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To Our Readers

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To Our Readers

This Special Issue of *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* is dedicated to two seemingly disparate but deeply connected features: poems about war from Ukraine and presentations about the spiritual psyche. How does war have any connection with spiritual life? The title of this selection of poems, “Too Close to Infinity,” a line taken from one of the poems, suggests a starting point to consider one of the many interconnections. “God is a trauma,” Greg Mogenson wrote (1989). In this issue, we offer our readers a vast field in which to contemplate the question of what spirituality means in the life of the psyche, from the traumatic to the contemplative.

Poetry Editor Frances Hatfield introduces us to four Ukrainians writing extraordinary poetry in the midst of utter catastrophe: “What do we know of war, if most of us have never been devastated by war on our own soil? In the poems offered here, we find an account of the situation in Ukraine that the daily news soundbites and recitations of fact cannot give us. We desperately need to know about the reality of the war in the depths of the psyche in Ukraine, not only because we are, ultimately, part of the *anima mundi*, and not only because we (in the United States) are its major arms dealer, but also, as becomes clear in reading these poems, because we are not strangers to a war that threatens our democracy, though the threat is not from a foreign power. We need to know, as Ostap Slyvynsky observes, that ‘there is no foodstuff as perishable/as freedom.’”

At the other end of the spectrum from war, our feature articles are based on work originally published in *The Spiritual Psyche in Psychotherapy: Mysticism, Intersubjectivity, and Psychoanalysis*, edited by Willow Pearson and Helen Marlo (2021). Although the authors presented here have refined and elaborated on themes articulated in the original volume, the papers published here stand on their own, offering not only the sustenance we crave these days but also exciting new work that expands the notion of the spiritual psyche and how it relates to the work we do as analysts.

The Spiritual Psyche in Psychotherapy: Mysticism, Intersubjectivity, and Psychoanalysis (reviewed in vol. 15, no. 2 of this journal) provided readers with a perfect place to sort through ambiguous and often fraught definitions and notions about the “spiritual” and the “psyche” as they conjoin in mysticism, intersubjectivity, and clinical practice. Although this eclectic read is ostensibly about the life and work of the spiritual psyche in psychotherapy, it provides a diversified discussion of the most current thinking about the numinous, both on the couch and in daily life in general. This collection of thoughts, conjectures, and wonderful story-telling

is one of several recent Routledge volumes about spirituality and psyche, including *Integrative Spirituality: Religious Pluralism, Individuation, and Awakening*, by Patrick J. Mahaffey (2019, reviewed in *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 14, no. 2) and Leslie Stein's *Working with Mystical Experiences in Psychoanalysis: Opening to the Numinous* (2019), as well as the Palgrave Macmillan publication edited by Thomas Cattoi and David M. Odorisio, *Depth Psychology and Mysticism: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Study of Mysticism* (2018, reviewed in *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 14, no. 1).

However, it is in Ann Belford Ulanov's primer *Spiritual Aspects of Clinical Work* (2004) that I find the early roots of what unfolds in *The Spiritual Psyche in Psychotherapy* (Pearson and Marlo 2021). In Ulanov's early work she addresses these questions: "How does the spirit emerge into clinical work? Do dreams open us to spiritual life? How do we reconcile human destructiveness with a vision of non-violence? What does religion uniquely offer beyond what psychoanalysis can?" Here these questions are again reflected on in fresh and creative ways. In both the life of the spirit and of psyche, there really are no answers, just new opportunities for reflection and inspiration.

In my review of Pearson and Marlo's *The Spiritual Psyche in Psychotherapy*, I expressed aspects of the development of my own spiritual psyche as a grounding for the exploration of the works I was reviewing, allowing my own background and biases to be known. The development of the spiritual psyche in each of us is part of our individuation toward greater wholeness during the life span. For some, there is the belief that we are always in preparation for the worlds to come and, as such, the realm of spiritual work is a necessary component of individuation into death and beyond. Prior to writing my review I had the following experience:

Recently, while hiking in the Southern California desert on a brilliant, chilly winter morning, I was overcome by the beauty of the surrounding snowcapped mountains, the crystalline air, and the rocky barren topography. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, I was surrounded by what I can only call a "cloud of Jesus." Impossible to put such a numinous experience into words, I would have to call it a felt experience of a loving God presence filling me with awe and gratitude. Everything in my vision and felt sense was elevated to the ecstatic for just long enough to feel cellularly transformative. This was not the first time I have experienced the presence of the divine in my conscious life, but it was the first time I had experienced the surrounding presence of Jesus himself as He radiated from the natural setting of the desert, which, for me, has always been deeply imbued with the mystical. In that unique moment He created a psychic environment of love, peace, protection, and a sureness of the rightness of all things. (2021, 126)

This experience has remained with me, providing solace in a world riddled with conflict, disingenuousness, and the preoccupations of power. I found an interesting passage related to this experience in Jung's "Commentary on 'The Secret of the Golden Flower'":

The symbol "Christ" as "son of man" is [a] . . . psychic experience of a higher spiritual being who is invisibly born in the individual, a pneumatic body which is to serve us as a future dwelling, a body which, as Paul says, is put on like a garment. ("For many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"). It is always a difficult thing to express, in intellectual terms, subtle feelings that are nevertheless infinitely important for the individual's life and well-being. It is, in a sense,

the feeling that we have been “replaced,” but without the connotation of being “deposed.” It is as if the guidance of life had passed over to an invisible center. Nietzsche’s metaphor, “in most loving bondage, free,” would be appropriate here. Religious language is full of imagery depicting this feeling of free dependence, of calm acceptance.

This remarkable experience seems to me a consequence of the detachment of consciousness, thanks to which the subjective “I live” becomes the objective “It lives me.” This state is felt to be higher than the previous one: it is really like a sort of release from the compulsion and impossible responsibility that are the inevitable results of *participation mystique*. This feeling of liberation fills Paul completely; the consciousness of being a child of God delivers one from the bondage of the blood. It is also a feeling of reconciliation with all that happens, for which reason, according to the *Hui Ming Ching*, the gaze of one who has attained fulfillment turns back to the beauty of nature. (1929/1968, CW 13, ¶¶77–78)

What sets analytical psychology apart from all of mainstream psychology, save perhaps transpersonal psychology, is the open acknowledgment of the *reality* of such numinous experiences and their power to transform the life of an individual. The authors of our feature articles initially braved the vulnerability of expressing the personal and profound in their reflections on the spiritual psyche. As Jung speaks of a feeling of liberation filling Paul, perhaps we can read these papers with an eye toward liberation from “the bondage of the blood” and a “reconciliation with all that happens.”

In “Experiencing the Spiritual Psyche: Reflections on Synchronicity-Informed Psychotherapy,” Helen Marlo explores spiritual dimensions of the psyche as originally conceptualized by Jung, including its relationship with mysticism, numinosity, and the religious attitude. This is a far-reaching piece that weaves additional ideas about spirituality and mysticism from other psychoanalysts and within depth psychology. The paper draws on experiential evidence and emphasizes knowing the spiritual psyche from real lived experiences, especially as expressed through synchronicities. She introduces the term *synchronicity-informed psychotherapy* as a legitimate focus of therapy and analysis, particularly as a way to know and engage with the spiritual psyche. I found her work on synchronicity-informed psychotherapy fascinating and original.

In what I hope will soon be a book on this topic, Robin Eve Greenberg brings us, “The Kabbalah Dance, Jungian Analysis, and Home in Soul.” Here she explores intersections between Kabbalah ideas, Jungian analysis, her own background in dance, and the idea of finding home in soul. Underlying depth work is the art of listening, with the humility of opening to what wants to grow. The Tree of Life imagery—a dynamic and creative dance—has symbolic roots in the heavens, whereas the *Sefirot*—utterances from God on how to live a holy life—are continually forming and re-forming new beginnings, impregnating and birthing the human soul. The author explores how Kabbalah mythology and Jungian ideas can work in tandem, as both touchstone and compass in the process of analysis. The author makes the Kabbalah accessible to Jewish and non-Jewish audiences alike, integrating it into Jungian psychology with ease.

In “Spirituality and Surrender: Reflections on ‘Letting the Light Get In,’” Katherine Olivetti reflects on her initial contribution to *The Spiritual Psyche in Psychotherapy*, in which she relates an experience of extraordinary connection at her mother’s death. Here she goes

deeper and in exquisite prose shares a moment of childhood trauma that had not only emotional and psychological consequences, but also spiritual consequences. In her reflections, what she describes is related to the experience that Rosemary Gordon (1993) writes about—the connection to the greater being and the desire to surrender into the connection to that larger one. Although the incident she describes was traumatic in terms of a child’s relationship to the mother, and to the development of self-esteem, it was also an attack on the psychological and emotional foundation of spiritual life. She ponders, “How could one who felt connected to something so large and so glorious, survive the annihilating attack?” In her reflections, she describes how the spiritual foundation of feeling connected to something larger than oneself, of being able to surrender into containment, begins in childhood. The good parent, the one who is able to carry the growing child’s idealization, so necessary to the child’s development, sets the spiritual foundation for a lifetime. She asks, “How, after all, can one surrender and become part of a being beyond oneself, if the early paradigm collapses too soon?” In Olivetti’s words:

Of course, every child will eventually endure the gradual waning of the idealization projected onto the parent. Under the best of circumstances, the decline will be gradual and governed by the growing awareness and insight of the child. The idealization optimally will yield to the development of an inner possibility, a healthy narcissism, a felt inner sense of what Jung called the Self, and this capacity will allow for independence and dependence, the ability to function autonomously and the ability to surrender. The capacity to let one’s self go, to surrender, to merge with something greater than oneself, while maintaining a sense of self is at the heart of spiritual/religious/mystical experience—and that, I believe, has its roots in the early childhood idealization of the parent. For this reason, the exploration of early trauma is important for the healing not only of emotional and psychological wounds but also spiritual wounds because these events also rupture the foundation of spiritual life.

I found this to be one of the most original pieces of writing merging developmental constructs and spiritual development in childhood.

Next, Mitchel Becker provides a brief postscript to his chapter “Allowing the Creation.” In “Searching for ‘Inging,’” Becker continues to ponder the process of creativity. Using the neologism of “inging,” the author invites the reader to encounter the essence of *being* and *becoming* through the essential qualities that allow for “inging” to occur: love, freedom, and truth. As Becker notes, “These three modes are always relational. Love is experiencing the wholeness of an other. Freedom is the unshackling of the soul. Truth is a passionate linking to the experience of life.” The author’s very personal remembrance of his relationship with his father is used to illustrate love, freedom, and truth through the mourning process.

In Robin Bagai’s “Spiritual Psyche, Living Psyche . . . a Reverie” he states,

Spiritual is a word used in all kinds of ways. The ancient division between *matter* and *spirit* highlights a contrast between physical, material substances and everything else. By everything else, I mean all “things” that cannot be measured, located, or palpated the way physical objects can. This includes all thoughts, ideas, feelings, dreams, imagination, desires . . . as well as impressions, hunches, gut feelings, intuitions, urges, drives, passions and infatuations—in short, the term *spirit* encompasses all of human *experiencing*. Psyche is nothing if not spiritual and spirit is nothing if not experiential.

In this very moving piece Bagai humanizes aspects of the spiritual psyche by contrasting our physical material world with the experiential worlds of psyche and spirit. I found this to be an intriguing paper well worth a serious read.

In a sheer abundance of creativity, Willow Pearson Trimbach provides the reader three distinct contributions. In a two-part article “Integral Relational Practice of Dreaming the Caesura” Pearson provides readers with a “dreaming practice” that expands their capacity to be with suffering both as a clinician and patient and an opportunity to develop expanded transformational compassion and wisdom.

What follows is an integral relational practice of dreaming that has two principal roots. One root is integral practice, based on my study, training, and teaching of integral psychology and psychotherapy. Another root is relational psychoanalysis, specifically through the teachings of Michael Eigen, and James Grotstein and the influence of Jessica Benjamin.

Additionally her study and practice of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, and the teachings of Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche inform her work. This manuscript builds on her prior reflections on dreaming in a number of publications, one of which is the co-edited book with Helen Marlo on the spiritual psyche. In her own words, Pearson describes the process,

The practice is, simply put, a meditation on caesura. *Caesura*—in its psychoanalytic context—is a selectively permeable membrane that simultaneously unites and separates that which it links. . . . Caesura can be likened to the co-emergence of the linked, yet distinct, quadrants in integral psychology . . . which distill into what [is called] the *Big Three*, or *Self, Culture, and Nature*.

In the second part of the paper, “Dreaming Charlotte Small Thompson,” Pearson Trimbach describes an integral relational practice of “dreaming the caesura” with an illustration of this specific practice through the author’s dreaming of her great, great, great, great grandmother, Charlotte Small Thompson, a Métis Cree woman who traveled across Canada with her husband from 1799–1812. The contemplative practice is anchored in compassion and expands the writer’s capacity to be with suffering. What she describes in the piece as the 1st person, 2nd person, and 3rd person perspectives of integral experience are viewed through their separate and also their linked and embedded relationships to one another, thus constituting the caesuras of contemplation as exemplified in her reflections on her distant relative.

Before turning to Pearson Trimbach’s other contributions, which are anchored in her emerging professional and personal relationship with psychoanalytic psychotherapist Shifa Haq, Haq presents “Stray Reflections on Hate with Gandhi and Winnicott as Companions,” a mediation on hate and transformation. Haq has spent many years working in the militarized regions of Kashmir with survivors who “brought her stories of brutalities in which souls disappear.” What, she asks, can nonviolence mean to those whose lives have been destroyed by violence? How do we not turn hard or cold in the face of hatred? Using Winnicott and Gandhi as her guides, along with experiences from their own lives, she draws connections between hate and survival as they inform the personal and the political realms of existence. She shares moments of intimacy with a man whose son disappeared in Kashmir, as they imagine a hope for the future. “What I notice in the works of Winnicott and Gandhi is an idea of survival in which emancipation of the self rests on emancipation of the other.”

Pearson Trimbach reviews Haq's work *Windows of Faith: Collective Resistance and the Work of the Creative in Mourning the Disappearances in Kashmir*. Shifa Haq's book illuminates aspects of faith embodied through mourner-survivors' collective political resistance and creative work. Haq presents and situates the stories of three mourner-survivors and their families in the context of militarized violence and collective trauma in Kashmir, advancing the psychoanalytic theory of mourning as she recognizes and shines a light on memorializing remembrance and the imagination of the petitioning unconscious. This is a review that makes the reader want to instantly buy Haq's book in anticipation of a compelling read.

In "Dreaming, Mourning, Transformation, and Truth: A Conversation," Pearson Trimbach provides us with an email exchange between two colleagues that explores themes that are catalyzed by Haq's book *In Search of Return: Mourning the Disappearances in Kashmir*. These themes include dreaming, mourning, transformation, and truth. Being deeply affected by trauma anchors the conversation. Creative work through art and song as well as its transformative power is touched upon. Psychotherapy as a transformative practice, on the level of soul work, threads through the conversation.

In an ARAS (Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism) contribution, Stacy Hassen provides reflections on trauma and healing in "The Elixir of Life." In her own poetic language she states,

In a world in need of extensive healing from deep trauma and crisis, from the many conditionings of conceptual impositions, quantum leaps do not come from the mind or thoughts where the disturbances originated, but from a mind surrendered to the heart and its intuitive, visionary capacity to see through the old patterns into the new story arising at this time.

In the featured artwork, *Healing* (2013), she describes a particularly illuminating, uplifting quality in the work of artist Autumn Skye. She posits that the work harmonizes and restores balance by honoring soul inspired in the world. Here she sees beauty with a quality that nourishes soul and abounds in the deeply resonant symbolic painting that contains within itself the alchemical refinement of spirit and matter—opposites united in wholeness.

In addition to the review of Shifa Haq's book previously discussed, Helen Marlo, our reviews editor, brings us two other reviews.

In "The Expansive Psyche," Christine Skolnik reviews Terje Simonsen's, *A Short History of (Nearly) Everything Paranormal: Our Secret Powers—Telepathy, Clairvoyance, Precognition*. Simonsen is concerned with Jung and his circle and the history of paranormal and contemporary paranormal studies. The book includes a discussion of the usual Jungian topics such as archetypes, dreams, the collective unconscious, and transpersonal psychology; however, the author pairs the topics with paranormal research. Skolnik describes the psyche as an expansive and, indeed, expanding field of experience and study and celebrates Jung's openness to various worldviews while challenging Jungians to keep expanding their own understanding of Jung and his relevance to academic research. However, the book is about so much more and is only partially related to Jung and his work. As Skolnik describes, "The book is like a conversation that one wishes would never end, and so I recommend readers savor it one chapter at a time. This is a gift to be enjoyed in a spirit of camaraderie, communion, and play."

In “Aging and Its Gifts,” Lionel Corbett reviews Connie Zweig’s, *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul*. Zweig’s book provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities provided by the aging process. In Corbett’s words,

The book contributes to our increasing need to see the value of the last part of life and its essential contribution to the growth of the personality and the individuation process. The author offers important insights into the psychology of this period. She offers multiple examples from her own practice with clients as well as from her own experience and through discussions with several spiritual teachers who are in late life themselves. In addition, the author has many useful and practical suggestions and exercises that enable readers to put into practice her suggestions. These exercises are valuable ways in which readers might discover their unconscious attitudes and anxieties about aging. . . . The book describes how we can compensate for the inevitable losses of aging through psychological and spiritual development.

I found the review to be clear, forthright, and intriguing.

The readers of this special issue may find their consciousness expanded through the many-faceted explorations offered on the nature of the spiritual psyche. The universal expressions of this notion are far reaching, at times elusive, and always available for our consideration, which can perhaps lead us to, as Jung put it, “free dependence” and “calm acceptance.”

Jeffrey Moulton Benevedes, Editor

NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

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