
Desire, Spirit, and Inner Conversation*

Kathryn Madden

Abstract:

One of our goals in the process of analytical psychology is to become aware of the inner movement of desire and spirit in our psyches. Jungian psychology offers a map of psychological growth in the context of relational conflict, creative inspiration, various layers of personal healing, and deepened spirituality. Following the thread of desire in our images and dreams helps us to distinguish the difference between fantasy and imagination and develops self-reflection in respect to our personal obstacles and defenses. Above all, we experience active individuation through creative expression. *Quadrant's* 2011 Distinguished Artist, Brent Weston, is once again featured illustrating his own artistic awareness of what desire in relationship to spirit asks of us.

Key Words:

desire, spirit, inner conversation, *sensus communes*, soul

Kathryn Madden, Ph.D. is a psychoanalyst of Jungian/psychodynamic orientation in New York City. She is author of *Dark Light of the Soul*, Editor-in-Chief of *Quadrant*, and co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*. Kathryn is on the faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute and a Lecturer at Union Theological Seminary. She served as Academic Dean, President, and Chief Executive Officer of the Blanton-Peale Institute for ten years and was awarded the New York Society for Executives Award for Social Responsibility for her trauma program, "Project Care." Email: maddkc@aol.com

*This article was first presented as a lecture for The Fairfield County Jung Society at Temenos Institute in April, 2010.

Painter **Brent Weston**, who hails from Tennessee, has been influenced by an awareness of the sounds of nature in conjunction with lectures and study. Having traveled through Western Europe, Morocco, and Turkey, he spent three months studying in L'Abri, Switzerland. There, he was inspired to build an easel made of cut wood and sticks from Tolkien's short story, "Leaf By Niggle," along with personal research of the Bible's "creative mandate." He then headed off to Italy with his easel and a small gouache paint set, later returning to paint in Switzerland and in France. In the US, he has studied at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the Architecture Program, The Atlanta College of Art, and the University of Tennessee. Brent's solo exhibitions include "Bipolar," at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia (1997) and "Untitled" at the Czigan and Rummel Gallery in Jacksonville, Florida (2001). Group showings include "Coincidence" in Monzambano, Italy; The Nexus Patron's Party; and he participated in Project Interconnections, Inc. from 2002-2008, guest-speaker, Mrs. Rosalynn Carter. Brent has a fascination with Carl Jung's teachings and has attended Jungian seminars on spirituality and psychology at the Journey into Wholeness conferences in North Carolina. Email: bt.weston@earthlink.net

This evening's talk is about desire, spirituality, and imagination. My hope is that you'll gain an increased awareness of the vastness of the psyche, belief that the unconscious really exists, and return home with some practical tools for working with self-reflection in your own inner lives. I will be speaking about various obstacles that can get in our way and make us stuck preventing a free flow of desire, and offering some ideas as to how we can work through some of these hurdles toward more creative and healthful living.

One of my favorite inspirational thoughts is to find that thing that makes you like nobody else and to live it. There is only one blueprint that is you and, as Carl Jung indicates throughout his writings, an individual's intentional dialogue between the conscious and unconscious dimensions of the psyche can make a considerable difference in that person's community and in the world. That "thing" that makes us unique often has to do with our desire.

Desire is a specific kind of longing. It is full of sighs. Desire is different for each one of us. Desire might have to do with yearning for a specific person, for better health, for a new job, a better job, or, in this current environment of economical paucity, perhaps just to have employment. It may have to do with finding the resources to pull ourselves out of a depressed mood, or to reconcile with someone

Desire has an aim.

who we've wounded or who has hurt us. *What* do we really wish for? What is of ultimate concern to us that we don't quite have, that we don't feel fully connected to that creates in us a deep, deep longing?

What images does your desire cluster around? Sexual thoughts that repeat? An ideology? Something that we eat or drink? Something in nature? Desire, by its very nature is rarely intellectual, although it might show itself in intellectual form. Is there something that we long to accomplish before we die? Is there an obvious theme, a color or colors that your desire collects around?



(FIG. 1) SPACE

Desire has an aim. Knowing what that aim is doesn't come to us as easily as we might think. Sometimes we have to do quite a bit of work to get at what exactly the aim is. We have to dig. This process is an archeological digging into the unconscious psyche. We need to do a lot of self-reflection to become conscious of what is going on in our interior lives. As we dig, we become more aware of the aim of our desire. If we pay attention to the intention of our digging, a more defined color, something primary that might take on an object-form, begins to become more available to us.

... desire links with spirit and brings the body into the spirit.

If we really stick to our archeological excavation of the psyche, we eventually may feel that something is moving toward us. This occurrence feels like something is pulling us in one direction or another, and we want to know what this image, object, or entity is in connection to the aim of our desire and where it is leading us.

If we were to put this discernment in terms of spirit, analogous to what Jung thinks of as the Self, we eventually might encounter a bridging factor that points to transcendent spirit. And spirit, in this later sense, may cross over and meet us head on with shattering intensity. Yet, initially what we're after is putting first things first in the psyche, toward having a passionate, all-out loving with what we are locating in our self-exploration. This lavishing is not narcissistic if it doesn't remain centered upon ourselves. Abundance of desire is efficacious when it is directed toward another.



(FIG. 2) BLUE BOVINE AT NEUSCHWANSTEIN

What does all this passion want? Where is it leading us? In terms of spirituality, desire leads to spirit, and spirit attracts desire. God incarnates in the flesh of the psyche, and the psyche is not divorced from the instinctual body. In other words, desire links with spirit and brings the body into the spirit.

Unfortunately, in the Christian tradition, for one, there is a split between spirit and desire. In many traditions, desire is dangerous and we shouldn't have it. Or its intentions are misunderstood. For example, one of my patients of the Catholic faith

tradition has been convinced by the doctrine of his church that his occasions of self-release have led him to go blind, when, in fact, he lost sight in one eye when he was an infant. He is a single man and longs to find his bride. Convinced that he is being punished for his physical acting-out, he begs for medication that will squelch his libido so that he won't lose the other eye, which retains only 20% sight.

Following the lead of desire is a distinguishing characteristic of Jung's psychology. For Jung, the psyche begets. Things originate from the psyche. Since we all have psyches, we are all authors or begetters from this perspective. In this process of authoring, a seed arises from the psyche. We have to catch it, pay close attention to our desires, sometimes labor with what we catch.



(FIG. 3) BUBBLES OF BOVINE

Where spirituality and Jung begin to overlap is on this theme of desire and where it leads. I think of that moment in New Testament Scripture when Mary says “My soul doth magnify the Lord” (Luke 1:46). We can look at the image of the seed becoming incarnate literally, symbolically, and on an anagogical level.

What is that seed in us? Jung would claim that human individuation potentially leads to the totality of *hieros gamos* wherein we find the divine marriage of opposites in the human being. How does this spark of incarnation manifest? We all can give birth to something, male or female. Our desires lead us to the body—of feelings and images and to the spirit, or, through the spirit back to the body. If we pay attention to this movement, we get to where we belong.



(FIG. 4) BLUE AND CENTER

Obstacles

On the other hand, desire can go awry, and the seed of passion does not germinate because we misinterpret the direction of our desire. Our passion can land on the wrong object and actually become a poison to our creative aliveness. When desire goes off-center, it is like a plant that becomes stunted in its growth or whose shoots become blocked.



(FIG. 5) MODEL, EASELS, AND ARTIST

From a psychological perspective, certain obstacles may have occurred in our developmental lives. These can include childhood traumas, verbal or physical abuse, environmental deficiencies, and/or numerous impingements upon our psychological growth.



(FIG. 6) THE BROKEN WHOLE

If we can't work our way through our obstacles, desire cannot become conscious. Psychological inflation is one result. When our desire falls on the wrong object, it inflates in a way that people channel what they think is the new true God, ideology, or cause. We are all too familiar with the results of the fundamentalisms of our time, in which peoples' experience becomes highly projective and tightly contained within very specific walls.

Another obstacle is that our desire falls upon things that are too small of an object, like addictions, alcohol, food, shopping, working our bodies and psyches beyond our innate limits, or losing our core selves to rigid dogmas. In our digging, we have to address these obstacles first before we will get to the free flow of desire toward the object that desires us.

Jung gives us a useful map of how to negotiate the terrain of obstacles.

Intrinsic to his giving us guidance is his specific language for desire. Those familiar with Freud are aware that he used the term libido for desire. Libido pertained primarily to sexual energy that could be transformed into life and work. Jung renamed libido as psychic energy. Psychic energy includes the sexual, but is not only the sexual. Psychic energy includes sex and aggression but, most importantly, it is vital energy that can participate with divine *pneuma*: breath, or soul.

Jung is not saying that psychic energy *is* God, or the divine. He is saying that the psyche is a bridge to the deity. The psyche is the primary source of our spirituality and spiritual experience, even if our experience is sometimes of emptiness, an abyss, a black hole!

He emphasizes the function of our psyche as a tool that is a corrective to the experience of spirituality becoming rigid, rote, and lifeless as sometimes occurs in institutional religion.



(FIG. 7) OIL AND SAND

Next Steps

Desire has an aim, or intentionality, and the psyche functions as a vehicle or container to help us find where our desire is leading. We are tracking the psychic energy, attending to any obstacles along the way, with the purpose of locating the spirit that inhabits us—both in the psychological and spiritual sense. This is an active process in which we are seeking to discover the language of our bodily instincts and our unconscious life. If, in any way, this energy is immovable, we need to discern at what layer of the psyche it is stuck.



(FIG. 8) LASCAUX LEOPARD

Layers of the Psyche

How and where do we start digging so that we can accept, receive, and discover the deeper aim of our desire? How do we access it? Jung says that desire and spiritual discovery occur through primarily three layers of the unconscious psyche. Albeit familiar to all who have studied Jung, these three layers have many subsets, and certain aspects pertain more to the relationship between desire and spirit.

These layers include: 1. Our personal images; 2. The cultural layer; and 3. The archetypal layer. We begin with our personal images and work our way through the first two layers and then relate to the archetypal. We begin by asking ourselves: What are the dominant images that we like and don't like in our faith traditions, our culture, our relationships, our work places?

It is important to not reduce our images to what is obvious and already known by our conscious selves. The images of desire are instinct-based, living things that are specific to the individual. Our images involve a real exploration. We want to inquire into their specific meaning and then compare and contrast them to traditional meanings. What we'll find is that the language is always double: that of the visible and obvious and that of the psyche.

For instance, one of my patients has a repeated dream of a pair of beautiful large blue eyes looking at her. This image is very specific to her life, her past, present, and future. If I were to tell her what I thought her image meant, this could stop her own process of digging. We need to be very careful and sensitive to another person's images lest we burn any bridges that might lead us or meet us on the bridge to the divine beyond.



(FIG. 9) JAIL WINDOW AND FIST

Layers

The first layer of our personal images is about the kind of ego we have. The ego is our place of personal residence, our house. The ego's special ingredient is consciousness. Consciousness is the only mediation between us and the deeper unconscious, the archetypal layer.

The ego is also a complex. The psyche is full of complexes and our ego is just one of them. A complex is a center of energy. It has a feeling tone and has a lot to do with our emotions, images, and behavior patterns. In other words, sometimes



(FIG. 10) ATOMIC CELL ÌBÎ

when we feel rather helpless about something we've done, or a way that we've acted, we could say "My complex made me do it!"

In such cases, our complex "has us" rather than our "having it." At the heart of the ego complex is a rather powerful and profound archetypal image that grabs us. Jung calls this heart or center the Self. Let me give you an example of ego complex in relation to the other two layers.

Let's take the image of mother. We all have images of our personal mother, then we have associations to our cultural images of mother, and at the center, archetypal images of mother. All of these layers can have a double nature. For example, we have a personal mother, who maybe we remember as creative and warm, but she might also have had a side to her that made us feel like we were a burden. So we learn to withdraw and to swallow our words and feelings.



(FIG. 11) "FATHER, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

The main thing to note is that our ego complex relates to the other main layers of the psyche. We feel and do things because of our complexes. We might get a stomach ache, or suddenly go blank, or get a sudden feeling of persecution as the result of the intrapsychic dynamics of a complex.

The cultural notion of mother is conditioned by the collective culture. For example, there's motherhood, Mother Church. The third layer, the archetypal, is timeless. Jung tells us that at the core of the archetype lies the entire history of ancient historical evolution of humankind. Psychologically, our mother ini-

*The anima/animus is the mediator or bridge
between the ego and the ultimate archetype of wholeness.*

tially carries the archetypal inheritance for us from the moment that we become incarnate beings. The exact moment of that incarnation is debatable. For some, it pertains to the moment of birth. For others, it has to do with the kernel of the ego being formed. I tend to think of incarnation in light of Jung's notion of a seed being germinated in the psyche, which would place incarnation at a much earlier moment, perhaps even before the actual moment of pregnancy.

If our mother, for whatever reason, did not or could not carry this archetypal birthright for us—for example a depressed mother might not have the resources—this absence of a much needed presence can result in numerous developmental shortcomings such as an overwhelming image of emptiness throughout our lives, or an inability to find intimacy.

Anima/Animus

If you can envision the psyche as a big circle, and that we are traveling toward a center, one of the first things the ego encounters is what Jung called the anima and animus. The words anima and animus find their etymological derivative Latin, meaning breath or soul. For our purposes, in terms of the notion of desire, the initial concept is that we have this other gender stance in our own ego, which has an opposite point of view to our ego gender identity and position.

One way to get a sense of this image of desire is to make a list of persons of the opposite sex who arouse a strong positive reaction in us and we begin to get a sense of what the image(s) is. Sometime these images can surprise us because they can be quite estranged from what the ego believes or projects its objects of desire to be. There are stages of development that the anima and animus can undergo over a lifetime that deepen all aspects of our sense of embodied self, the dimensions of who we are as an internal unity, which has implications, in turn, for our spirituality.

In encountering the anima or animus within us, or externally in object-form, can raise obstacles and stumbling blocks similar to what I mentioned above. Depending on our upbringing, our environment, our wounds, and so on, our desire toward these inner and outer figures can grab hold of the ego in projective form, rendering us off-center. Such impediments can divide the anima or animus in two. Even Jung suffered from split desire.



(FIG. 12) BEYOND ME

Yet, we want to locate our images of anima and animus. The anima/animus is the mediator or bridge between the ego and the ultimate archetype of wholeness. It can usher us into the deeper psyche and open the terrain of spirituality.



(FIG. 13) ITALIAN QUASAR

Archetypes

Archetypes are important to a discussion of desire because they are universal symbols that are inherited, although their content will be different for all of us based upon our parents, our environment, our cultures. They are a pre-formed, ever-ready universal system and cause us to feel deep meaning when we are aligned with them. Archetypes are timeless, but form great myths in time. The archetype is also the center of the God image. Most important for our subject is that Jung investigated the God image in terms of desire and spirit.

I say God image, because the deity can never totally be known in its mystery. Most of us have inherited a cultural God-image and have chosen to relate to it or not. To get to the larger, archetypal level of God-image, Jung tells us that there is another part of the psyche we need to address.

The Shadow

Jung calls this part of the psyche the shadow. The shadow is also a complex. The shadow is all the stuff we don't like, don't want. Shadow material turns up in projections. Projections are about otherness, things we don't like about ourselves that we cast upon someone else. From the ego's point of view, the shadow may feel very other. Projections of shadow exist in racism, fundamentalism, homophobia,



(FIG. 14) THE GLASS BACHELOR

How do we deal with shadow projections; how do we free our desire from obstruction? We need to “dig” into the lacunae—the gaps—in our psyches and become conscious of what is still meaningless or unconscious. We may discover things we don’t like to admit about ourselves and that we “dump” these unwanted characteristics onto others, but we need to look honestly into what may not be particularly attractive to us and not be made dead by what we see. To integrate something into life and aliveness, there must be a feeling to it and a value, whether positive or negative, but our affect can’t be just a feeling of deadness, boredom, or avoidance.

Looking with intentionality into a meaningless abyss or void, we may get a hint on why a hip doesn’t work, or why we have chronic back pain, or migraine headaches, or anxiety that seems to come upon us like a fallen beehive. Somewhere in these bodily things, desire is clotted up.



(FIG. 15) WARPED MANDALA OF THE SUNSET FLOWER

By throwing a new net of meaning over what we don’t know, and what most likely needs to change, we begin to hold the opposites that exist within us. These opposites are often the split positions that we inherit or learn. We inherently are influenced by culture and society, and a dualism forms somewhat naturally in us regarding our perceptions of what is good and what is revolting, vile, or at worst, evil.



(FIG. 16) G AT THE HWY, 127 YARD SALE

Change occurs by suffering because healing requires us to hold the opposites, which are the roots of our problem, until they begin to integrate and stitch up the hole or gap. When the mending of the hole begins, we start to authentically work with the trauma that put us in this position. We can begin to befriend the wound. From the view of spirituality, stitching up the hole of our own wounds and our cast-off parts contributes to the ongoing wholeness of God, to the spirit of life, which includes all of us.

Aim of the Ego and Archetype

In light of the theme of this talk, the spiritual aim is for desire to lead to spirit. When we dig deep, our ego-complex runs headlong into the fact that it is not the center of its own world. Jung calls this the ego-Self relationship. The Self is Jung's name for the central archetype of wholeness that contains all opposites. The psyche is the container in which desire is born. Our desire is pointing us. The Self was what he experienced in his own psychological exploration. The experience is that of our personal ego being pushed aside for the Self to come into the foreground. Jung was not trying to replace religion with this notion of Self! He never intended for his study of the unconscious psyche to connect us to a new deity.

Entering the terrain of the unconscious psyche is part of the process of knowing that we are possessed of the capacity to be conscious of the deity. In fact,

this process functions to help people to connect to their faith tradition. When we delve into these inner aspects of the psyche, we find that spirit knows us and wants to establish a living presence within us.

In sum, from Jung's view of the psyche, we see how our psychological work progresses layer by layer toward spiritual awareness. By engaging with these various layers of the psyche, we come to know what we most deeply desire and what most deeply desires us. A major turning-point occurs in our growth when the ego comes into relationship with the life-giving Self.



(FIG. 17) CRAZY B'S IN THE CHALICE

Inner Conversation

There is a process of active engagement that is somewhat analogous to what Jung discovered in his own experience. This process, as active imagination, is a tool for us to use along this journey of awareness. That means, or method is inner conversation. Inner conversation is an active engagement in the practice of seeking consciousness. In inner conversation, we try to become really conscious of all that

happens to us, all that is. It is a gathering up and a turning over of the content of our lives in which we examine and reflect upon the contents of the unconscious and explore the details that come forth through feelings, images, and dreams. Inner conversation involves glimpsing an *aperçu*, which means that we catch sight of the spark or image of what is there to be turned-over, tilled, and cultivated.

There are a few steps of preparation for beginning inner conversation. First, there is the fact of acceptance. We are basically saying “yes” to our existence, “yes” to who we are, and “yes” to our unique life circumstances—whatever they are. We need to see ourselves in order to be seen, whatever our state of being is: passionate, sad, feisty, hopeless. We accept who we are, where we are. If we never fully accept ourselves, it can become a psychological form of suicide, a denial of our birthright.

Self-acceptance is important because the activity of inner conversation is about receiving. If we can welcome ourselves with all the lumps and bumps and idiosyncrasies, we will be on the way to receiving. Receiving what?

Inner conversation enables us to receive a portion of our inner life that has been foreign to what we have known from the point of view of our egos. When the conscious interacts in a steady, active dialogue with the unconscious, we cross into a borderland in which we may feel quite alien to ourselves. This alien otherness is important to receive, especially because what comes up is usually what we need most to work on or to integrate. What may need to weave its way into our psyche is some otherness that has nested down in some cocoon of our body and psyche for decades, which needs to be brought to light, to breathe, to have air.

Noticing, accepting, and receiving the imaginal products and images that arise from our psyche, or unconscious life, is crucial. Here, there is an element of precaution. We don't know in advance what the contents of our projective materials might be. Jung warned us about digging this deep and recommended making this journey with another—a therapist, spiritual director, someone trained and knowledgeable about the contents of the deeper unconscious.

The Body

In addition to acceptance and receiving, a third conduit of preparation is that of our body. In fact, our body is often the point of entry for inner conversation because the body and psyche are so closely intertwined. The body registers what is ignited in the psyche. Repression of the things we don't like about ourselves that get projected, any of our woundings, can go into the body where they contribute to conditions ranging from depression to anxiety to phobias.

Acceptance and receiving what we find in the diggings into our psyches inclusive of the symptoms of our bodies is often one of the most difficult things for us to do. We may have self-esteem issues left over from childhood, or have gotten caught in one of our complexes, in which case our body has become a target of negative images and feelings. The body is intrinsic to desire and spirit, the act of imagination, dreams, symbols, and all the products of the unconscious. Nearly every desire that comes to us is a yearning for the ultimate. Something is struggling to come forward into consciousness.

We need to gather up and acknowledge whatever we have cast-off or despise about our body. These elements of preparation—accepting and receiving all of ourselves, including our bumps and bulges, scars and peculiarities, is crucial toward preparing ourselves toward the momentum of desire in relation to spirit.

Dialogue

When we begin to pay attention to the notion of inner conversation, we are engaging in a particular form of dialogue. This dialogue is inner. In cultivating this inner dialogue, we find a self, a dialogue-mate who is there and available. Remembering the notion of anima and animus, we find that we are not alone.

The anima/animus gives the other point of view in us and our ego has to answer and form a conversation. The dialogue consists of going back and forth to follow this inner voice. We need to keep asking who or what is this something other that comes to us from within? We try not to censor anything that speaks. If we listen within again and again, inner conversation can become living dialogue, in which a very specific identity is discovered.

Important to inner conversation is that we have a sense of ourselves while we are in the experience of the dialogue. One qualification is that the way we are with whatever comes up in the dialogue, includes the way the other is. It is like we are in two places or two persons at once. Initially this might feel a bit strange.

Think of reading a novel, or seeing a film, and how a character becomes a real presence in our imagination. In the darkened *temenos* of a theatrical space, something about our interiority remains open to the willing suspension of disbelief. We accept the otherness we experience on the screen or on the stage in a way that often leaves the rational mind “anesthetized.”

Inner conversation ignites our imagination to examine actively *what is happening to us* in the process. Instead of brushing certain feelings aside, we inquire. Inner contents that we might typically repel—otherness that feels unfriendly or neg-

We are making an assault on our own human interiority by inquiring even into the maddest ideas to see where they lead.

ative—are also who we are. Our entire interior needs to have a voice. What feels negative or unattractive needs to speak, or we deny our real selves and allow the ego to reign. We deny being found.

Our negative personifications or projections may, in the end, be the most positive factors in terms of our growth. If we don't acknowledge what is waiting there to be discovered—even the oddities hidden under the rock of repression or denial—we can fall prey to a form of narcissistic inflation in which we only want to know the good in ourselves. We don't ignore our spitefulness or the envy that exists in the shadows. We yank it out into the open because we really want to know ourselves in relation to the Self. We have to look at everything that comes before us! If we can grab hold of this active process of self-examination, it can become a passage to living our lives fully.

What we are engaged in is a full body and soul-centered projection inquiry in which we are talking to the contents we find inside. We are making an assault on our own human interiority by inquiring even into the maddest ideas to see where they lead. As Jung witnessed, in the thorough scrutinizing of all the inside parts of himself, the closer we get to the Self, the more likely it is that we'll encounter aspects of ourselves that seem illogical, or incongruous. There are elements of our egos, personas, or complexes that may cause us quite a bit of embarrassment or shame. Yet, we need to be willing to tolerate even that which feels absurd without blaming ourselves. Blame doesn't encourage consciousness.

Consciousness

Inner conversation is all about consciousness and transparency, as we make the unknown known. To really know ourselves in relation to the Self that bridges to the divinity, we have to accept the unknown and investigate it. We may have to exist in the darkness of the unnamed and unfamiliar for a time; sometimes for a very long time. We may have to identify with the shadow-world for awhile. This waiting can be uncomfortable. We may fall apart. One patient described this “as like having an autopsy and all of his parts robbed from his body, including his soul.” If something completely unpleasant threatens us to the point of crippling us we have to try to dis-identify with it. We may need help in doing this.

Nonetheless, even with the most troublesome moments, what is important is the intensity of our experience, the existence of something there that must not be denied. Nothing of the otherness of the psyche is too awful that it can't be useful. In essence, entering the inner terrain of inner conversation is a first step toward the deeper levels of the psyche and that which is beyond the psyche.

Seeking the Inner Other

Ultimately, inner conversation is about relationship and a fullness of being. Eventually what we have gone inward to find becomes an outward evolving of experience. We can only go out if we've gone in. There is an intriguing example of inner conversation and relationship in the late Hebrew wisdom literature called the Apocrypha. In the Wisdom literature interrelationship is the point! Each of the persons is each of the persons. There are two in inner conversation even when only one is speaking.

Re-reading the biblical Song of Songs from this perspective also is powerful. The bridegroom is not just talking to the bride. Each is the other. This interplay of inner conversation involves a conjunction of opposites. Initially, these opposites live within as opposites and as contraries, but they can finally come together. We need this opposite to fulfill our potential as human beings. The turning of the inside into the outside can feel disastrous, like a real rejection of who we think we are. Our normal self-boundaries melt, and our seams feel exposed and insecure. We acknowledge that we have self-doubt, fear, and resistance. Yet, in this incredible process that is inherently ours as human beings, we can embrace a dialectical structure of life.

Our intentional excavation requires an appetite, a hunger for these "receiving" moments that are "seeding" moments. We can't let these "seeding" moments go by. Through attention, acceptance, receiving, and dialogue, we begin to see that the world is comprised of a mutual attraction of things. One of the greatest experiences is when we begin to feel that everything is held together in a synaxis, meaning where things are united and act together.

By extension, there is social and cultural importance to the practice of inner conversation. Emerging from the inside out, we begin to see persons as distinct and individual in contrast to objects. From this topsy-turvy view, everyone is interesting. No one is rejected.



(FIG. 18) INSPIRED BY GRACE

Intentionality

Intention, from the Latin *intendere*, means a stretching toward, a going into. Wrestling forth something into consciousness from the unconscious requires that we stretch and go into. It is not that unconscious things don't come to us spontaneously. They do. They can knock us over or inspire great awe. Inner conversation is a bit different. It is more of a relating to the constant presence in our lives in the here and now. Our goal is that we are engaged in primary process, or "non-directed thinking," which really is foremost.

At some point, we become aware in ourselves of being in touch with an archetypal presence. This is both the root of our humanness and the potential for our development. It is a seeking, a looking for, and allowing of our desire and deepest longings to reach toward and connect with archetypal presence, which Jung (1960) says has to do with a spontaneous aim to fulfill ourselves:

We see [the self] entering into manifestation, freeing itself from unconscious projection, and as it grips us, entering into our lives and so passing from unconsciousness into consciousness, from potentiality into actuality. What it is in the diffuse unconscious state we do not

know; we only know that in becoming our self it has become [hu]man. (para. 398)

Inner conversation is the process of the human being coming out from the inside. Inner conversation is a two-leveled way of living. It begins with inner dialogue, with imagination.

We push back dimension by dimension to get to one dimension. We talk to ourselves and to that Self that knows about beyond Self. And “beyond the Self” something talks back. Because, in actuality, even with all of our hunger, digging, acceptance, and intentionality, we are being sought! For each of us, this will be different. For Jung, during his *Nekyia*, the dead of Jerusalem came to his door and made quite a racket, the point being, this imagery came to him.

At some point, we may not have any particular image. At some point, if we stick with this journey, we may begin “to see” in the form of imageless thought. In other words, we are no longer trying to define things into known categories. We might just develop a “confidence” in the immateriality of the meaning of love. In this sense, inner conversation eventually can become a way of knowing by unknowing.

We pass beyond the thoughts of the mind and the images of the psyche and the essential realities of archetypal residues. Sometimes, because of what we have taken and worked through, we move away from images and transcend them. We go beyond the ego and become one with objects, unite with them. Uniting becomes a sort of a multiple mirroring—a *sensus communis*. Objects are reflected in us and us in the objects, and the objects respond to us.

Vision

In this process of self-examination and digging, we are turned inside out. But we are actually closer to what we are meant to be than we ever were before when we were right side up.

This is the ego-Self alignment. We are not just ourselves but are also the other. In the direct way of union, the other encountered is an authentic subject. We experience that receiving is giving and giving is receiving.

In Jung’s terms, one individuates then, or becomes more whole by relating to the Self as a desiring subject. We are the object of the Self’s desire, as it is the object of ours. We can “see ourselves being seen.” We know that we have identity and that we are known. The passion of the other is met by the passionate self.

In the words of the *Song of Songs*, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine” (2000, 6:3). We now know there is something outside ourselves that is inside ourselves. Life moves beyond the attentive looking and acceptance to union, to an incarnate exchange, what Jung calls the *coniunctio oppositorum*. We continue to make ourselves available by becoming fully occupied in loving. There is so much size in the universe of the psyche and soul, it goes on forever. When we have truly received someone, we have them. “Having received you, I have you.”

Inner conversation is entering what lives forever. In the gap of uncertainty, forever facing the unknown, our total giving becomes, in the end, a complete receiving.



(FIG. 19) (K)No(W)

References

- Jung, C. G. (1960). *Psychology and religion: West and east*. *CW* 11. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- The King James Bible*. (2000). Cambridge, G. B.: Cambridge Edition.