

Recognizing Life Events as Animated by Soul

By Pat Muller

Abstract

According to the Tibetan master Djwhal Khul, the preferred approach to psychology is to consciously bring in the powers of the soul. Here Jungian concepts are used to show that by changing perspective the tools of traditional psychology can also be used to gain more conscious awareness of the effect of soul on our life. Looking at the events in our life metaphorically allows us to see the wisdom behind what happens to us and to see the soul at work. Thus even with a basis in traditional psychology, an occult approach is justified.

The Tibetan master Djwhal Khul outlines three psychological approaches to help someone. The first consists of "delving into the patient's past; it seeks to unearth the basic determining conditions which lie hidden in the happenings of childhood or infancy" (Bailey, 1942, p. 498). It seems very similar to traditional psychology. The second approach consists in "filling the present moment with constructive creative occupation and so drive out the undesirable elements in the life through the dynamic expulsive power of new and paramount, engrossing interests" (Bailey, 1942, p. 498). The third approach, which the Tibetan tells us is sanctioned and used by Hierarchy, is "to bring in consciously the power of the soul. This power then pours through the personality life, vehicles and consciousness, and thus cleanses and purifies all aspects of the lower nature" (Bailey, 1942, p. 498). From the occult perspective, it seems obvious that psychology needs to shift its attention away from the first approach, and toward the third

approach, conscious recognition of the soul. An appropriate example to illustrate the use of the Tibetan's third approach within traditional psychology might be the meaningful..." (Jacobi, 1964, p. 357). If we accept this notion that physical events can have a meaningful relationship with the psyche, and such occurrences are well documented both by Jung and many other researchers, it then becomes easy to apply some of the properties of the psyche to gain some insight into the meaning offered by these synchronistic events. We can then observe how the tendency of the unconscious to balance the conscious through compensation (the harmonizing factor of soul) and its tendency to fill in gaps in consciousness with complementation (the soul bringing in more light) may be manifesting themselves not only in our dreams, but in the events of our daily life.

In this manner, the same wise guidance we seek by interpreting our dreams, a process known as dream tending, can also be available to us when we make a symbolic interpretation of the chain of events that make up our life. We need to shift the perspective we have of our life stream from literal to metaphoric, and in this way we can learn from and be guided by the wisdom of both our personal, as well as the collective unconscious, as they manifest in the events of our daily life. We can now apply the same Jungian tools and techniques, such as amplification and active imagination, which have proved successful in dream-tending material, to the events around us and thus use our life stream as a guide in our journey

toward wholeness. In this way we can place our attention on connecting consciously with the causative agency in our life: the soul.

We lay out the foundation for this new perspective starting with the nature of the unconscious from a Jungian perspective. According to Jung the field of consciousness can be separated into what is known and what is unknown. The known is the realm of the personality that is the center of the field of consciousness. The unknown portion of consciousness is then, by definition, the unconscious, and according to Jung, that is the domain of the soul, which he calls Self. He further divides the unconscious into two realms: "an 'extra-conscious' psyche whose contents are personal and an extra-conscious' psyche whose contents are impersonal and collective" (Jung, 1959B, p. 7). (It seems that in much of the literature the term psyche is used somewhat synonymously with the term unconscious and, in this paper, we are positing that the portion of the unconscious we are interested in is the supra-conscious, the realm of the soul).

The notion that the unconscious has a collective and autonomous aspect, and is not simply a storehouse of our repressed personal past, is one of Jung's great contributions to depth psychology. He further explains: "I understand the unconscious rather as an impersonal psyche common to all men, ..." (Jung, 1959B, p. 186) and that it has "its requirements and needs just as consciousness has" (Jung, 1959B, p.186). Thus in the Jungian sense, the unconscious is a collective principle which binds us and the whole universe together. This notion articulates the notion of the *Unus Mundus* in which [p]syche and matter exist in one and the same world, and each partakes of the other..." (Jung, 1959, p. 261) and reminds us specifically of the realm of our unitive principle, the soul. A crucial notion here is that the unconscious, particularly the collective unconscious, includes, by definition, everything that is not conscious, and it is in that realm that the phenomena we are interested in originates. We are seeking to

become more conscious of the parts of ourselves, soul, which we do not know well as yet. Let us now examine some of the workings of the Jungian unconscious.

Jung tells us that: "The psyche is a self-regulating system that maintains its equilibrium just as the body does" (1974, p. 101). He further elucidates this regulating interplay between the conscious mind and the unconscious when he tells us that: "It is, in fact, one of the most important tasks of psychic hygiene to pay continual attention to the symptomatology of unconscious content and process for the good reason that the conscious mind is always in danger of becoming one sided, of keeping to well-worn paths and getting stuck in blind alleys" (1959A, p. 20).

Jung emphasizes that the unconscious functions autonomously, in ways not always in accord with the conscious mind. Although he refuses to "personalize" the unconscious, it does have a "mind of its own." The compensatory nature of the unconscious serves then to emphasize polar aspects in opposition to the content of the conscious mind, in order to offer it a sense of balance.

The Jungian analyst Eugene Pascal tells us that this compensatory action of the psyche "...creates a reconciliation of opposites within us, the tension of which produces a more refined psychic energy and more nuanced life" (1992, p. 207). This sounds strikingly like the unitive energy of soul. He goes on to say that: "When all the aspects of consciousness and unconsciousness come together, we are slowly made aware of an entity called the Self that is synergistically greater than the sum of the psyche's parts" (1992, p. 207). This is an allusion to the process of spiritual development that the Jungians call individuation, whereby we become conscious of the [Jungian] Self, the soul, leading us toward the realization of the meaningfulness of life. Again according to the Jungian perspective, this spiritual growth occurs as a result of one's increasing ability to hold on to pairs of opposites (psychically). Thus the compensatory nature of the psyche is a force that drives us toward more conscious

knowledge of soul and serves to render us more aware of polarities that may not be fully integrated by our conscious mind.

Another aspect of the regulatory function of the unconscious is complementation. Again, in the words of Jungian analyst Eugene Pascal, complementation is the process by which the unconscious "...simply supplies missing aspects that perhaps have resulted from a lack of perception of an outer life situation or inner psychic state" (1992, p. 236). Complementation is the psyche's attempt to enrich the limited perspective of the conscious mind by revealing some under-emphasized piece of the whole.

The unconscious, generally speaking, is a unifying factor that pushes us toward psychic harmony between our conscious and unconscious. Since the unconscious is collective, we could argue that this desired harmony is not simply intra-psychic, but also applies between us (the personal), and the world (the collective). According to Jung, "...this [lack of harmony] is the reason for a vast majority of psychogenic misfortunes ranging from severe accidents and illness to harmless slips of the tongue". (1974, p. 74). Often the unconscious will operate autonomously from the conscious mind, and this can be seen in the figures of the anima and animus, according to Jung, our female and male parts. For example, "falling in love" with someone only to later realize that we were projecting the lovable qualities on the other person is an example of such autonomous operation of the psyche. It is when we learn to realize and "own" such projections that we grow toward individuation.

Given that the unconscious has a tendency to push us toward wholeness, Jung believed that the expression of psychic phenomena extended beyond the intra-psychic world of dreams into the world of the somatic, the events in our life. This effect he called synchronicity and explained it thus in the popular book, *Man and His Symbols*: "It [synchronicity] is based on the assumption of an inner unconscious knowledge that links a

physical event with a psychic condition, so that a certain event that appears 'accidental or 'coincidental' can in fact be physically meaningful; and its meaning is often symbolically indicated through dreams that coincide with the event" (Jacobi, 1964, p.357).

Synchronicity does not imply a relationship of cause and effect, Jung emphasized, but rather of meaningfulness. It could be said that it is through synchronistic occurrences that the [Jungian] Self, our soul, communicates its wisdom (that of the collective, really) to our personal consciousness, the personality. Jung's writings, which place the Self (the soul) at the center of the unconscious, further elucidate the synchronistic relationship between the Self and the personality. It is important to note that, contrary to the Tibetan, Jung means personality when he uses the term ego. Jung further elucidates: "The self, moreover, is an archetype that invariably expresses a situation within which the ego is contained. Therefore..., the self..., acts like a circumambient atmosphere to which no definite limits can be set, either in space or in time. (Hence the synchronistic phenomena so often associated with activated archetypes)" (Jung, 1959B, p. 168). The concept of synchronicity helps elucidate a world view where we exist in a matrix of personally meaningful events.

"Meaningfulness is what distinguishes synchronistic events from an event that is mere coincidence" (Martin 1991, p. 19), explains K. Ramakrishna Rao, a leading parapsychological researcher who considers Jung's work a rich source for vocabulary and concepts for his research in parapsychology. He further believes that at the deeper levels of the psyche: "...at the psychoid level, our psyche is a microcosm with a latent capacity in the unconscious for knowledge independent of our senses and for action beyond normal energetic interaction (Martin 1991, p. 19)." It seems that this meaningfulness is relevant both in space, 'influencing' what events occur to us, as well as in time, arranging' when they occur.

K. Ramakrishna Rao appears to go a bit further than most in his interpretation of

meaning, going as far as suggesting that we may open ourselves to synchronistic experiences to the extent that we attribute more meaning to them. He claims that: "a synchronistic event becomes meaningful to the extent that it is experienced as a reflection of the unconscious by the connection it makes between the psychoid level and conscious experience through the meditation of archetypes" (Martin, 1991, p. 20). He goes on to say: "The meaningfulness, then, is not merely a sign, but in a very significant sense the 'cause' of the paranormal experience. The relationship is not causal in the ordinary sense, but hermeneutic and possibly teleological." (Martin, 1991, p. 20).

When viewed from this perspective, it can be seen that critical events in our lives can serve as catalysts for our development and individuation. In the words of the famous Jungian analyst Marie Louise von Franz, synchronistic events "almost invariably accompany the crucial phases of the process of individuation" (1964, p. 211). It also appears that the more emphasis we place on such synchronistic events, the more meaning and significance they take on in our life, and the more meaning we can derive from them.

Given the definition of the unconscious, its tendency toward unifying opposites through compensation and complementation, and the tendency of synchronistic events to occur around activated archetypes, we have all the pieces with which begin exploring our life stream of events in a new and meaningful way. Interpreting synchronistic events in much the same way as we would dreams would put us more in touch with the unity of the universe and our place within that unity. One Jungian analyst who is very much in favor of this kind of interpretation is Jean Bolen. In her words: "In the experience of a synchronistic event, instead of feeling ourselves to be separated and isolated entities in a vast world, we feel the connection to others and the universe at a deep and meaningful level. That underlying connection is the eternal Tao, and synchronistic events are a specific

manifestation of it" (Bolen, 1979, p. 24).

To gain greater understanding into the mechanism of interpreting the synchronicity of events is to use the Jungian nomenclature of complexes and archetypes and view them as operating within psychic fields; the conscious and the unconscious fields. A recent article in the journal of the Archaeus Project expresses this notion quite well: "...[W]e may be able to apply knowledge of psychic structures to the understanding of the external world..." (Stilling, 1989, p. 14). Beginning with the simple effects unconscious processes can have on our stream of consciousness, we see that: "Psychological complexes exert a field effect, based on their energetic level, that can interfere with conscious processes..." (Stilling, 1989, p.14).

An example of this would be the proverbial Freudian slip of the tongue. Going further and deeper into the Jungian structure, we have: "The archetype, which lies behind the complex, has even greater power, and its field effect can extend to an unknown distance and order psychological and even physical events - as in synchronicity" (Stilling, 1989, p.14). This gives a simple way to grasp such a fundamental and far-reaching principle.

It is very important to keep in mind that the way in which the unconscious communicates with us is not literal, but rather a metaphorical and symbolic way as we attempt to unravel the synchronistic events in our life. The Jungian analyst Jean Bolen suggests analyzing synchronistic events much the same way as dreams, using the Jungian techniques of amplification and active imagination.

Going a step further than analyzing life events, if we elaborate on the idea of informing ourselves using the synchronistic events of our life stream as we would dreams, then we can also make use of some of the latest perspectives and tools of phenomenological amplification as described by Dr. Steve Aizenstat who favors "Tending your dreams" (1993) rather than interpreting them. According to Dr. Aizenstat, adopting this idea

of dream tending also implies a more fundamental realization that dreams are not simply "our" dreams, but have a life of their own, and that in phenomenological amplification, we can tend that life, which exists between the dream and us. In a similar fashion, I believe that we are not simply living out our own personal life, but rather that our life is unfolding as part of a greater ecology, Life, a unified stream which is the Life of the Unus Mundus, the unity found at the soul level.

By using Dr. Aizenstat's dream-tending assumptions extended to the metaphors of our life stream, we may then realize, as we "tend" to our own life events, the sense of unity which is the property of the Jungian Self, the soul, as we progress on our journey of individuation. Another dimension of this approach is that, as we use our life stream as a source of wisdom, we are led to lead our life in greater harmony with the collective unconscious, in a sense the Unus Mundus, and this makes good ecological sense at the psychic level.

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