we think this and not that? Why do we

suddenly remember an event or smell from 30 years ago? We like to think of ourselves as having free will, so we do not like to acknowledge that we really don't know why we think what we do, or what causes this thought or that feeling or what our motives truly serve. What is going on when we ask "Why did I do/say that?"

So rather than worrying about whether or not there are gods, or God, or supernatural forces or a psychological unconscious, we should make it our priority to examine our *relationship* with our/the unconscious. Do we believe in its existence? Do we fear it? Respect it? Consider with any seriousness what it sends us?

Freud believed the unconscious was a garbage heap into which we had thrown all memories and behavioral traits and feelings we rejected by means of repression. If that is so—and Freudian psychology is our mainstream attitude—then engagement with the unconscious is the last thing we would want. But Jung's view was more that the unconscious is like our "Companion," and while some of it is like a dark and dirty basement filled with our refuse, there is more to it. Inspiration and spiritual forces were also seen as existing "in" and deriving from our unconscious.

Freud's unconscious is like the "snorting serpent" of the "Hymn of the Pearl," and Jung's unconscious is that serpent BUT also the Pearl it encircles.

If that is the case, then an attitude of rejection towards our unconscious only serves to sever our link with our Source, the Source referred to in the "Fountain of Treviso" in the Appendix. The images which come to us in our dreams and fantasies are then not just polluted bubblings of buried garbage, but may also be very helpful signs showing us the way to who we truly are. The more we reject and ignore these signs, the more hostile the unconscious seems to become. This can lead to a destructive cycle in which we perceive the unconscious and its messages as threatening (which they *can* be to the ego—the unconscious is also the source of mental illness and psychosis) and we become more closed and defensive, thus escalating the antagonism between the conscious self or "I" and the mysterious and unknown unconscious, whatever that truly may be. We end up back at the pharmacist's counter for a new medication to quell our unease.

On the other hand, if we are willing to be receptive to our dreams and fantasies, our symptoms and compulsions, passions and obsessions, to take them as messengers with meaningful information for us to understand, then the unconscious becomes our partner, a more supportive ally.

The most accessible layer of the unconscious contains the thoughts and memories floating just beyond your awareness—your old phone number, a high school classmate's name, memories of last year's vacation. These are available when you shine the spotlight of your attention upon them. They are unlikely to disrupt your life or to cause symptoms.

But beneath that archaeological layer you will find the split-off or dissociated ("to separate from association or union with another") memories of shame and trauma, and the shadow personality's rejected qualities. These can form complexes around them, autonomous ("existing or capable of existing, responding, reacting, or developing independently of the whole") and therefore capable of intruding in unwanted and potentially embarrassing or even destructive ways.

These independent inner "subpersonalities" are what you are likely to encounter if you feel called to explore the world within. If you meet an angry mood which has been disturbing your day, and you ask it, "Who are you? What do you want?" you may find that it wants your attention, wants you to listen to its complaints. You can even imagine a gender, an appearance, and an age for this subpersonality. Thus there are inside you actual "people" who are not you. They have feelings,



agendas, values and desires which may be very different from your own. In fact, this is quite likely since their existence was probably created by your rejection of their pain or distressing habits.

Together, you and these subpersonalities make up your personality. You are operating under a delusion when you believe yourself to be only the conscious personality you wish yourself to be. It is humbling to encounter these other selves and, having recognized them, to listen and try to accept them. Other people who live or work with you may know them better than you do. But not accepting them only creates division in yourself, and “a house divided against itself cannot stand.”<sup>8</sup> In such a condition, you lack integrity (“singular oneness”) and your decisions and commitments cannot be relied upon. You forget something important you had committed to do, you find your decisions undermined and constantly in doubt, leading to vacillation and inaction. The entire committee of inner inhabitants needs to be considered if your choices are to be on behalf of the whole personality.

As you proceed in sorting out these various subpersonalities (which takes some time), there may be occasional glimpses of another deeper layer of the psyche. This also is objective or “not-you,” but even more so. Instead of developing from your personal experiences of trauma and rejected parts of your personality, the components of this deeper layer have been inherited. Starting with the first elements as family traits, tribal, religious and national attitudes and assumptions, eventually you will encounter more universal factors that live within you simply because you are human.

This is what Jung referred to above when he wrote: “It should be said in passing that unconscious contents are by no means exclusively such as were once conscious and, by being repressed, have later grown into unconscious complexes. Quite otherwise, the unconscious has contents peculiar to itself which, slowly growing upward from the depths, at last come into consciousness. We should therefore in no wise picture the unconscious psyche to ourselves as a mere receptacle for contents discarded by the conscious mind.”

As an example, you have, buried in your unconscious memories, the experience of your physical birth. The specific circumstances or your birth, whether it was difficult or easy, caesarian or natural or by forceps, lengthy or quick, breech or life-threatening, are all recorded somewhere in your psyche, and may be triggered by present-day events if they resemble those memories closely enough. So if you were born surgically by c-section, it may be that in a crisis today where you need to take a new step, to move in a new direction, you find yourself fantasizing being rescued by outside intervention. Another person with a different birth might in the same situation feel they were going to die. A third person may mobilize all energy to fight aggressively to make it. All three of you may be re-living the circumstances that attended your particular physical birth.<sup>9</sup>

In the deeper layer being discussed here, there exists “birth.” All of humankind has experienced birth, the coming forth from a state of peace (usually) in a “Garden of Eden” where all needs were taken care of and there was always plenty of nourishment, oxygen, and a sense of safety in being contained and protected. Psychologists are fond of interpreting the biblical expulsion from the Garden of Eden as a metaphor (or memory) of being born. Some claim that it is the collective memory inside of us that leads us to imagine such a fantasy.

So when you find yourself in any situation, it has the potential not only to trigger specific individual life memories from your past, but also this deeper level of collective human memories that we all share (the “archetypal”). On this deeper level, which Jung called the “collective unconscious,” you are no longer the individual, but a participant in collective human life. It is very important to recognize the existence of this deeper layer, because otherwise you may imagine yourself to be the

carrier of humanity's burden or the hero who can save the human race. This indicates inflation, where your personality has mistakenly identified itself with the total of human life and can very easily "fly too close to the sun," forgetting your individual limits and flaws.

The Mystery Which is your Home, and toward Which your journey inward is tending, is largely on this collective deep level of the unconscious. As you approach, the language of mythology becomes more relevant, because myths represent human beings' attempts to articulate the images and fantasies found there. That is why imagining the world as a place informed by gods and goddesses assists us in realizing the presence on this deeper level of the Mystery in our lives.

We will be discussing the opposites (**Chapter 7**) and their cyclic dance with one another. The pair of opposites we can call the individual conscious personality and the unconscious which is our bedrock and source need to recognize each other and to carry on a mutual dialog. This can begin and grow by your willingness to develop sensitivity and acceptance toward the messages from the unconscious—dreams, fantasies, moods, feelings, symptoms. By attributing an intelligence, an autonomy and will to these alien forces within you, you can begin to engage with them and to learn from them. And in this dialog you will be influenced, and perhaps so will they. This is evidenced by the fact that frequently the characters and images in our dreams and fantasies are seen to transform over time. So you change and they change. The unconscious becomes more conscious, and consciousness is enlarged (and humbled) as well in the process. This pathway for dialog has been called the "I-Self axis."<sup>10</sup>

This is what must happen now if we are to be able to connect with our Source, the Mystery within and around us, the Mystery That we are. Out of this Mystery came all that is, and as we have lost sight of this Mystery, we have increasingly put ourselves in jeopardy, with our inner and outer world having lost its foundation, and chaos as a result. Chaos is necessary now, in order to undo the rigid structures we have built as defense against the very Mystery we need. But moving through chaos is very dangerous, especially without any compass to guide us. The Mystery is that compass, and from It will come the way through.

*The artful denial of a problem will not produce conviction; on the contrary, a wider and higher [and deeper] consciousness is called for to give us the certainty and clarity we need. . . . When we must deal with problems, we instinctively refuse to try the way that leads through darkness and obscurity. We wish to hear only of unequivocal results, and completely forget that these results can only be brought about when we have ventured into and emerged again from the darkness.<sup>11</sup>*

This is not the time to cling only to the certainty of the conscious mind and its logic. It is time to restore the balance between rational and irrational. It is time to listen to what's inside of us if we are to right the ship before it goes down. We cannot continue to cling only to what we already know, as we are doing.

What will make us, help us to take the plunge into the darkness, into what we do not know? Because if we do not willingly dive in, it will continue to rise over our heads as it is doing now. Sink or swim.

This image of venturing into the darkness and the abyss of uncertainty to find clarity appears in the ancient Chinese divination text of the I Ching, which:

*. . . describes your situation in terms of a dangerous situation you cannot avoid. It emphasizes that taking the risk without reserve, the action of Gorge (dangerous place; hole, cavity, hollow; pit, snare, trap, grave, precipice; critical time, test; risky), is the adequate way to handle it. To*

*be in accord with the time, you are told to: venture (risk falling until a bottom is reached, filling and overcoming the danger of the Gorge, like flowing water) and fall (fall down or into, sink, drop, descend; falling water; be captured).<sup>12</sup>*

Venture and fall. To be in accord with the time. A dangerous situation you cannot avoid.

Knowing and not knowing. Certainty and doubt. There are worse things in this life than being uncertain. As the poet T.S. Eliot said in the Introduction: "In order to arrive at what you do not know you must go by a way which is the way of ignorance." And Theodore Roethke: "In a dark time, the eye begins to see."

Conscious and unconscious. I and Self. Rational and irrational. Either-or. The Way is found between the pairs of opposites. The Middle Way. You are not this, not that. The mind thinks in opposites. Everything has its opposite. Yin and Yang.

It's a stretch to embrace paradox and contradiction until finally...



## Notes

- 1 Roberto Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis*, (New York: Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, 1965), pp. 20-21.
- 2 C. G. Jung, *Modern Man In Search of A Soul* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1933), p. 51.
- 3 See for example Dane Rudhyar, *Beyond Individualism*.
- 4 C. G. Jung, *Civilization In Transition*, CW10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) p. 90.
- 5 C. G. Jung, *The Visions Seminars, Book One* (New York: Spring Publications, 1976), pp. 72-73.
- 6 See John Firman & Ann Gila, *The Primal Wound*.
- 7 C. G. Jung, *Modern Man* , pp. 31-32.
- 8 Benjamin Franklin.
- 9 An outrageous idea to western medicine, but see the writings of Stanislav Grof, M.D.
- 10 See Edward Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*.
- 11 C. G. Jung, *Modern Man*, p. 97.
- 12 Rudolf Ritsema & Stephen Karcher, *I Ching*, (Rockport, MA: Element Inc., 1994), p. 344.