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To Our Readers

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Hexagram 15 – Ch'ien Modesty¹

When John Beebe proposed that the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco publish *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*, he consulted the *I Ching* and received Hexagram 15 “Modesty,” the hexagram that John said was “the most positive hexagram in the book!” The essence of the commentary about the hexagram is balance. About the image, the text says,

Within the earth, a mountain:

The image of MODESTY.

Thus the superior man reduces that which is too much,

And augments that which is too little.

He weighs things and makes them equal.

(Wilhelm, 1950, 463)

The correction of reducing the too-muchness and augmenting the too-littleness also resonates for me with Jung’s concept of the transcendent function:

If we can successfully develop that function which I have called transcendent, the disharmony ceases ... The unconscious then gives us all the encouragement and help that a bountiful nature can shower upon man ... for it has at its disposal all subliminal psychic contents, all those things which have been forgotten or overlooked, as well as the wisdom and experience of uncounted centuries which are laid down in its archetypal organs. (1943/1969, CW 7, ¶196)

Jung’s writing about the transcendent function illuminated one of the concepts of analytical psychology that has resonated most deeply for me. Years ago, when I facilitated the workshop that inspired the beginning of the ongoing editing group, I asked participants to choose their “favorite” Jungian concept as a topic for a short essay. Mine was the transcendent function. Working with it in my own psychic processes and with those of analysands, experiencing and witnessing the transformations, has proved to be nothing short of miraculous.

I have had some difficulty with the concept “tension of the opposites” and in my own mind have preferred to think about the tension generated by conflicting, disparate, or disharmonious vectors. To me “the opposites” reduces a conflict to a binary paradigm that may not always be useful or accurate and may invite a contrary alignment, or opposition, rather than a more complex multiplicity. Jung was so clear and so ahead of his time in his recognition of the non-unitary nature of the psyche, that holding tensions to include the multiplicity, not just those opposed to one another, would be, in my view, in line with Jung’s vision of the psyche. Along the same lines, Stacy Hassen contributes the image of *Golden Opening* and her amplifying text states that the image “intimates a map to an internal dimension beyond the duality of this world.” Jon Mills takes up a resonant theme in his thoughtful and detailed article, “Jung on Transcendence,” where he points out that others have taken up Jung’s notion of transcendence and the transcendent function, but few have considered his view of transcendence.

I did not expect to be at the helm of *Jung Journal* again. As I stepped in, the first article that crossed my desk was Naomi Azriel’s brilliant and original rendering of the Cassandra myth. In “Rethinking the Cassandra Myth: Toward Collective Recalculation of the Capacity to Listen,” Naomi not only recognizes the myth as representing the story of the medial seer who was not heeded, but she also presents the interactional, mutual responsibility of the relationship between Cassandra and the community. This relational aspect of the myth, previously unexplored, is so important. John Beebe mentions in the interview that appears in this issue how this relational sensibility was a key feature of the San Francisco Institute, going back decades, and he was intentional about wanting to share that with the larger community.

The idea of the *Jung Journal* as community has always been important to me, and for that reason with this issue, I wanted to include a group of brief essays written by many authors under the banner of “Many Voices.” When John began the *Library Journal*, one of the intentions he held was to encourage Jungian analysts to write about their experiences. In that light, I asked therapists (Jungian and non-Jungian) to write about clinical experiences in which they drew upon fairy-tale or mythic themes. Seven contributed short essays, and one by Nickie Amerius-Sargeant that began as a short essay grew into a full feature article that will appear in the next issue.

The way the thought of drawing on fairy tales or myths came to me was that in jumping back into the work of the editor, I felt like a bewildered and lost heroine in a fairy tale. I recalled that the archetypal theme included the phenomenon that in the moment of desperation, helping factors emerge. After reading Naomi’s article, I was particularly moved by her reference to the Japanese art of *kintsukuroi* also known as *kintsugi*. The idea of creating an object more beautiful by repairing a rupture struck me as particularly apt at this time. My hope of finding a special image sent me scrolling online through Google images. The vase that graces our cover captivated me, and as I tracked down its origin, it led me to Morty Bacher. At each step along the way, I felt that something miraculous was happening, and when you read Morty’s story in the interview, I believe you will understand.

Where the art of *kintsugi* holds the broken pieces together, Rob Tyminski's article "*Diva: Disrupting Identity and Revealing a Mosaic*" takes us in the other direction by questioning the unity of identity. He draws on the 1981 film *Diva* directed by Jean-Jacques Beineix, and wonders out loud why he would focus on a film more than four decades old? But as he illustrates so well, the question of identity, its elusive and mosaic-like quality, is a topic well worth consideration. Identity is also deeply considered by Brooke Laufer in her article, "The Infanticidal Mother as the Speaking Subject," the first in a series of articles on the Death Mother archetype. Laufer takes the reader on a journey into a seldom entered territory to view the humanity of these mothers who are most often otherized as monstrous and mad. Through her own experience Brooke helps the reader understand the subjectivity of these women.

David Swanger's poems evoke themes of birth, death, and offer the image "belief is a small dog," which moved me to think of loyalty, companionship, devotion, and other qualities that we all yearn toward. Surely, Neil Kostik's memorial to Steve Joseph, a former editor of this publication, reflects those among other of his fine qualities as a psychoanalyst and man.

Two reviews resonate with archetypal themes: alchemy and mediality. Thom F. Cavalli's review of Catherine MacCoun's book *On Becoming an Alchemist: A Guide for the Modern Magician* focuses on how alchemical processes transform baser substances into higher ones, a metaphor for the process of working with emotions. Dennis Patrick Slattery's review of Roberta Bassett Corson's book *Stepping Out of the Shadows: Naming and Claiming the Medial Woman Today* takes the work of Toni Wolff on the medial woman as a starting point. Cassandra appears again as an example that the author references. Slattery writes, "*Mediality* is an in-between space wherein two domains are bridged—conscious and the collective unconscious, self and other, dreams and waking life, for example. Mediality is also a form of community-making; it is fluid, supple, and nuanced and allows the one who mediates to exist in multiple human structures simultaneously."

Profound themes reverberate throughout this issue—transcendence, mediality, duality, balance, identity cohesion and discord—for both the individual and the community. From an astrological point of view, in 2023 Pluto, the planet that brings breakthrough or breakdown energy, the planet of regeneration and creator of new life, is transiting from Capricorn into Aquarius, the sign known for humanitarian, innovative, and progressive traits. This astrological configuration occurred during the time of the French and American Revolutions, which offers a mirror into the magnitude of disruption and reconfiguration that is possible during such a time. Here at the San Francisco Jung Institute, we have not escaped these plutonian pressures. The loss of an old and move to a new home and challenges to existing orders are evident. I believe we all hope that with adequate containment and process, respect for the personal, cultural, and archetypal factors that press on all of us, the tensions and disharmonies that have emerged represent the pains of growth that are intrinsic to the process of positive transformation.

Katherine Olivetti, Interim Editor

ENDNOTE

1. From Adele Aldridge, *I Ching Meditations: A Woman's Book of Changes*, <https://www.ichingmeditations.com/ching-hexagrams/hexagram-chien-modesty/>.

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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