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THE LIFE of EMOTION

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Introduction

Emotional Currents and Cross-currents

“These familiar flowers, these well-remembered bird-notes, this sky, with its fitful brightness, these furrowed and grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given to it by the capricious hedges—such things as these are the mother tongue of our imagination, the language that is laden with all the subtle inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood left behind them. Our delight in the sunshine on the deep-bladed grass today, might be no more than the faint perception of weary souls, were it not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years which still live in us, and transform our perception into love.”¹

This quote of Dickens stands for the intimate connection of life and love, and movingly expresses the transformative processes that change mere perception into imagination, memory and ever-shifting feelings. Like the sense of life, love shifts and acquires all the movements of memory and

¹ George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss pp. 41-42

imagination. Although we have become accustomed to notions of mind, brain, and intelligence, and we are familiar with the idea that seeing is believing (and, conversely, what we cannot see we cannot believe in), these concepts severely limit our capacity to feel, recognize and describe what were once called « the movements of the soul. » This Dickens quote evokes imagination and memory in the processes of thinking, loving and perceiving. Also, it expresses the life of emotions, which our contemporary world so often obscures.

The life of emotions is directly related to the concept of *psuche*, the Greek word for life force, breath, soul, that which distinguishes the living from the dead. *Psuche* is etymologically embedded in our terms psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis and is an essential concept for our understanding today of these disciplines as they have emerged from centuries of healing practices and philosophy. Yet the cacophonous dominance of rationality and irrationality in descriptions of our psychic life has deafened us to its pertinence today in considering the life of emotions and the role of emotions and relationships in defining time, history and ethics.

It is now commonly but misleadingly assumed that artificial intelligence is intelligence, and that comprehension can be « understood » by a machine, without emotions. Similarly it is assumed that « emotional intelligence » is emotional. In the pages that follow I hope to show that as human beings, all understanding however construed, requires a context of our own lived experience, a context of our bodies, our minds, our intuitions, our hearts and our souls all together. This context cannot be reduced to notions of the brain, cognition, the mind, the brain, neuroscience, or the human will, although these can be a part of the context. The most essential, the primary, element in this context is our emotional life, a little life rounded by sleep.

Our emotional life cannot be reduced to any mind/body dichotomy.²

Although some writers have assumed that it was the Greeks who gave us our present mind/body dichotomy, this is misleading. Not only are mind and

² Given the complementarity of mind/soul and body in Greek thought, it seems odd that many writers have assumed that the Greeks gave us the mind/body dichotomy. Whether a mind/body dichotomy ascribed to the Greeks or the mind/body dichotomy of our contemporary world, both leave out Aristotelean notions of action and ethics. Obviously artificial intelligence further complicates the picture by assuming that a non-human machine can « think » in any way resembling a human being

body not opposed in Greek thought, their complementarity is part and parcel of notions of time, change and the place of mankind in the universe. Just as God needed to breathe life into Adam to bring him alive, so the concept of *psuche* conjoins breath and life. It is emotion that breathes life into us, not rationality or thinking.

As a backdrop to the Greek notion of *psuche* there is the notion of *Logos*, the overriding principle of complementarity in the human world. *Logos* appears to be an inclusive concept, including both mind and body, both ethics and intuition, both individuals and societies in their relation to the surrounding world (Nature). *Logos* designates what we as human beings can know of what comes before and after us, the vast world of something far, far larger than our lives, our aspirations or our identities. Comte was fond of saying that humanity is composed of far more dead than living.

In our contemporary world, the fact of birth and death are associated with bodies, and what lies in between is often assumed to be the province of the

mind.³ The antithetical mind/body dichotomy was in place when Nietzsche wrote the *Birth of Tragedy*, opposing Dionysian and Apollonian forces.⁴ Apollo was the god of the sun, and Dionysos the god of the underworld, associated with Persephone and Pluto. Whereas their complementarity is an underpinning of Greek tragedy, and a reference to nature's life cycles and the cycles of the seasons, sun and soil—all required for growth, the antithetical definitions given by Nietzsche in his *The Birth of Tragedy* represent a major departure, a departure of profound significance for our contemporary understanding of the life of the mind.

Related to dialectical oppositions (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), the Nietzschean approach to tragedy and, implicitly, to the life of the mind, may be found throughout the social sciences; in dialectical materialism as well as

³ Traditionally defined as a combination of pity and fear, each of which increases the intensity of the other, for Aristotle, *katharsis* is the aim, the function and the purpose of tragedy. An intense jolt of energy, it is intended to reinforce human bonds and a sense of humanity, to restore health to ailing relationships, and faith in human capacities.

⁴ Although these oppositions would appear to designate conflicting antithetical concepts, the Dionysian vs Apollonian antithesis reduces the forces of heaven and earth to black and white, mutually exclusive notions. With Nietzsche, they assume a stagnant, immovable character, a power contest, force-counter-force. Reliance on assumptions of opposites is increasingly a problem for the social sciences and humanities.

in assumptions about progress and evolution. All imply a static, uni-directional history (Darwinian, embriological and teleological), determined by assumptions of negation, contradiction and conflict which distort the life and movement of history and obscure the life of emotions. The focus on static and dialectical oppositions (e.g, Nietzsche's Dyonysian vs Apollonian) hide from us the life and movement of our emotions, our *psuche*.

In contrast, *psuche* designates not rationality but rather what gives our emotions life; it designates a life force, a changing flux, far greater than reason, will or any individual life span. While dialectical oppositions might appear to generate energy, they cannot because they are merely « scientific », not « practical ». By practical here I mean Aristotle's definition of practical as what has an ethical effect because it is a part of *psuche*.

The dictum of the Delphi oracle: « Know thyself » may seem simple enough, but carries with it the portentous consequences of failing to recognize one's humanity. The tragic figure of Oedipus is doomed because, out of arrogance, hubris and a willful determination to defy prophecy, he failed to know himself, failed to abide by the Delphi dictum, thereby showing his

deficiencies and human limitations to all. For the Greeks, these human frailties were not sinful; rather they were believed to be expressions of *hamartia*, human failings, tragic flaws having nothing to do with guilt or punishable offense. In fact, these very flaws appear to be an integral part of *psuche* as they are of Greek tragedy. As distinguishable from gods, heroes can be tragic because they are human and can be characterized by *hamartia*. By definition gods cannot be tragic.

For the Greeks, thinking was a far more limited concept than *psuche*, the emotional experience of a life force beyond the confines of human understanding. But sometimes mind and *psuche* were so intimately associated as to be indistinguishable. Knowing oneself by definition meant the emotions of feeling alive, and feeling alive meant knowing oneself in relation to others and to Nature.

Whatever self-hood and identity are now construed to mean have therefore changed beyond recognition. In fact, change is a major theme of this book, change as a manifestation of life, of thinking and feeling, and change as a function of knowing oneself. Whatever identity is, it is always changing. It

depends on how we make use of those resources available to us as we attempt to think about and respond to our emotional, experiential, conceptual and perceptual worlds.⁵ Our responses necessarily include our relationship with others, both fantasized and « real, » what our bodies and imaginations and memories tell us.

It might even be said that self-knowledge as the recognition of *psuche* is the goal of psychology and psychoanalysis, and that this requires a sense of identity that far exceeds the individual will and necessarily extends to relationships and to a visceral sense of birth and death. Therefore is the responsibility of the psychologist and psychoanalyst to help patients know themselves and thereby feel more keenly the life of their emotions, to feel *psuche* and to recognize it within themselves. This requires on the part of the therapist an ability to recognize the *psuche* within in order to marshall the life-giving powers of human connections in the service treating suffering and trauma. This is an integral part of the Asklepiian tradition.

⁵ In this sense, this book is historical, being grounded in the present, with all the pitfalls and limitations of our present perspective.

Alas, this is a perspective that has been mostly lost. In the centuries between the Ancient Greeks and ourselves, it has come to be assumed that the activity of thinking constitutes life: « Je pense, donc je suis. » Descartes,⁶ uses the first person singular, referring directly to himself. Descartes turns this around. Existing, for him, depends not on feeling but on thinking. « Je pense donc je suis. » Presumably he could not exist if he did not think.

How different is this from the dictum « Know thyself » of Delphic Oracle, implying that those who do not know themselves—those who do not feel and recognize the power of *psuche*— are fated to be no more than the pawns of fate, living unreflective lives. Being alive requires overpowering emotions. Therefore those who do not know Dionysian intensity are incapable of recognizing *psuche*.

This difference is worth considering closely, since it obviously has serious consequences for our conceptions of thinking, as well as for psychoanalysis, psychology and psychiatry.⁷ Descartes marks a shift from the primacy of the

⁶ Descartes, Discours sur la methode.

⁷ There are implications for all branches of knowledge, from the quadrivium to the sciences, to the social sciences and to history.

feeling of life, clearly central to Greek notions of tragedy and ethics—to the theory of existence that depends upon thinking.

We are defined by the ways in which we feel about our thinking, by the ways in which we judge our feelings, and also by the ways in which we are thought by others, not only thought by others, but also also felt and imagined and judged by others whom we imagine and feel as they imagine and feel us. This process of looking and being looked at, of seeing and being seen, exists in human time, ever-changing and never stopping. Therefore, thinking is a response to emotions and sensations, not the other way round, although obviously thinking can influence emotions.

And seeing and being seen are evidence of this *psuche*, a life force far more powerful than anything we can imagine, a life force that defines our emotions and constitutes also a context for whatever we are able to think. We are thought and felt by others before we can think; as infants it is our parents and those around us who think us into existence. Our parents think of us before we are born, and we are born into their thoughts and reactions, their hopes and fears.

Greek Tragedy is rooted in the cult of Dionysios, a figure associated with the underworld and cave cults, a cult associated with bacchic ecstasy and wild enthusiasm, overwhelming emotions of irresistible, vitalizing power and awe-inspiring natural forces. The theater of Dionysos Eleuthereus⁸ was the most important theater in Athens, the epicenter of the cult and the theater where the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euipides, and Aristophanes were performed. Associating passions with overpowering emotions and life force, the cult of Dionysos and its celebrations were held to be the source also of music and dance as well as of Greek theater.

Bearing in mind Aristotle's notion of nature as the context for what is human, it would appear that the Dionysian cult, far older than Greek theater, provides the ground, the soil, from which theater, music and dance could grow. Greek tragedy then is framed by and animated by the cult, as human emotions are

⁸ It has been suggested that there may have been an altar in the center of the orchestra, and that under Lycurgus in the fourth century BCE, the theater would have had a capacity of 25,000. The altar suggests the cult of Dionysos.

framed and known through relations with Nature, often represented by the gods.

More generally, overpowering emotions and ecstasy were essential to the life of the Greek temples, which were places of healing, theater, dance and music. The Greek god of healing, Asklepios was associated with Dionysos, both being underworld, cthonic deities. Both drew their life-giving powers from deep within the earth. The Greek tradition of theater with its Dionysian ecstasy and overpowering emotions, draws into it medicine, dance and music—all in celebration of the power of life.

Thus the life of emotions is far larger than thinking, far larger than rationality, far larger than our experience as isolated human beings. *Psyche* necessarily draws upon our relationships, our families, our histories, our bodies, our sense of history and something like that inconceivably vast Nature, that logos, to be found in Greek thought.

Chapter 1

Tragic Emotions, Greek Tragedy and Katharsis

Aristotle, katharsis, natural forces and human limitation

With these notions of *psuche* in mind, we turn to the world of Aristotle and Sophocles. Aristotle's theory of tragedy (which takes Oedipus Rex as the quintessential tragedy) is a theory of the emotions and a theory of trauma and suffering, a theory that subordinates thinking to feeling, and feeling to a life force far greater than individual lives.⁹

For Aristotle, thinking and belief are not as separate as we might today assume. This is because for Aristotle both belief and thinking begin in emotions. Indeed, Aristotle writes: "beliefs are connected to emotions in a very intimate way: they appear to be part of what the emotion itself is."¹⁰ For Aristotle, the power of feelings strikes root in his concept of nature, individual feelings being the manifestations of natural powers far greater than human

⁹ Aristotle ranks tragedians according to the power of their emotional effects. Hence, he does not consider Euripides as powerful a tragedian as he does Sophocles because Euripides mistrusts and downplays inner conflict and human passions.

¹⁰ Nussbaum 2004, p.27

comprehension. Nature in Aristotle “is not the outward world of created things; it is the creative force, the productive principle of the universe.”¹¹

By placing Man in the context of far greater natural forces, Aristotle underscores human helplessness: “Man, who is her highest creation, she brings into the world more helpless than any other animal, --unshod, unclad, unarmed.”¹² For the Greeks, helplessness was linked to a sense of forces far more powerful and far larger than human lives. The « littleness » of human lives, their short compass, their limitations, were thus felt to be a testimony to the far larger powers of the vital force of the universe and Nature.

Related to the feeling of littleness with respect to the immensity of the world and of time, the sense of our limitations and their place in whatever we can conceive of as the natural order, is the Greek concept of *hamartia*. Translated as human failings, these are not in themselves reprehensible; rather, they are an integral part of tragic emotions. Aristotle’s tragic hero, then, is “a man . . .

¹¹ Aristotle, *De Anima* iv. 10.687 a 24,

¹² Aristotle, *Poetics* 1453a

whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty.”¹³

Whereas for us in the modern world, human helplessness has no larger context than the compass of our individual lives, human helplessness for Aristotle is “natural” because it frames *psuche*. It is natural because it is a part of Nature, as it is for Lucretius, who writes that the newborn arrives in the world “like a sailor cast forth from the fierce waves, lies naked on the ground without speech, in need of every sort of life-sustaining help, when first nature casts it forth with birth contractions from its mother’s womb and into the shores of light. And it fills the whole place with mournful weeping, as is right for someone to whom such troubles remain in life.”¹⁴

In Aristotle’s Poetics, the value of tragedy lies in its *kathartic* effect, most commonly translated as a purge through pity and fear. For Aristotle, *katharsis* is the aim, the function and the purpose of tragedy, but the purpose and function of tragedy is to express *psuche*. An intense jolt of energy, it is

¹³ Ibid, Poetics 1453a

¹⁴ Quoted in Nussbaum, 1986, p. 177

intended to reinforce human bonds and a sense of humanity, to restore health to ailing relationships, and faith in human capacities.

The notion of a kathartic purge appears to be directly related to medical traditions. In his Politics Aristotle describes *katharsis* as a process that works by providing a jolt of energy, causing patients to “fall back into their normal state as if they had undergone a medical or purgative treatment.”¹⁵ In both his conception of katharsis and his conception of Nature, Aristotle, was influenced by the tradition of Asklepios, the god who responded to human suffering and who healed in dreams.

Because his father was a physician, Aristotle, like Hippocrates before and Galen after him, was a member of the Asklepiads,¹⁶ the guild of physicians who associated themselves with Asklepios.¹⁷ As Asklepiads, Greek

¹⁵ Politics v (viii) 7. 1342 a 15

¹⁶ Sophocles may have been among those responsible for introducing the cult of Asklepios in Athens, and Hippocrates (the father of medicine) established his medical school in Athens. N. Collinge notes that except for Aristotle, Sophocles is more truly medical, more seriously a devotee of the craft, than any other literary figure of the fifth and fourth centuries” quoted in Ahl, p. 9

¹⁷ Accordingly, Aristotle’s conception of *psuche* carried with it the Hippocratic tradition to which Freud as a medical doctor was connected but from which he took pains to distance himself.

physicians both explicitly and implicitly relied upon nature to heal, and viewed human health in the context of suffering and of natural forces dwarfing human will. The intensity of katharsis¹⁸ and of kathartic emotions appear to be directly related to the Asklepiian tradition.¹⁹ As such it is a notion with which Aristotle, whose father was a physician and who was himself a member of the Asclepiads, was well aware.

Inasmuch as the force of the purge comes from a life force, of essential importance in the conception of healing, *katharsis* overlaps with *psuche*. In the Asklepiian tradition, Aristotle explicitly links katharsis to the life-giving restoration of balance, health and harmony, to the moral and socializing emotions (the social body).²⁰ The Aristotelian notion of katharsis restores

¹⁸ a notion which Freud borrows but with significantly different meanings.

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud was married to Martha Bernays, whose paternal uncle, Jacob Bernays, in 1887 wrote a pamphlet in German filled with errors (see Butcher p. 244 footnote 1) on the subject of katharsis as a medical metaphor.

²⁰ The prominent German philologist, classicist and philosopher Jacob Bernays, uncle of Freud's wife, Martha, and a towering orthodox Jewish intellectual, believed that katharsis is a medical metaphor. But he also stoutly defended Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy. (Rudnytsky, p. 217)

balance to the psyche while, simultaneously, strengthening the sense of social responsibility, ethics, and empathy.²¹

What is meant by « balance » in this context requires explanation. Essentially, *psuche* can be interpreted to designate not only life force but also restorative/healing powers. Therefore if *katharais* is to effect a « purge », the effect of the purge is intended to heal, and in this sense, to « balance. » And to « balance » is to allow for *psuche* to heal. This is reminiscent of the Asklepian/Hippocratic saying that it is the doctor's responsibility to be Nature's helper and not her teacher. This notion carries with it the sense of Nature's powers which are so much greater than human will or skill or experience.

Katharsis is an antidote to the imbalance of hubris, self-preoccupation and grandiosity. Just as *hubris* (egoistic self-preoccupation) proclaims man's overreach and insults and defies the powers of the gods, so *katharsis* re-establishes an awareness of human helplessness, of the relation between

²¹ Aristotle addresses both ethical disposition (*ethos*) and intellectual content (*dianoia*) Politics, p.liii

man and fellow man and between man and nature, between man and higher powers, instilling humility and a sense of place within the natural order.

Hippocrates, another physician and member of the Asclepiads, speaks of the four humors corresponding to four temperaments: sanguine (pleasure-seeking and sociable), choleric (ambitious), melancholic (analytical, introspective), and phlegmatic (calm). Such theories of temperaments are theories of healing, theories of healing are theories of emotions, and theories of emotions are theories of human nature.

Aristotle held that the function of tragedy was the « imitation of an action ». Tragedy was to borrow from nature the means to affect the emotions.²² « The tragedian's objective is to move us with the meaningful experience of human beings with whom we can identify ourselves (by) suffering with them. »²³ But « suffering with them » does not to us sound like « imitation, » since

²² By viewing art in terms of its effect, Aristotle places humanity squarely in the center of his aesthetics. Aristotle (Butcher xl) In his comments on Aristotle's Poetics Butcher writes « a work of art is an image of the impressions or 'phantasy pictures' made by an independent reality upon the mind of the artist, the reality thus reflected being the facts of human life and human nature. » p. 150

²³ Aristotle (Gassner) p.xLi-xlii

« imitation » comes with implications of a copy without emotion, a likeness, a simulacra.²⁴

Aristotle describes the difference between action and imitation as an ethical difference. Action depends upon ends; ends, as motivating forces, must be « good. » Aristotle writes « it is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man. For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot, for good action is itself its end. »²⁵

It follows then that when Aristotle speaks of « imitation » he is suggesting that tragedy is « an imitation of an action » and therefore that, like action, its aim is « the good. » What other way of understanding the effects of theater (or art, music, dance) is available to us without distorting the desired effects of art, or, by extension, without distorting our capacities to respond to the suffering of others?

²⁴ Much attention has been paid to the definition of « imitation ». Putting notions of psuche side by side with notions of katharsis, suggests that imitation is used only to distinguish the motivating source of emotion (memesis) and not to differentiate emotions themselves.

²⁵ Nicomachean Ethics 1140b

The spectator of a tragedy does not himself suffer literally, but his feelings « imitate » the suffering of the tragic hero. He « really » suffers. While bearing in mind that the hero is an actor, a human being who is « imitating » what he interprets to be the emotions of the character he is playing, as the spectators are « imitating » the emotions of the actor, it is clear that for all concerned, the suffering is real.

Aristotle continues, « The same reasoning applies equally to magnitude, to time and to motion. »²⁶ In other words the forces that breathe life into us all are a part of Nature and apply to our relation to the natural world.²⁷ For Aristotle tragedy is an imitation of an action which has magnitude. In other words, when tragedy has « magnitude » tragedy can transform, but by no means master, Nature. In what does the transformation consist? Not in some sort of usual mimesis. Quite the contrary, Nature is not a perfect model to follow. « Nature, often baffled in her intentions, thwarted by unfavorable matter or by human agency, yet tends towards the desirable end. »²⁸ In other

²⁶Aristotle, Physics VI i

²⁷ These tragic emotions necessarily include suffering, shame and helplessness, despair and awe and joy. Which points to the question: in what does being alive consist? How is the mind alive? How is the body alive?

²⁸ Aristotle (Butcher), p. 152

sords, Logos shows itself inevitably in the magnitude of tragedy. Tragedy is « a rivalry of nature, a completion of her unfulfilled purposes, a correction of her failures. »²⁹

Let us return to the Aristotelian notion of *katharsis*, a purgation of pity and fear; pity because spectators feel pity for the suffering represented by the tragedy, and fear that a similar fate could befall themselves. Aristotle writes: « Pity is a sort of pain at an evident evil of a destructive or painful kind in the case of somebody who does not deserve it, the evil being one which we might expect to happen to ourselves or to some of our friends , and this at a time when it seems to be near at hand. »³⁰

In other words, *Katharsis* is a sort of cleansing through shared suffering which must include fear for oneself « it could easily happen to me ». It is associated with the practice of Dionysian ecstasy, causing men to « fall back into their normal state, as if they had undergone a medical or purgative

²⁹ Ibid., p. 154

³⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* ii.8.1385

treatment. »³¹ One can see what this tradition means for Aristotle, whose famous definition of tragedy takes Oedipus as the prototype of the tragic hero. The pity and fear evoked in us, the spectators prompt us to resonate with the isolation, anguish and despair in the plays, all awakening our awareness of human suffering and pain. Such a response humanizes us all.

In other words, the function of tragedy is to move us as powerfully, and even more powerfully than nature and experience could do, and to do so through suffering, and intensity of emotions and passions in human connections. It moves us to recognize in ourselves our need for each other as part of piety, an attitude of reverence, and the emotions of reverence are a necessary part of the Greek notion of health. ³² For Aristotle and the Greeks, suffering and passions, associated with human connections, are equated with life force and with being alive.

³¹ Aristotle, Politics 1342a

³² It becomes more emotionally intelligible than experience. Whether or not this implies that tragedy is more « universal », as has often been argued, is another question.

Listen carefully to the way Aristotle characterises motions and counter-motions together. As a physician, Aristotle is concerned explicitly with sickness and health. In the Asklepiian tradition, this means that he is concerned both implicitly and explicitly with ethics. In his treatise on Physics, Aristotle writes « We have further to determine what motions are contrary to each other, and to determine similarly how it is with rest. And we have to decide whether contrary motions are motions respectively from and to the same thing, e.g, a motion from health and a motion to health (where the opposition, it would seem, is of the same kind as that between coming to be and ceasing to be); or motions respectively from contraries, e.g, a motion from health and a motion from disease; or motions respectively from a contrary and to the opposite contrary, e.g, a motion from health and a motion to disease; or motions respectively from a contrary to the opposite contrary and from the latter to the former, e.g, a motion from health to disease and a motion from disease to health: for motions must be contrary to one another in one or more of these ways, as there is no other way in which they can be opposed. »³³

³³ Aristotle, Physics V iv 229

For Aristotle, as for Hippocrates, the healing forces lie in nature. “Nature” for Aristotle is relational and not simply physical. It is not a Newtonian “nature,” a realm of what is observable and whose laws can be “discovered” and studied objectively. Rather “Nature” for Aristotle begins with human nature, not objectivity. Nature in Aristotle is Man’s place and his feelings about it, his connections to others, his relation to his environment and to those forces that lie outside his control. It is not what lies outside human experience, but rather what shows us something essential about ourselves, something that comes from within. As will become clear in the pages to follow, inside and outside can be considered rather differently from the ways in which we do in our contemporary world. And in these differences can lie hope in the life of emotions.

It is therefore the task of the physician to be “nature’s helper, not its teacher.” The original meaning of the Hippocratic aphorism “do no harm” (*primum non nocere*), an integral part of the Hippocratic Oath taken by all physicians, indicates that the physician should make use of nature and allow nature to

heal, an emphasis also on the role of the arts in the temple complexes to Asklepios.³⁴

For Aristotle, then, the power of tragedy includes far more than insight or anguish alone; it lies in feeling how fragile is human life, in despair over missing the mark, in our human need for each other, all of which evoke the immensity of natural forces far greater than human concerns. It is shame that drives these humanizing forces.

³⁴ “The culmination of these Asklepiian rituals, the dramatic nocturnal events in the temple that restored health, contained an element of the stage, the hallmarks of theater--it was like a play, a work of art. The word *katharsis* also connected it with art.”Szczeklik p. 69

Chapter 2

Sophocles, Oedipus and his family

Trauma and the Oedipus saga

The story of Oedipus is far, far larger than commonly thought, and provides a backdrop, a context for what we know the story to be. The sense of an entire family line interlaced with rapes, murders, curses, the intercession of gods and the misfortunes of mortals is so much more than we know Oedipus to be today. The vast horizon which the story opens up can represent our need to widen our conceptions of the mind and of history, to humanize the life of emotions.

The story is the story of the family line that produced Oedipus, the epigrammatic character of Greek tragedy, and the story also of the Dionysiac rites and cult out of which Greek tragedy was born. It is the story behind the birth of tragedy. This is so much more than the reductionist vision of Nietzsche in his The Birth of Tragedy, a book

which reduces the vast horizons of the Greek world, and the human suffering implicit in Greek tragedy, to a sterile, formulaic opposition of two forces: Appolonian and Dionysian.

Oedipus is the last in the unfortunate line of Kadmos, king of Thebes. The movement of this larger narrative can be felt as an expression of *psuche* and also of *logos*, those forces of the Greek world so much larger than human comprehension or will that make themselves felt as a part of human suffering and tragedy.

In tracing the family of Oedipus it is impossible not to feel disoriented and thrown off kilter. We try in vain to grasp the threads of continuity in a family so torn apart, so wrenched from any sense of security that there is no possible order that can come to our rescue. Helpless to “understand.” we have no choice but to take it as we feel it, shapeless and haunting, but always moving, constantly shifting, one generation giving way to the next.

The Family line of Oedipus³⁵

Oedipus comes directly from the line of Kadmos, the first king of Thebes. Pentheus, the second king of Thebes, the “Man of Sorrows”³⁶ does indeed meet a sad end. He is literally torn apart and killed on Mount Cithaeron by his own mother, his aunts and other followers of Dionysos. In Euripides *The Bacchae*,³⁷ Pentheus is said to have climbed a tree to spy upon the revelries of his mother and the other Bacchic (Dionysian) women. But when they discover him there, they throw themselves upon him and tear him apart, believing him to be a wild beast.³⁸ Here again is the theme of seeing what one is not supposed to see, a bookend to not seeing what one is supposed to see (Oedipus).

³⁵ Psychoanalysis has neglected to consider the family line of Kadmos. Even Bennett Simon’s Tragic Drama and the Family fails to take into account the family line of Oedipus.

³⁶ from the Greek “Penthos,” sorrow or grief, especially grief over the loss of one love

³⁷ The Greek god Dionysos was renamed Bacchus by the Romans.

³⁸ Some say that it was the gods who tricked Pentheus’ mother and the other Bacchae into believing he was a wild beast.

Some time after Pentheus is torn apart by the Meniads comes Labdicus.

Because he opposes the cult of Dionysus, Labdacus is, like his cousin (uncle?) Pentheus, killed by Dionysus' enraged devotees, the Maenads.³⁹

Labdicus' only son Polydoros is murdered by Polymestor and hurled into the sea.

Some time thereafter Menoeceos, the son of Pentheus and the father of Jocasta, kills himself outside the gates of Thebes.⁴⁰ Upon the death of Menoeceos, Labdacus eventually becomes king of Thebes. Upon the death of Labdacus, his now fatherless son, Laius, is adopted by the Corinthian King Polybus and his wife. There is, it seems, a confusion of generations here, as both Jocasta and Laius appear to be children of

³⁹ As a result Lycus once again becomes regent.

⁴⁰ In some versions, Menoeceos kills himself in response to a prophecy of Tiresias, that if Menoeceos would sacrifice himself for his country, Thebes would win the war of the Seven Argives against Thebes. In yet another version Menoeceos kills himself as a result of a Delphic oracle.

Menoceos, who appears to be at least generations older and closer to Kadmos, confounding fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers.⁴¹

Assuming Laius' adopted father is Pelops,⁴² some time after Laius is adopted by Pelops, he rapes and abducts Pelops' son Chrysippus, as a result of which Pelops lays a curse on Laius, that his son will kill him. The curse of Pelops on Laius underscores the misfortune of the entire line of Kadmos. The curse on Laius, entirely absent from present-day versions of the Oedipus story, is altogether pertinent for an understanding of the tragedy of Oedipus Rex.

In one version of the saga, Pelops himself has been cursed long before he curses Laius. Myrtilus, the king's charioteer, places a curse on

⁴¹ In yet other versions, Chrysippus, the bastard son of King Pelops and the nymph Axioche (Danaïs?) kills himself with his own sword, and dies out of shame (because of the rape?). It is not clear whether Laius rapes Chrysippus out of envy because Pelops favored him over Laius. However, this seems a distinct possibility, and is in line with the murder of Abel by Cain (Cain having been slighted by God's refusal of his offering, engendering murderous hatred of his brother Abel). Favoritism, envy, shame, and devaluation lead to violence, murder and madness.

⁴² There appears to be a confusion over who the adopted father of Laius was or whether there were two. In some accounts it is Pelops, the king of Pisa and in others Polybus. Psychologically, it makes more sense for Laius' adopted father to have been Pelops, since the betrayal would be that much more unbearable and the curse on Laius that much more justified.

Pelops when Pelops arranged for the death of his own father, Oenomaus. Pelops' son Chrysippus promised Myrtilus (the king's charioteer) half of his father's kingdom (Pisa) if he arranged for Oenomaus' death. Myrtilus accordingly failed to put in place the linchpins of Oenomaus' chariot, the chariot fell apart, and Oenomaus was dragged to his death. Realizing what Myrtilus had done, Oenomaus, with his dying breath, placed a curse on Myrtilus that he would die at the hand of Pelops. Pelops threw Myrtilus into the sea, although not before Myrtilus had time to place a curse on Pelops and his family line.⁴³

Oedipus' "mother," Jocasta, is descended from Pentheus (here too there is a confusion of generations, opening up the possibility that Jocasta and Laius are brother and sister). In the many and various versions of these stories, generations overlap, family conflicts and

⁴³ In yet another version because Pelops, the son of Tantalos and Euryanassa, married Hippodameia with whom he had Atreus and Thyestes, and loved Chrysippus more than his legitimate sons, the envious Hippodameia tried to persuade Atreus and Thyestes to do away with Chrysippus, since she knew that he would be in line for the kingship. When they refused, in the dead of night she stabbed the sleeping Chrysippus. Pelops buried Chrysippus and banished Hippodameia.

sibling rivalries abound, murders, rivalries, and curses follow one another. Confusion reigns, there are boundless missing links,⁴⁴ which open these narratives onto countless other narratives.

Laius and his father Labdacus were placed under the guardianship of King Lycus, who was a substitute father to both, adding to the confusion of generations. While Lycus was reigning in place of Laius, Antiope, the neice of Lycus (meaning wolf) was raped by Zeus and became pregnant with twins, Amphion and Zethus. As Laius and Jocasta were to do with Oedipus, Antiope abandoned the babies, leaving them with shepherds instructed to abandon them in the wild. Eventually, the twins returned to Thebes to kill Lycus and Dirce and take command of Thebes. Ruling as joint kings of Thebes, they expelled Laius.

⁴⁴ Like others in the line of Kadmos, both Laius and Jocasta are orphaned, having lost their parents under horrifying circumstances at a very early age.

Laius marries Jocasta.⁴⁵ Soon after Oedipus is born, Laius and Jocasta entrust Oedipus to a shepherd, who pierces his feet and truss him on a stake like an animal to be left in the wild (hence the name Oedipus, swollen feet).⁴⁶

Oedipus grows up mistakenly assuming that King Polybus and Merope are his real father and mother.⁴⁷ Like his father Laius, who arranged for Oedipus to be killed to avoid the prophecy that his son (Oedipus) would kill him, Oedipus is determined to defy the curse placed upon him (that he will kill his father and marry his mother). Accordingly, Oedipus unknowingly misconstrues the prophecy and, abandoning his supposed parents. To keep them safe, he leaves Corinth for Thebes.

⁴⁵ In one version of the saga, before giving birth to Oedipus, Laius and Jocasta have two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles and two daughters, Antigone, and Ismene. Some versions of the story make Polyneices and Eteocles the sons (not the brothers) of Oedipus, once again blurring the generations.

⁴⁶ Note, however, that there is a long family tradition of abandonment: his father, and grandfathers lost their fathers in infancy. Laius is abandoned by his father, Labdacus, as Labdacus was himself abandoned by his father Polydorus, and so it goes back generation by generation.

⁴⁷ Note: the family line of Pelops has also been cursed. Therefore, inasuch as Laius is his adopted son, theoretically the curse applies to him as well as to any other children Pelops would have. Both the father of Oedipus and his step-father (adopted father) were cursed, their lines and progeny were cursed.

On his way to Thebes he meets an older man who bars his way. They quarrel. In the ensuing struggle Oedipus kills the stranger. Continuing on to Thebes, Oedipus finds that the king of the city (Laius) is dead, and that the city is at the mercy of the Sphinx. Oedipus solves her riddle. By doing so he inherits the dead king's throne and the the king's widow Jocasta in marriage.

Years later, when Thebes is being ravaged by a plague, and it is believed that the murderer of Laius is responsible for the plague, Oedipus determines to find who killed Laius, only to realize that he himself is responsible. Simultaneously, Jocasta, upon realizing that she has married her own son and her husband's murderer, hangs herself. At her grave site, Oedipus seizes two pins from her dress and drives them deep into his eyes.

When Oedipus is banished from Thebes, the throne is left to his step sons (or step brothers?) Polyneices and Eteocles. Oedipus places a curse on Polynices and Eteocles. In the war of the Seven against Thebes

Polynices and Eteocles are each slain by the other, thus fulfilling Oedipus' curse.⁴⁸ The line of Oedipus comes to a cursed dead end.

Dionysos and the line of Kadmos

The family line of Oedipus begins with Kadmos. At some unidentifiable point after Kadmos, Dionysos appears in Thebes. Note Dionysos is a god, and his cult is an important part of the saga of the line of Kadmos and the kings of Thebes, as it is an essential element in Greek tragedy.

The family of Oedipus is not just an ordinary family. It is the story of conflicting narratives of the House of Kadmos over which hang the frenzy and madness of Dionysos. Oedipus' grandfather King Labdacus (the father of Laius), opposed the cult of Dionysus, and was killed by Dionysus' enraged devotees, the Maenads, as was Pentheus.

⁴⁸ Creon served as protector of Heracles, his stepfather Amphitryon, and mother Alcmene. Creon even gave his daughter Megara in marriage to Heracles. In return, Heracles defended Thebes in two more wars that Thebes became entangled in, first against King Erginus of Minyan Orchomenus, then against Pyracmus of Euboea.

Immensely influential throughout the Mediterranean, the cult of Dionysos is essential as a background to the theater of Sophocles and to the Oedipus trilogy.

The theater in Athens in which Oedipus Rex was performed was the center of the cult of Dionysos. Divine inspiration and divine frenzy are strikingly combined in the cult and its theater, as though to underscore the life-giving importance of overwhelming emotions. Associated with the island of Lesbos, Dionysos,⁴⁹ an “eater of raw flesh” (*omophagia*), is associated with the flouting of taboos, with threatening excesses of all kinds, with murderous frenzy, unyielding madness, and with the abrogation of cultural conventions and morals.

Conventional Versions of Oedipus

⁴⁹ Also, Dionysos is not what he appears to be, yet another theme of the Oedipus story. Although he is a god along with Zeus and Hera, he is often mistaken by mortals for a sleeping (and carousing) young man.

Conventional versions of the Oedipus saga depart significantly from the narratives I have pieced together, which clearly include Dionysian frenzy, inspiration, madness and theater.

Here is the abbreviated version of the Oedipus story to be found in the Encyclopedia Britannica (11th Edition, 1910-1911).

In Greek legend, [Oedipus is] the son of Laius, king of Thebes, and Jocasta. Laius, having been warned by an oracle that he would be killed by his son, ordered him to be exposed, with his feet pierced, immediately after his birth. Thus Oedipus grew up ignorant of his parentage, and, meeting Laius in a narrow way, quarreled with him and slew him. The country was ravaged by a monster, the Sphinx; Oedipus solved the riddle which he proposed to its victims, freed the country, and married his own mother. In the *Odyssey* it is said that the gods disclosed the impiety. Epicaste (as Jocasta is called in Homer) hanged herself, and Oedipus lived as king in Thebes tormented by the Erinyes of his mother. In the tragic poets the tale takes a different form. Oedipus fulfills an ancient prophecy in killing his father; he is a blind instrument in the hands of fate. The further treatment of the tale by Aeschylus is unknown. Sophocles describes in his *Oedipus Tyrannus* how Oedipus was resolved to pursue to the end the mystery of the death of Laius, and thus unravelled the dark tale, and in horror put out his own eyes. The sequel of the tale is told in the *Oedipus Colonus*. Banished by his sons, he is tended by the loving care of his daughters. He comes to Attica and dies in the grove of the Eumenides at

Colonus in his death welcomed and pardoned by the fate which had pursued him throughout his life.⁵⁰

The plot presented by the *Encyclopedia* essentially pulls Oedipus out of the context, substituting an altogether different narrative romantizing the hero, pitting him against the forces of fate. In view of the horrors and tragedies in the line of Kadmos, what stands out is a vast saga of trans-generational trauma, envy, shame, loss, despair and identity confusion.

The story of Oedipus is not the dualistic Nietzschean vision of Dionysian forces against Apollonian. Nor is it the story of a strong-willed hero pitted against malignant forces. It is, as Aristotle underscores, directly associated with *katharsis* and *hamartia*, with human limitation, human conflicts and overwhelming emotions, with the anguished movement of *psyche*.

⁵⁰ It is striking that, according to this text, Oedipus was at once « resolved to pursue to the end the mystery of the death of Laius, and thus unravelled the dark tale, and in horror put out his own eyes » and a « blind instrument in the hands of fate. »

Far from the model of our valiant, modern hero, Oedipus' struggles are profoundly human struggles, his "blindness" far more complicated—and far more human—than the characterization of a defiant and heroic Oedipus might suggest. His are struggles with his own humanity, and not simply struggles with outside forces.

Kadmos and Orpheus

There is a still larger context for the tragedy of Oedipus, one which reaches back to underground cults, fertility rites and seasonal notions of growth and decay. The founder and first king of Thebes, Kadmos⁵¹ was sent by his parents to bring home his sister Europa, abducted and raped by Zeus, disguised as a bull.⁵²

Kadmos made a pilgrimage to the oracle of Delphi, who advised him to give up the search for Europa and instead to found a new city by following a

⁵¹ As a Phoenecian prince, Kadmos introduced the Phoenecian alphabet to the Greeks (Herodotus).

⁵² Europa is, and is depicted in the paintings of Rubens and countless other painters.

nearby cow to its resting place. Kadmos followed it to Boeotia where it died. At the site of the new city, Kadmos sacrificed the cow to Athena. Needing pure spring water for the sacrifice, Kadmos found himself face to face with the guardian of the spring, a monster serpent. There ensued a fierce battle in which Kadmos prevailed, slaying the monster.⁵³ The serpent⁵⁴ appears to be associated with cthonian cults of the dead as well as with cults of fertility.

Here it is worth pausing for a moment, since monsters guarding springs are often associated with the underworld, and the « riddle » of the sphinx can

⁵³ When he sacrificed the cow to Athena, she told him to get the teeth of the monster and plant half of them in the ground. There sprang up warriors fighting among themselves until five were left. These five people, called the "Spartoi" ("sown men ») helped Kadmos build Thebes.

⁵⁴ Hydra, is a serpentine lake monster in Greek mythology and Roman mythology. Its lair was the lake of Lerna in the Argolid, which was also the site of the myth of the Danaïdes. Lerna was reputed to be an entrance to the Underworld. the monster is killed by Heracles as the second of his Twelve Labors.

certainly be construed to refer to death.⁵⁵ The cthonic underworld valence of Dionysos becomes clearer in the light of his parentage. Originally the son of Zeus and Persephone, Dionysos was conceived in a cave while Zeus was disguised as a serpent. When adult, Dionysos was ripped apart by Titans (Giants) then boiled and eaten (the original *sparagmos*). Zeus struck the Titans with a thunderbolt, turning them to ashes (note the reference to fire). From these ashes, humanity was born.

In Orphic belief (Orpheus being intimately related to Dionysos) humanity has a dual nature: body (*sôma*), inherited from the Titans, and a divine spark or soul (*psuche*), inherited from Dionysus. In order to achieve salvation from the Titanic, material existence, those initiated into the Dionysian mysteries

⁵⁵ As you will see, the line of Kadmos is cursed since it symbolizes the tensions between Apollo and Dionysos. Pentheus is torn apart by women followers of Dionysos because he turned towards the sun rather than towards Dionysos. Whatever the two gods can today be interpreted to mean, it is clear that they represent loyalty conflicts and rivalries. It would appear that their rivalries also represent the heavens (the sun) and the underworld, light and dark, the forces of life and the forces of death. Nietzsche made use of the tensions between Apollo and Dionysios to advance his theories of the dialectic of tragedy, thus deliberately ignoring what makes Sophocles plays tragic and ignoring also the ethical underpinnings of Aristotle's vision of tragedy.

could participate in the ritual of the suffering and death of Dionysos.⁵⁶ Both Dionysos and Orpheus went to the underworld, Orpheus to rescue his wife Eurydice and Dionysos to rescue his mother Semele. Because of underworld connections, Dionysos, Persephone and Hades figure prominently in Orphism, and appear to be part of the background of the arts.

To describe rebirth, beauty and life-force, the Italian Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries brought a Neoplatonic perspective to Orpheus, the muses and Pythagoras (also associated with the underworld). Orpheus played his lyre when following his love Euridyce into the Underworld, and Pythagoras is associated not only with music but also with harmony, proportion, accoustics, astronomy and with the sacred profession of tuning instruments. Although there is much disagreement among scholars about the connections between Orpheus, Pythagoras and Dionysos, it is clear that the overlapping in the Italian Renaissance points to the ways writers and artists of the Italian Renaissance connected ideals of beauty, inspiration, proportion and music to the cycle of the seasons and the life cycles of nature, the

⁵⁶ Orpheus is said to have been a prophet of Dionysos who established the Dionysian mysteries. By at least the fifth century BCE, theological poems with connections to the cult of Dionysos had beome part of « Orphism ».

cycles of life and death. It would also appear to be connected to the return of Persephone from the underworld in the spring. Perhaps the most striking illustration of these connections is the *Primavera* of Botticelli. The *Primavera*, meaning the first greens of spring, framed by a scallop shell, rises out of the sea in a light dress covered with flowers. She is pregnant, with an unearthly beauty and an irresistible sense of life. The underworld valence of Dionysos, in combination with Persephone and Orpheus, suggests generation, growth, seasonal and life cycles—all of which point to a cyclical conception of time composed of necessary and ceaseless change.

There is a direct connection between life and death cycles, the cult of Dionysos and the riddle of the sphinx that Oedipus solves, thereby saving Thebes from the destruction. The riddle: what walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three legs in the evening? The answer is: mankind.⁵⁷ One implication of the riddle is to highlight an ethical view of

⁵⁷ The sphinx is half man half lion, so the riddle the sphinx asks comes from a being only half human. Oedipus believes himself lion-like; he is the strong king whose cunning saves his people from destruction. But in believing he is lion-like, he betrays his humanity, betrays his soul. The destructiveness of the sphinx and that of Oedipus are thus implicitly placed side by side. But the sphinx knows how destructive humankind can be, but also knows how vulnerable, how in the evening the « riddle-creature » walks on three legs, needing a crutch or cane because legs are no longer reliable supports, and aging entails weakness tending towards death.

human nature defined by the life cycle. Oedipus the king defies fate and exhibits hubris, disgracing himself in the eyes of both the Thebans and the gods. He solved the riddle but failed to grasp its import and his own dishonor.

As though to remind us that the wheel keeps turning, never to stand still, Sophocles writes Oedipus at Colonus twenty years after finishing Oedipus Rex.⁵⁸ As a very old man. Sophocles describes the death of Oedipus from the vantage point of one unsure of what he has seen.⁵⁹

« When we had gone we turned round and looked from afar. Him we saw nowhere, but Theseus we saw, his hand before his face, as if to shade his eyes from some awful sight upon which he could not look. Then, a little

⁵⁸ At the end of Oedipus Rex, Oedipus is the polluted outcast, the cause of the city's distress and plague, the once great king brought down by crimes predicted by Apollo before he was born. Oedipus repeatedly emphasizes his innocence, and neither the Chorus nor the narrative indicates that anyone ever thought he was guilty. « Pure before the law, unwitting I have come to this » (Oedipus Colonus, p. 558) How can the attribution of guilt to Oedipus have become so prevalent and so dominant in the face of overwhelming evidence in Oedipus Rex, and in view of the larger family narrative of the line of Kadmos?

⁵⁹ Note here the critical importance of looking and of the eyes, yet another reminder of the central importance of Oedipus' act of blinding himself. Note too how sight itself is unreliable, how far this is from the « seeing is believing » of the sensualists (Locke, Hume, etc).

later, we saw him do reverence to the Earth and to Olympus of the Gods in one and the same prayer. But by what death he perished no man could tell but Theseus only; for no blazing thunderbolt from heaven worked his end, nor any storm arising from the sea at that time, but either sole escort sent by the gods or some dark, yawning, kindly chasm of the Earth below. For not with lamentation nor pitiable with disease was that man sent forth, but wonderfully above all others. »⁶⁰

What is clear in this passage is that, despite his hubris as king, despite the horror of his acts and behaviors, Oedipus has managed to feel his shame and to achieve an honorable death. This he could not have done had he been « guilty. » Also, what could not be « seen » (and only related after the fact) can be directly related to his suffering and his realization that he is human (i.e., will die). Thus his honorable death has ethical implications.

For Aristotle tragic emotions are by definition ethical. By contrast, our modern tendency to blame Oedipus, holding him responsible and attributing guilt to him, as standard versions of the Oedipus story and as the Oedipus

⁶⁰ Sophocles, p. 155 Oedipus at Colonus (1647ff)

Complex do, implicitly make him the romantic hero battling the outside forces of fate alone. However, if we remember the Greek concept of *hamartia*, human failings as essential for the conception of tragic emotions and ethics, we have a far more respectful approach to human suffering. By becoming a tragic figure, Oedipus comes to know shame, becomes fully human and can thereby achieve honor and an honorable death.

Chapter 3

The Oedipus Complex

Bearing in mind both the saga of the line of Kadmos, and the roots of Greek theater in the cult of Dionysos, let us turn now to the Oedipus Complex. As should become clear, the Oedipus Complex leaves out the saga of Kadmos, the curse on Laius, the shame of Oedipus Rex, and the honorable death of Oedipus in Oedipus at Colonus.

Freud's formulation followed late 19th century assumptions about science and picked up on the values of the period, influenced by Darwinian/Hegelean/Neitzschean assumptions about the direction of primate evolution, the course of history and natural selection of the strongest. However inadequate and incomplete these assumptions feel to us today, Freud used what was available to him at the time, forging a theoretical system of thinking and of the mind which prevails to this day. What he left out—and who he left out— in order to conform both to his ideals of science and of rhetorical legitimacy, remain to be adequately described. His omissions are of crucial

importance in thinking about ethical responsibilities in our contemporary world.

In this and the chapters to follow, I will trace some of the sources of Freud's thinking in order to place his scientific rationalism of the late 19th century against the Greek tradition of *psuche* and Aristotle's notion of *katharsis*, and to examine more closely how he puts the various parts of his theories together.

There is a saying that our problem as human beings is that we live forward but we think backward. The world of the mind when thought backward leads to stagnant, abstract concepts devoid of interpersonal interaction, devoid of the blood, sweat and tears of human lives. Yet the psychoanalytic vision inspires curiosity about our lives that goes beyond the constrictive emphasis on the senses, behavior and notions of influence and conditioning.

In his letter to Fliess of October 15, 1897 Freud writes: "I have found love of the mother and jealousy of the father in my own case too, and now believe it be be a general phenomenon of early childhood. . . .If that is the case, the

gripping power of Oedipus Rex. ..becomes intelligible.”⁶¹ It is a Eurika moment for Freud, who sees in his « discovery » of mother love and father jealousy the « gripping power of Oedipus Rex. » Extrapolating from his « own case », Freud assumes that he knows in what the « gripping power » of Oedipus Rex consists.

Freud extracts far more from his Eurika moment than anyone might have predicted. He comes to link « gripping power » with his definition of the Oedipus Complex, and defines the Oedipus Complex to include an evolutionary theory of the development of the species and a theory of psychic forces that accounts not only for thinking but also for repression and for the unconscious.

From this insight related to his own parents, Freud derives his universal theories of the Oedipus Complex in which individual development recapitulates the development of the species. Phylogony recapitulates ontogeny was in the air at the time, and was essentially the war cry of the embriologist Haekel (1834-1919), a German Darwinian embriologist whose

⁶¹ Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Willem Fliess 1877-1904 eds. Mosbacher and Strachey. New York: Basic Books 1987, p. 7

work clearly influenced that of Freud. Haekel's work provided Freud with a foundation for his theories of the universality of the Oedipus Complex. Child development became evidence of Oedipal stages.

Of his « discovery » of the Oedipus Complex Freud writes: « But all this became intelligible when one realized that a universal law of mental life had here been captured in all its emotional significance. Fate and the oracle were no more than materialisations of internal necessity; and the fact of the hero's sinning without his knowledge andd against his intentions was evidently a right expression of the unconscious nature of his criminal tendencies. From understanding this tragedy of destiny it was only a step further to understanding tragedy of character— Hamlet. »⁶²

Freud writes of his Oedipus Complex that a « universal law of mental life had here been captured in all its emotional significance. » Where is the « emotional significance? » When the play opens, Oedipus has already unknowingly killed his father, so Laius has already been eliminated as a

⁶² SE XX p. 63 Autobiographical study

supposed rival. Moreover, Oedipus had no idea his father was his father when he killed him. With his father, Laius, out of the way, Freud's version of Oedipus focuses on the relation between Oedipus and his mother.

Note, in Freud's definition of the Oedipus Complex there is not a trace of Jocasta's sexual interest in her son; she functions as the object of Oedipus' libido. Implicitly there is no mutuality here, and no trace of a possibility that Jocasta might have sexually seduced and traumatized Oedipus. No trace of the mention that she tried to have him killed by abandoning him as a helpless infant in the wild to die. Do her murderous feelings take any place at all in Freud's description of the Oedipus-Jocasta relationship? No. Only her horror at finding her son functioning as her late husband, the horror taken by Freud as an expression of sexual drives breaking into consciousness.

Who was Jocasta to Oedipus? She was the prize that Oedipus won for having solved the riddle of the sphinx: to be king and to have Jocasta as his queen. Who was Oedipus to Jocasta? A replacement king. But to her horror, the replacement king turns out to be her son. She never recognizes Oedipus and only puts the pieces together and infers that he is her son from the

various pieces of testimony offered to her towards the end of the play. In response, she kills herself, whereupon Oedipus strikes out his eyes.

What does Freud do with the fact that in the play Oedipus cannot know his mother is his mother or his father is his father? Listen to Freud's explanation: « That he (Oedipus) did so unwittingly, since he did not know them as his parents, is a deviation from the analytic facts which we can easily understand and which, indeed, we shall recognize as inevitable »⁶³ Note, it is not easy to understand what Freud is doing here, although he says it is. What is he referring to that is « inevitable »?

Freud elaborates: « One may hear it objected, for instance, that the legend of King Oedipus has in fact no connection with the construction made by analysis: since Oedipus did not know that it was his father that he killed and his mother that he married. What is overlooked in this is that a distortion of this kind is inevitable if an attempt is made at a poetic handling of the material....'⁶⁴

⁶³ SE XXIII p. 187

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 191

Then Freud asserts that the ignorance of Oedipus is not really ignorance, but rather a manifestation of the unconscious. « The ignorance of Oedipus is a legitimate representation of the unconscious into which, for adults, the whole experience has fallen; and the coercive power of the oracle, which makes or should make the hero innocent, is a recognition of the inevitability of the fate which has condemned every son to live through the Oedipus Complex. »⁶⁵

Freud appears to be saying that the fact that Oedipus does not know his father is his father and his mother is his mother, that he is guilty of parricide and incest, does not matter; that behavior is both what matters most and what matters not at all: that parricide and incest indicate not tragic shame, hamartia and incomprehension, but rather unconscious guilt, aggression and libidinal drives. In other words, Freud takes the Oedipus story, focuses on behavior (parricide and incest) and then says the behavior cannot be taken literally since it is merely « poetic. » Therefore, the behavior of Oedipus needs to be interpreted as the manifestation of unconscious sexual and libidinal

⁶⁵ Ibid., 191-192

drives. This may seem to make Freud a closet behaviorist because of his emphasis on focusing on behavior in order to bypass it.

Freud notes: "The ignorance of Oedipus is a legitimate representation of the unconscious state into which, for adults, the whole experience has fallen; and the coercive power of the oracle, which makes or should make the hero innocent; is a recognition of the inevitability of the fate which has condemned every son to live through the Oedipus Complex."⁶⁶

How can Freud assert that the guilt of Oedipus is undeserved while at the same time assuming he has sinned and is guilty? Freud says clearly: « the fact of the hero's sinning without his knowledge and against his intentions » must be a manifestation of unconscious Oedipal forces. By implication, then, Freud's unconscious echoes Christian and Judaic notions of sin; guilt defines Oedipus but is somehow undeserved, unmerited.

Back now to Freud's alchemy in transforming the anonymity of Oedipus' parents to him and of him to them in order to make sense of how Oedipus

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.192

can be guilty without the guilt being deserved. Oedipus cannot know his parents through his experience; they cannot know him through their experience; they are mutually unrecognizable to one another. So, unable to think about them, he can only unknowingly act upon them: killing one and committing incest with the other. Freud explains: « Fate and the oracle were no more than materialisations of internal necessity; and the fact of the hero's sinning without his knowledge and against his intentions was evidently a right expression of the unconscious nature of his criminal tendencies. »⁶⁷ Here Freud says clearly that Oedipus is a criminal, but does not know he is and therefore cannot be held responsible for his actions.

Freud attributes the guilt of Oedipus (which Freud does not doubt) to unconscious forces because it is undeserved.⁶⁸ His theories of child sexual development and latency then validate his assumptions about the role of the

⁶⁷ Freud's reasoning here is similar to the way he approaches a dream of a man who dreamed his father was dead but did not know it. Freud interprets the dream to indicate that the dreamer, who knew he was, had the power to kill his father and wanted his father dead. This says more about Freud than it does about the dreamer.

⁶⁸ Given Freud's insistence on the centrality of the Oedipus Complex for the entire psychoanalytic enterprise, he felt constrained to assimilate guilt to the superego, and then to note how it can overflow its bounds, challenging the poor ego caught between the forces of the Id and libido and the persecution of the superego.

unconscious and the centrality of the Oedipal Complex. In the same text Freud passes from why Oedipus was guilty even though he did not know his parents were his parents, to the subject of child development.

Freud's preoccupation with the anonymity of Oedipus to his parents and theirs to him carries over into his discussion of child development. A theme of this book is the agony and life-giving powers of human relationships as a central manifestation of *Psuche*. His approach to the Oedipus story pulls Oedipus out of context, isolates him implicitly not only from the line of Kadmos, but also from parents he could not recognize and who for all intents and purposes were not there. In speaking of the child and of child development, he does the same thing: he skews the importance of relationships by making sexual desire a one way street. Either the mother (for boys) or the father (for girls) becomes the object of desire. Desire cannot go both ways. As we will see, this emphasis on one-way development unaffected by relationships still dominates contemporary therapies.

But even assuming sexual desire is one way, where then is the evidence of the sexual wishes of Oedipus for Jocasta or hers for him? If Oedipus has no

idea that his father is his father and his mother is his mother, where are his feelings for his parents? The only place feelings can be is therefore in the « unconscious. » But the unconscious is unknowable directly and requires « interpretations. »

The Oedipus Complex, the keystone in the arch of psychoanalytic theories, relies upon drive theories as the most important element on which all the others depend.⁶⁹ However, It is becoming increasingly clear that the Oedipus Complex distracts us from the ever-changing, dynamic nature of emotions as we live them, from the essential importance of relationships for feeling alive, for *psuche*. It diverts attention away from the ever shifting dynamics of human suffering with its blood and tears, to impersonal, abstract, bloodless unconscious forces and their interpretations.

Using biology, evolution and developmental theories, Freud magically transforms Oedipus. In his hands, Oedipus becomes the prototypical individual standing for all of humanity, defined not by his tragedy but by his « Complex. »⁷⁰ In

⁶⁹ See, for example, the volume of Dominique Scarfone, (2009) *Les Pulsions*. Paris: PUF Que Sais-je

⁷⁰ Like Freud and Freud's double nephew Eddie Bernays, Hall was promoter and impresario par excellence.

Psychoanalysis, sexuality is assumed to be the primary drive, the Oedipus Complex being taken as its prototype. Freud's Oedipus Complex retains all the bumps and rattles of an outworn theory.

Chapter 4

Freud's Project and the Unconscious

Of modern thinkers, it is Freud who has contributed most to our assumptions about thinking and the unconscious. This chapter will focus on Freud's formulations in order better to show how easily the life of emotions can be lost in efforts to describe thinking. The concept of the unconscious has assumed so many ideological and cultural overtones that it has served to be all things to all people. However, because it comes packaged with the divide between conscious and unconscious, it has also provided a distraction from our emotional life.

Freud and psychoanalysis emerged from millenia of philosophy, theology, mathematics, history, literature, religion and the Humanities. He is justly associated with depth psychology, the only alternative we have to behaviorism and cognitive science. However, in our contemporary world, complicated and riven as it is by greed, ignorance, and delusions of power,

as indifferent as it seems to be to human suffering, there is a need for larger horizons in imagining how we think. Notions of emotional intelligence have little to do with emotion, but are rather attempts to reduce emotions to categories that can then be organized and interpreted. Today in order to be more faithful to the life of the mind and soul, we need those life-giving forces of emotion that our contemporary world perverts and distorts.

When Freud formulated the Oedipus Complex, nobody was prepared to argue with him about the guilt-laden interpretation of the defiant hero Oedipus, who sinned, defied the oracles, and blinded (for Freud “punished”) himself in recognition of the horror of his sins and the demonic allures of incest. Major figures in German philosophy (e.g., Schlegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche) had already linked Oedipus, Adam, and Hamlet to incestuous urges and sexuality gone wild. In his formulation of the Oedipus complex, Freud used what was already there. In leaving us 24 volumes of his work, he contributed an extraordinary theoretical vision, but he picked and chose in order to present a coherent scientific vision of the mind. In the process, he left out competitors, beginning with classical competitors and continuing to his contemporaries.

The beginning of Freud's theories can be found in his Project for a Scientific Psychology. However loony Freud's Project for a Scientific Psychology seems to the unsuspecting reader today, the Project contains the vision of his later theories of the unconscious, repression, memory, drives, inhibitions, symptoms, and his tripartite model of the mind: ego, id and superego.⁷¹

He clearly states that the aim of the Project is « to furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science; that is, to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specifiable material particles.. . thus making those processes perspicacious and free from contradiction ».⁷²

Borrowing from Physics, notions of energy (of force and counter-force, entropy and motion) his drive/repression model provided him with a way of arguing that perception, memory and imagination could all be put together.

⁷¹ Significantly for us today, Freud's Project needs to be assessed in the context of how clinical psychoanalysis has evolved in the century since Freud, as well as in the context of the Aristotelean tradition from which Freud borrowed Oedipus. What kinds of approaches can most usefully nourish our clinical understanding?

⁷² Project for a Scientific Psychology, SE vol I, p.296 He did not want contradiction, so he needed a total system of thinking, memory and perception. Such a total theory is seductive. The question is: is it useful to us now?

He writes: « It is accordingly inhibition by the ego which makes possible a criterion for distinguishing between perception and memory. »⁷³ Since we know that what we perceive is necessarily affected by what we remember and vice versa, why then does Freud need to make the distinction at all,⁷⁴

Freud provides us with a clue in the following passage. « Biological experience will then teach that discharge is not to be initiated until the indication of reality has arrived, and that with this in view the cathexis of the desired memories is not to be carried out beyond a certain amount. »⁷⁵ Do our bodies « teach » us that there is a discharge of energy only if there is an « indication of reality »?

Freud appears here to be contorting himself in order to link « biological experience » with reality. He writes: « Thus the intellectual unpleasure of

⁷³ « An important element in the theory of repression is the view that repression is not an event that occurs once but that it requires a permanent expenditure (of energy)...Because instincts are continuous, the ego needs energy to defend against them." Inhibitions SE vol IV p. 157

⁷⁴ As will become clear shortly, Willem Wundt was a pioneer in researching perception and followed Goethe in his interest in color. His student, the anthropologist Franz Boas, wrote his dissertation on the color of sea water, and the Torres Straits Expedition was organized around research in perception.

⁷⁵ Project, vol I, p.326

contradiction, is nothing other than the (unpleasure) accumulated for the protection of the biological rules, which is stirred up by an incorrect thought process. The existence of biological rules of this kind can in fact be proved from the feeling of unpleasure at logical faults ».⁷⁶

Freud's « biological rules » appear to borrow Darwin's evolutionist assumptions, which he incorporates in his theories of the evolution of culture. These show the influence of Frazer's evolutionist *The Golden Bough*,⁷⁷ a strikingly popular book, made up of bits and pieces of « primitive » behavior, a method Freud used in *Totem and Taboo*. Frazer's

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 386 In this passage Freud speaks of feelings, but these are feelings of unpleasure and discomfort at « logical faults ». In other words, these are feelings about judgements and not just ordinary feelings associated with wishes and fears or anxiety and pleasure.

⁷⁷ Although the prime metaphor (the golden bough) is classical, the book lacks the depth and imagination of classical scholars like Henri Bergson in France, or of academics like William Robertson-Smith, editor of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and author of *The Religion of the Semites*.

interest in taboo might well have been led to Freud's interest in the subject.

But, as with other « borrowings », we will never know.⁷⁸

Freud's total conception of psychological processes—bodily experience and theories of motion, the behavior of neurons, perception and memory, thought and matter, body and mind— required bridges: from his neurones, from his material particles, both inward to the realm of the psyche and outward to the body and biology. His theories of sexuality and drives as formulated in the Oedipus Complex were intended to bridge psyche and soma, inside and outside.

For Freud, all symptoms are « based on sexual instinctual forces. By this, he continues, « I do not merely mean that the energy of the sexual instinct

⁷⁸ Another student of Wundt, Franz Boas, wrote his dissertation on the color of sea water and evinced an interest in perception and language. Boas left a lasting imprint on the American Museum of Natural History, profoundly influenced the Bureau of American Ethnology and founded the Anthropology Department at Columbia University. Anthropological writings after Boas tended increasingly to focus on intelligible structures and cognitive/sociological patterns. Ruth Benedict, a student of Boas, thus hit upon a dichotomy (between shame and guilt cultures) to interpret the Japanese. The emphasis in Anthropology over roughly the last century on cognition and structure (Levi-Strauss et al) and kinship, roughly parallels the emphasis in psychology on the overly tight relations of thought to language and structure, all influenced by linguistics and semiology. Cognitive science and neuroscience have strengthened this unspoken search for linguistic/ structural rules and principles by which human behavior can be “interpreted.”

makes a contribution to the forces that maintain the pathological manifestations (the symptoms). I mean expressly to assert that that contribution is the most important and only constant source of energy of the neurosis and that in consequence the sexual life of the persons in question is expressed...in these symptoms. »⁷⁹

Childhood sexuality, Freud explains, « produces a store of energy which is employed to a great extent for purposes other than sexual—namely, on the one hand in contributing the » sexual components to social feelings and on the other hand (through repression and reaction-formation) in building up the subsequently developed barriers against sexuality ».⁸⁰

Note there is a force (sexuality) countered by an opposing force (repression). These are the bookends of Freud's theories, but significantly unlike the theories of motion in Aristotle. For Freud the fear of incest and parricide in the Oedipus Complex, the fear of sexuality gone wild, indicates the need for repression. Conversely, the existence of repression indicates energy from the

⁷⁹ SE VII Three Essays p. 163 Compare Freud with Aristotle's comments about energy. See pp. (earlier discussion of Aristotle's comments on motion)

⁸⁰ SE VII Three Essays p. 232

libido that needs to be repressed.⁸¹ Since Freud needed to integrate inside and outside in his theories of theories of fantasy and anxiety, he depended on his theories of sexuality and Oedipal conflicts and dynamics to explain all aspects of psychic life.

It is useful to pause for a moment to consider carefully what Freud appears to be doing. By focusing on sexual development, he is plugging into the Darwinist assumption of history as embiology, the history of the species and the survival of the fittest.⁸² By subscribing to the theory that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, he is « embriologizing » psychological development. Psychological development becomes morphology, and evolutionary physical alterations become equated with psychic development.

Freud sought to ground his psychoanalytic theories in the biology of the period: thinking as we know it becomes subordinated to an evolutionary

⁸¹ In other words, the energy driving thinking and symptoms, driving all psychic processes, is sexuality and sexual horror. Implying that fear and horror is somehow motion and energy, Freud strives in vain to hold his theories together.

⁸² Today it is clear that British colonialism lies behind Darwin's theories, which implicitly vaunt the superiority and strength of the British Empire and their unrivaled naval power. Darwin's theories can be seen as the justification for colonialism and imperialism.

history of the species, which is reflected in individual development, and vice versa. Freud trumpeted theoretical coherence, a total theory of unconscious processes and drives based on the movements of physical, material particles, a total theory to resolve the mind/body problems, a total system of thinking, memory and perception that would make psychological processes « subject to the general laws of motion. » But the laws of motion to which he was referring were themselves motionless.

By « cathexis » Freud means an investment of energy, a charge. By using the term to evoke intensity and account for what causes it, Freud is drawing our attention to physical and not emotional references of intensity. Freud writes: « Because instincts are continuous, the ego needs energy to defend against them. To protect repression, what we see in analysis is resistance, anti-cathexis, reaction-formation in the ego. »⁸³ Note the reference to « anti-cathexis ». Resistance is not emotional, it is conceptualized as a physical counter-motion. Reaction-formation has no emotional referent. Relying on the penumbra of notions of particles, atoms, energy, dynamos and hydro-

⁸³ Repression SE XIV p. 151

electric power, Freud shifts attention from the feelings themselves to notions of discharge and cathexis.⁸⁴

The Larger Context

Let us step back for a moment and consider Freud's ideas of energy in the light of history and in the light also of the writings of his contemporaries and his place in the intellectual world of his time.

Freud combined the 19th century the interest in motion and counter-motion, in Physics with an approach to instincts as a threat, a philosophical tradition inherited from Plato and centuries of rationalists. The ego needs « energy to defend against them ».⁸⁵ In other words, drives provide the ego with energy

⁸⁴ As though the leap from feelings to energy and neurones was not wide enough, Freud then associates such leaps with judgements (one does not make logical faults) and with errors in reasoning.

⁸⁵ Also, it is difficult not to see Freud's reference to « a (continuous) investment of energy » as a direct borrowing of Greek notions of motion and void, retaining only the energy but without the void and also without the motion.

through repression.⁸⁶ This is a drive/defense model. He writes: « the repressed exercises a continuous pressure in the direction of the conscious, so that this pressure must be balanced by an unceasing counter-pressure. »⁸⁷

Freud's « neurones » are clearly the counterparts of the « monads » of Leibnitz, and, reaching farther back, of the atoms of Democritus, who, as we shall see, associated his atoms with movement, and the study of atoms with observers themselves moved by atoms.⁸⁸

Notions of energy clearly appear in Isaac Newton's force of gravity and later in the 18th century vogue for animal magnetism, and for Mesmer with his

⁸⁶ « An important element in the theory of repression is the view that repression is not an event that occurs once but that it requires a permanent expenditure (of energy)...SE XX Inhibitions, Symptoms p.157 The idea that motion requires a permanent expenditure of energy is also to be found in Aristotle's Physics.

⁸⁷ Repression, SE XIV p. 151 He continues« Thus the maintenance of a repression involves an uninterrupted expenditure of force, while its removal results in a saving from an economic point of view »

⁸⁸ It is useful to note that at the time Freud was formulating his ideas, the most important figure in psychology, experimental psychology and theories of perception was Wilhelm Wundt, a man of wide horizons, and an enthusiastic proponent of Leibnitz (the philosopher who spoke of monads).

various devices to capture energy.⁸⁹ Goethe in *Elective Affinities* compared the power of human attraction to chemical reactions. Benjamin Franklin's lightning rods represented control over the power of lightning, and Edison established electricity and hydroelectric plants, symbols of harnessing power and energy. By the end of the 19th century, when Freud was writing, motion took new and unmistakable forms: motion pictures, making images move, and locomotion, the railroad system with its steam engines used to harness the power of steam.⁹⁰

In his efforts to account for what moves thinking, to account for mental energy, Freud focused on neurones and sexuality. He did not focus on dynamics of opposing, complementary forces, both outward and inward, and including both notions of motion and of void (as did Democritus and, implicitly, Aristotle).

Freud writes clearly that he believes all symptoms are based on « sexual instinctual forces. » And so as not to be mistaken, he adds, « By this I do not

⁸⁹ It was also implicit in hypnotism, and in Charcot's theories of hysteria.

⁹⁰ Freud believed that he was the first to make theories of neurons « scientific » through their integration with his concept of unconscious Oedipal dynamics.

merely mean that the energy of the sexual instinct makes a contribution to the forces that maintain the pathological manifestations (the symptoms). I mean expressly to assert that that contribution is the most important and only constant source of energy of the neurosis and that in consequence the sexual life of the persons in question is expressed...in these symptoms. »⁹¹

Unmistakably Freud says here that sexuality (the energy of the sexual instinct) is « the only constant source of energy » in neurotics and, by implication, in all human beings.⁹² Notably this theory of drives makes the drives mechanical and Newtonian, one-way forces to be countered by opposing forces.

His formulation of the Oedipus Complex also relegates his description of Oedipal emotions to the position of supports for his theories of energy. What Freud includes as the feelings of Oedipus towards his mother and towards his father—envy leading to incest and murderous rage leading to parricide—

⁹¹ Three Essays SE VII p. 163

⁹² It would appear that Freud's Oedipal theories are dependent on constant sources of energy (the drives), which imply the need for motion and counter-motion.

are expressions of drives. They cease to be emotions at all. The energy here implied is the drive to possess the mother and the drive to do away with the father, which are countered by repression and manifested by conflict.⁹³

As though to make sexuality ever more dangerous, Freud conflates unconscious sexual drives with uncontrollable passions, with envy and murderous aggression: the purient fascination with sexuality becomes a driving force, becomes the quintessential psychic energy. Consequently Freud misses how feelings are thought in their inter-relationships, how their fluctuations and interactions define inside and outside.⁹⁴

Wary of outside influences, and failing to recognize the work of others as pertinent for his enterprise, Freud summarily dismissed the academic

⁹³ Freud's implicit conception of emotions in Oedipal dynamics have direct implications for psychoanalytic technique.

⁹⁴ He singles out feelings (incestuous and parricidal feelings in Oedipal conflicts) but does not pair the dynamics of feelings as opposites: one reaching outward and the other inward, as in the concept of katharsis.

achievements and traditions of his peers⁹⁵ and predecessors. Unlike William James at Harvard or Henri Bergson at the College de France and who were in close touch with one another, Freud never held the post of professor in any major university. Although at pains to depict himself as the sole inventor of Psychoanalysis, the only pioneer of the unconscious, the larger canvas makes it clear that Freud owed much to the works of others (e.g., Janet, James, Wundt, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, etc.). He had no giant on whose shoulders he stood, since the only giant was himself.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ For example, although in his Clark lectures (1909) Freud readily admitted his debt to Breuer, giving Breuer credit for the invention of psychoanalysis but then in 1914 denied Breuer's contributions, claiming the entire credit himself. "Now I have strong reasons for suspecting that after all her symptoms had been relieved Breuer must have discovered from further indications the sexual motivation of the transference, but that the universal nature of this unexpected phenomenon escaped him, with the result that, as though confronted by an 'untoward event', he broke off all further investigations." (quoted Breger 2009 p.41)

⁹⁶ Unfortunately the International Psychoanalytic Association has persisted in its rejection of all those who might threaten Freud's theoretical formulations. Sandor Ferenczi, president in 1919, was, because of his positions on trauma and sexuality, accused of insanity and erased from the records as president of the association, and his photograph disappeared. The same thing happened to another distinguished member, Masud Khan. In July 2019, the IPA proceeded to destroy the entire Masud Khan archive including thousands of letters from and to Khan, the original 39 volumes of his Work Books (a professional diary covering the years 1967 to 1980), countless unpublished notes and manuscripts, and numerous patient records. Nobus, 2024

Many and various are the debts Freud owes to Nietzsche and to Schopenhauer, but takes pains to negate. For example, Freud writes: « The large extent to which psycho-analysis coincides with the philosophy of Schopenhauer—not only did he assert the dominance of the emotions and the supreme importance of sexuality but he was even aware of the mechanism of repression—is not to be traced to my acquaintance with his teaching. I read Schopenhauer very late in my life. »⁹⁷

And then Freud goes on to speak of Nietzsche. Freud writes, « Nietzsche, another philosopher whose guesses and intuitions often agree in the most astonishing way with the laborious findings of psycho-analysis, was for a long time avoided by me on that very account; I was less concerned with the questions of priority than with keeping my mind un-embarrassed. »⁹⁸ Freud borrowed Nietzsche's vision of what is not conscious as devoid of ethics « beyond good and evil ». Yet the ways in which Freud connects Nietzsche's Oedipus to the unconscious, or the ways he connects Schopenhauer's theories of repression and sexuality to the Oedipus Complex, belie his

⁹⁷ SE vol XX An autobiographical Study, p. 59

⁹⁸ Ibid An Autobiographical Study, p. 60

preoccupation with keeping his mind « un-embarrassed » by considering the works of others. Psychoanalysis might have been immeasurably enriched by other contemporaries of Freud, among them Willhelm Wundt (1832-1920). Whereas Wundt's reputation rested on psychology, his interests and curiosity roamed widely, reaching into many different disciplines (e.g, anthropology, philosophy, literature and history). Philosophically Wundt felt close to Leibnitz, and navigated the fields of anthropology, linguistics, cultural psychology, apperception and psychology—all at once.

Wundt's students include Franz Boas, the founder of American Anthropology, Emile Durkheim, Branislaw Malinowski, Edmund Husserl, the linguists Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir and the psychologist Pierre Janet,⁹⁹ whose ideas Freud liberally borrowed without acknowledgement. Wundt also influenced Jules Michelet, the towering figure in French history, whose interests extended to witchcraft, and the writing of Gianbattista Vico¹⁰⁰, as

⁹⁹ Unlike Freud's notion of the unconscious, which was beyond good and evil, Janet's « double conscience », which is far more faithful to human experience, connects ethics and awareness.

¹⁰⁰ Vico's distinction between « il vero » and « il certo », between a truth of Nature and of the external world that is unchanging, and « il certo » the certainty of what we as human beings can know because we have created it—and it is continually changing—will be an integral part of the final chapter.

Janet's did to magnetism and history. Because of the breadth of Wundt's influence on European intellectuals and his accomplishments in psychology, it seems possible in hindsight that Freud might easily have become Wundt's student (and he would have been in good company). Yet Freud implicitly dismisses Wundt as « unscientific ».

While Freud was never on the faculty of any major American or European university, It is worth noting that G. Stanley Hall, the man who invited him to speak at Clark University as a visitor, was himself a man of over-riding ambition whose scruples were few and far between. For example, In 1891, the Worcester Telegram began a crusade against Hall for its experiments on animals, mentioning "devilish contrivances." Believing in social Darwinist assumptions about inheritance and evolution, he was openly racist, a proponent of racial eugenics, biological determinism, and the use of manipulation and indoctrination in dominating the instincts of the masses for the well-being of society. Comparing Hall to those university intellectuals Freud shunned provides another perspective on Freud's reliance on those who did not question his « science. » The unscrupulous, un-academic Hall stands out against towering intellectuals like Wundt, William James, Henri

Bergson and Janet. Again and again Freud made it clear: he sought to promote only one discipline: his own. His « science » was to stand altogether apart from not only psychology but from all the social sciences and all the hard sciences as well, dismissing the humanities as « unscientific. » In this way he used his criteria of science to clear the field of all possible competitors. »

Freud sought to fit the life of the mind and soul within the compass of a unique science, within the compass of a single individual who stood for all mankind. In so doing he unnecessarily limited his extraordinary achievement. In order to present psychoanalysis as a science, Freud needed to harness the cultural mistrust of rationality (an integral part of Romanticism). But Freud quickly puts to rest such Romantic mistrust of rational thinking by positing an unconscious that can then be interpreted as a code (i.e., rationally).¹⁰¹

There is a political (Romantic?) dimension to Freud's theories of energy, neurones and drives. Freud knew full well that, despite his pretensions to scientific status, his fame rested on the writings of those like Rousseau,

¹⁰¹ And the analyst could be « romanticized ».

Marx and Hegel who promised a new social order. For Rousseau, men are born free but are everywhere in chains.¹⁰² Although Freud's neurones were in principle wild and free, like human beings, they could only be found compromised and restrained. The utopian Romantic ideals of freedom and a new order behind the existing one, lent a Romantic legitimacy to Freud's notions of the unconscious, which promised a new freedom. Freud's Civilization and its Discontents picks up clearly on these Romantic, utopian political, ethical and social implications (the ideal of freedom and its constraints).¹⁰³

Behind the theories of symptoms and thinking, behind the theories of neurones, repression and drives, lie the lures of a new, unexplored world of the unconscious. For Freud, the Romantics and the surrealists, the Unconscious was the unholy road to freedom.

¹⁰² For Rousseau, as for many 18th century thinkers, being wild was associated with freedom, an ideal to be opposed to the untidy restraints of social responsibilities, government intrusions and ethics.

¹⁰³ In this he was like Darwin, who smuggled social theories into his scientific theories of the survival of the fittest. see Fodor, 2011

Chapter 5

« Double Conscience, » Shame and Guilt:

The Unconscious and the Abyssus Humanae Conscientiae

While it is often assumed that the unconscious is what is not conscious, and that the conscious and the unconscious are distinct categories, this assumption has limited our ability to recognize the emotions driving our thinking. It has compromised our ability to imagine realms beyond human understanding, to feel the forces of nature and life cycles that evoke incomprehension and awe, to know that we live between birth and death. The life of our thinking depends upon how we feel about what we think, and how we think about what we feel.

The Ancient Greeks, Romans and early Christians had notions of a vast world beyond. Their notions included a sense of wonder and awe at the vastness of the universe, feelings conspicuously missing in descriptions of the unconscious. Both Augustine and Plotinus believed

that some 'memory' in this inner world would yield contact with God. For Plotinus, the inner world was a reassuring continuum: the "real" self was divine. Thus the divine within was incomprehensibly vast and consciously unknowable. As such the inner world opened onto human shame, littleness and insufficiency, on the one hand, and awe and wonder, on the other.

For Augustine, "the sheer size of the inner world was a source of anxiety quite as much as of strength."¹⁰⁴ Saint Augustine referred to the inner world as the *abyssus humanae conscientiae* (the abyss of human consciousness). The *abyssus humanae conscientiae* "is always what others do not know of you." For Augustine, "Conscientia is an abyss and not just a metaphor," an observation that underscores how vast is our world of incomprehension, how very little we can know of what others think of us, yet how dependent we are on what we can piece together in the patchwork of our own identities.

¹⁰⁴ Personal communication Peter Brown

These notions of the divine within, a source of wonder and immensity, that vastness that humbles us all, appears to be close to the Greek notion of *Psyche*, evoking our inner dynamics of deficiency and shame; we necessarily lack what we need and therefore must depend on others to help us define how vast are our deficiencies.

Dwarfing human concerns and lives, the immense inner world of Augustine and the Ancient Greeks was the source of wonder, shame and proportion, proportion as a sense of man's place in the vastness of Nature and of Logos, that incomprehensible order of things lying far beyond human comprehension. Just as for Plotinus the real world was divine, and therefore unknowable, so the imaginary world beyond was divine and a source of awe.

Viewing conscious and unconscious in the light of the saga of Kadmos and the line of Oedipus, we feel forces that are so much larger than the lives of the various kings of Thebes, all of whom come to early graves. The riddle of the sphinx throws into stark relief how small are human

lives when set against Nature and time, and consequently, how limited are human powers of comprehension. Four feet in the morning, two feet at noon and three feet in the evening. Doomed to the compass of a human life, Oedipus is part of his family line of curses, murders and jealousies, at the mercy of the powers of fate. Believing otherwise is hubris, and the source of his downfall.

Double Conscience

"Double conscience" in French designates at once consciousness (awareness, thinking) and conscience (ethical awareness, awareness of one's responsibilities to others and to oneself). Whereas the opposition of conscious to unconscious splits known and unknown, the concept of "double conscience" allows us to know and not know at the same time, to remember and perceive simultaneously. It allows for what patients, analysts and all of us can know because we are human, subject to error and subject also to ethical restraints which are built into our thinking and into our need for one another, into notions of thinking and of consciousness.

The contemporary of Freud most closely associated with the concept of "double conscience" was Pierre Janet. Janet challenged not only Freud's concept of the unconscious, but challenged the pertinence of the Oedipus Complex and the originality of his theories of the unconscious, drives and repression.

Janet writes of Freud: « He calls psychoanalysis what I formerly called psychological analysis; he calls complexus what I formerly called a psychological system to designate that combination of conscience and (external and internal) movements, of arms, legs and viscera, that link together in traumatic memories; he calls repression what I referred to as a

restriction of consciousness; he calls catharsis what I referred to as psychological dissociation or moral cleansing »¹⁰⁵

As Freud did with virtually all of his distinguished university contemporaries, not only did he refute Janet's criticisms, he condemned Janet for incompetence, and for distorting his own notions of mental conflict and repression. And, as though that were not enough, Freud continues: « Janet's works would never have had the implications which have made psycho-analysis of such importance to the mental sciences and have made it attract universal interest. »¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ my translation. "Il appela psych-analyse ce que j'avais appelé analyse psychologique, il nomma complexus ce que j'avais nommé système psychologique pour designer cet ensemble de fautes de conscience et de mouvements, soit des membres, soit des viscères, qui rest associé pour constituer le souvenir traumatique, il considéra comme un refoulement ce que je rapportais à un rétrécissement de la conscience, il batisa du nom de catharsis ce que je désignais comme une dissociation psychologique ou comme une désinfection morale." Janet (1923) p. 24 Janet speaks explicitly of the effects of trauma (souvenirs traumatiques) on what is remembered. "Il s'agit d'une modification particulière de la conscience que j'avais essayé de décrire en 1889 sous le nom de subconscience par désagrégation." Janet (1923) p. 23

¹⁰⁶ Freud SE Autobiographical Study XX p. 31 And Freud comments, testily, « Janet behaved ill, showed ignorance of the facts and used ugly arguments, » adding that there should be « an end to the glib repetition of the views that whatever is of value in psycho-analysis is merely borrowed from the ideas of Janet.» Freud SE Ibid., p.31.

Because they restrict the compass of comprehension, theories of the unconscious rely upon the conscious as rationality. Consequently, what is not rational is assumed to be a code to be unscrambled, an unknown language that abides by the structural and grammatical characteristics of language and is therefore decipherable and interpretable in the same ways as Linear B and hieroglyphics. Jacques Lacan was following Freud when he claimed that the unconscious is structured like a written language.¹⁰⁷ Significantly, this conception of what is not rational as a language is essentially what is written rather than spoken and responded to. Texts can be interpreted because they are written and essentially timeless.

But the spoken word is alive and exists in time, because, depending on tellers and listeners, on living, changing relationships, it resists structuralist interpretive approaches. If we bear in mind the distinction between grammar and syntax, it would appear that interpretation relies upon structural features of grammar rather than the functional features of syntax and meaning.

¹⁰⁷ Lacan and others have sought to defend Freud's science and his theoretical assumptions by drawing on linguistic theories, as Bion has sought to do the same by positing Alpha and Beta particles.

Psychoanalytic theories (e.g, Kleinians) have tried to compensate by postulating communication between the unconscious of the interpreter and the unconscious of the patient, but this only displaces the fundamental epistemological difficulty of what patient and interpreter can and cannot know and how their relationship affects how they think about it.¹⁰⁸

Freud's Oedipus cannot consciously recognize his father as his father or his mother as his mother. For Laius, Oedipus is an unknown man who gets in his way. Laius does not rationally know who Oedipus is. Similarly, Jocasta finds her new king in her bed without any rational understanding that he is her son. The motives of Oedipus, Laius and Jocasta must therefore be made "readable". Freud uses what Oedipus, Laius and Jocasta do not « rationally » know to define his unconscious as a code to be interpreted.

¹⁰⁸ In order to conform to Freud's notions of science, these psychological processes had to be material, they had to be physical. Freud imagined the unconscious to be powered by neurones and filled with inter-connecting pipes.

Setting psychoanalysis apart from the disciplines of the humanities and the universities¹⁰⁹ has made their underlying evolutionist/archeological assumptions appear to be in line with structuralist/linguistic aspirations. Structuralist theories rely upon spatial metaphors, and archeology relies upon strata that indicate time and history, theories of what is on the surface, what is deeper and what is below. Theories of psycho-sexual development and of the unconscious rest upon structuralist/linguistic assumptions. These are simultaneously evolutionary assumptions about what comes before and what comes after, what is on top and what is below. Viewing the unconscious as implicitly structural presents epistemological difficulties in being able to assess relationships between thinking and consciousness, between thinking and « conscience » (ethics).

¹⁰⁹ There is another perspective here. Psychoanalysis has had a difficult time with universities not only because Freud himself eschewed so many of his university contemporaries and viewed his science as apart from all others. The only university departments that have taken up psychoanalysis seriously are the departments of literature. Seemingly this is because of their interest in interpretation and language. But their interest in the unconscious has little to do with inner dynamics of conflicts, drives, wishes and fears. Rather, whatever they make of the unconscious is subordinated to theories of interpretation, language and structure.

The concept of the unconscious has led to approaching the instances of the mind conflictually, pitting the ones against the others. The ego wants its freedom, and so does the libido, but the superego then stands in the way, becoming the obstacle opposing the threatening libido. The superego and the Id can join forces against the ego, and, of course, the ego can join forces with either the id or the superego. All three compete and conflict. We are back with Rousseau's « men are born free but are everywhere in chains. » Once unconscious repression is associated with obstacles to freedom, the dynamics of ethics, shame and human responsibility can be cast aside in favor of guilt and aggression. This would throw light on the gyrations required to make Oedipus guilty by locating his guilt in the unconscious.¹¹⁰ At one stroke, Freud has placed not only the unconscious but all thinking « beyond good and evil. »

¹¹⁰ But what if these manoeuvres were a distraction from the tragic nature of Oedipus' shame and suffering? What if they had the effect of placing the unconscious beyond good and evil so that unconscious guilt could be seen to prevail, interpretation could promise « freedom » from guilt, and human suffering together with its shame and the feelings of human mortality could thus be evacuated?

In the mix too are the dialectical Hegalian conflicts: the « synthesis » between the thesis (libido) and antitheses is necessarily the function of the ego. Schematic notions of conflict in dialectical approaches contain and restrict the ceaseless movement and change we know living beings to have. These mechanical, drive/defense, motion/counter-motion models implicitly require spatial orientations, longitude and latitude, in order to defend their existence. While to this day the vogue for structuralist/archeological approaches continues to cast aside inconvenient difficulties, it is time to make way for approaches more faithful to human experience. It is time to recognize the crucial importance of shame, time and *psuche*.

Guilt and Shame

Shame and ethics both challenge narcissistic assumptions and interperative theories precisely because they are in constant movement, mirroring our existence between birth and death. There is movement on both sides, a before stretching out into the past and an after reaching into the unknown future. Past and future are unimaginably vast. Shame and ethics thus exist in

this vastness of time. Since the unconscious is posited to be itself unchanging so that it can be better interpreted, it is assumed to be timeless. Shame thus presents difficulties to any theory of the unconscious.

In Sophocles and in Aristotle it is clear that Oedipus is not consciously guilty. Therefore considerable efforts are required to present him as such. These are efforts to make guilt interpretable, which means taking it out of time, freezing it; the guilt of Oedipus stands schematically for the guilt of all mankind. To make Oedipus unconsciously guilty is to eliminate the inconvenient centrality of looking and shame on which the tragedy depends. The tragic emotions of which Aristotle speaks are inconceivable without shame as "the color of virtue". In Oedipus Rex shame is unavoidably expressed in the final scene in which Oedipus attacks his own eyes, the locus of looking and being seen.

As though to make shame, looking and blindness even more prominent, Tiresias, the blind seer,¹¹¹ is the very source of the prophecy that Oedipus does not want to “see.” He is the symbol of one who sees and does not see at the same time. Seeing and not seeing, knowing and not knowing at the same time are the dynamics of “double conscience.” The emphasis on unconscious guilt has the effect of negating the central dynamics of shame, the importance of eyes, looking and being looked at. It shuts out human helplessness and with it the vastness of both the heavens and the inner world, the soul.

The pain of shame is often wordless and far more difficult to describe than guilt. In Dickens’ Great Expectations, when Estelle gives Pip bread and meat, Pip comments: “she did so without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry—I

¹¹¹ There are many versions accounting for the blindness of Tiresias. All draw on the theme of illicit, secret knowledge (heimlich?). In one, Tiresias is caught watching Athena bathing, and for that she blinded him; in another, he sees snakes copulating and kills the female snake, and for that is blinded and turned into a woman by the angry Hera. In yet other versions of the myth, Tiresias is blinded for having divulged the secrets of the gods to men. So the blindness of Tiresias is associated with sexual secrets and horror at secret knowledge, recalling Freud’s fascination with heimlich stories. He sees but does not see, and is punished for seeing.

cannot hit upon the right name for the smart—God knows what its name was —that tears started to my eyes. . .so sharp was the smart without a name.”¹¹²

Shame is too close and inner condemnation too personal to be viewed at arm's length. Because it draws into it so many other feelings, shame eludes clear definitions; it is at once more intimate and more closely related to identity. In other words, because shame is dependent on our needs and fears of human connection in ways guilt is not, because of its shifting nature and the pain associated with it, it is therefore more alive and consequently more difficult to describe and still more difficult to fit into theories. But for this very reason, it is essential to grasp its role in the life of emotion.

Let me compare a few salient characteristics of guilt and shame, and then proceed to elaboration.

- 1) Shame is intimate, and related to the body; guilt can be attributed by others, and is in law definable theoretically.

¹¹² Dickens Great Expectations, p. 16

- 2) Shame grows from human relationships, from appearance anxieties and imagined appearances on which we depend; guilt can be viewed at arm's length and can be a narcissistic defense. In this respect guilt fits with paranoia (the enemy is others). One blames and envies others for their seeming powers of criticism.
- 3) Shame is related to the senses, and expressed as looking and being looked at; shame is associated with the skin (shame is on the skin, blushing); guilt bears no relation at all to the body.
- 4) Shame is associated with internal condemnation, whereas guilt is associated with external judgement.
- 5) Shame is intimately related to emotions and to anxiety and can be a reaction to other emotions, whereas guilt seems to be a more separate and distinguishable emotion, far easier to describe. Seemingly objective, guilt can be imagined without emotion, as a justification for crime and punishment.
- 6) Shame affects identity and appearance with fantasies of appearing and disappearing. Shame is a blanket, internal feeling, an internal condemnation, from which there is no escape since it cannot be

"located", cannot be given spatial or temporal coordinates. In contrast, guilt is associated with wrong-doing and external judgement.

- 7) Because shame is impossible to distance oneself from, it can be confused with guilt. Associated with the blame of others one can try to avoid, guilt, then, can be a defense against shame and internal condemnation.
- 8) Shame exists in time as a feeling that one knows and does not know at the same time. We want to hide it from the view of others in order to rely on their blindness to "not see" what we know and feel.
- 9) Shame designates states of being, whereas guilt designates reprehensible acts. The Oedipus Complex focuses on acts (and fantasies of acts) rather than on states of being.

It appears that the very difficulties in describing shame dynamics and including them in treatments suggest that they are so intimately linked to relationships, to anxieties over appearance and disappearance, that they defy the usual categories, and cannot be viewed as static. They are constantly changing in identities and relationships. Identity requires others, and without the sense of identity, the vacuum can masquerade as all there is.

To further complicate the picture, we can be ashamed of others, for others and in response to others. The emphasis on guilt and the neglect of shame, suggests that in fact the contemporary world of psychology and psychoanalysis have little room for the ever-shifting dynamics of shame and their life in relationships.

The interactions of feelings and shame which constantly change, since one can feel oneself looking and being looked at at the same time, suggest a life of emotion which is excluded from the usual definitions of conscious and unconscious. Because the notion of « double conscience » implies process, the process of looking and being looked at, the process of judging and being judged, the process of perceiving and remembering all at the same time, it conveys the life of the mind and soul.

The notion of the unconscious depends on conceptions of repression, which, in turn depend on a sharp cleavage between conscious and

unconscious.¹¹³ This cleavage relies upon the power of shame as the power to look, the power to shame the other, to turn the other person into the object of the look. Looking must be one way; an object of knowledge is not supposed to look back. There is no real theoretical allowance for therapist to be at once looking and being looked at, nor is there allowance for the patient to be the one looking. In this sense the patient is assumed to exist only as the object of the analytic gaze. Viewing the patient as an object means failing to recognize a living, human complicated source of thinking, responding and interacting with the known and the unknown in both himself and his analyst at the same time.

The notion of "double conscience" evokes time; it allows for the vast scope of history. With the notion of "double conscience", time, memory and history can be approached respectfully without the divide between conscious and unconscious. When we remember, we perceive, and when we perceive we remember. And when we

¹¹³ Repression "cannot arise until a sharp cleavage has occurred between conscious and unconscious mental activity--that the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious. SE XIV p. 147 "repression demands a persistent expenditure of energy. p151

remember we imagine. There is no clear line between the three, since one is always changing into the other; the one moves into the other, becomes the other.

Living is perceiving, perceiving is remembering and remembering is imagining. As the emotion most closely associated with life force, with psuche, and with consciousness and conscience (double conscience), shame is constantly moving, constantly in motion, echoing what we imagine others feel and perceive about us, ever challenging us in what we know and what we would rather not know, in what threatens what we know and how we know it.

The concept of the unconscious, filled as it is with threats of chaos and cruelty, when compared to the notions of the divine within or the notion of double conscience, shrinks this vastness and substitutes for the divine something « interpretable, » The horror of incest, cruelty and parricide in the Oedipus Complex, reinforces the emphasis on unconscious guilt, envy and aggression. Freuds writes: « The history of

human civilization shows beyond any doubt that there is an intimate connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct. »¹¹⁴ Like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, Freud viewed what was not within the purview of the conscious as threatening. When the unconscious is a source of threat, all the music and all the magic disappears, and the world is left impoverished.

There is another meaning to the notion of double conscience: that there are two consciousness in order for there to be one. Double conscience thus designates a fact of human nature: that we become human and conscious through each other and in relationships. Without the divide between consciousness and unconscious, being human takes on fresh meaning.

We need our feelings of wonder and awe, associated with the sense of how small is the compass of human lives and how vast is the universe, how we can know and not know at the same time, and how remarkable

¹¹⁴ Three Essays on Sexuality P. 159

and surprising are our intuitions, how much larger is our experience than our comprehension. Feelings of awe and wonder stretch the imagination and fill the heart. These ideas of the vastness of Nature, indispensable in thinking about human suffering, time and imagination, are indispensable also in considering the life of emotions. We need a fresh vision of our inner worlds opening onto vast possibilities for imagining together perception, bodily states, thinking, intuiting, and the movements of the soul.

Chapter 6

Aidos, Shame, and The Birth of Consciousness

Aidos and Adam and Eve

Interestingly, the Greek word for shame, *aidos*, also designates the genitals, private parts needing to be covered. *Aidos* appears in the Greek world as an experience of “being seen, inappropriately, by the wrong people, in the wrong condition.”¹¹⁵ The implications of the Greek *aidos*, the need to be conscious of genitals, would appear to have direct relevance for the Genesis account of Adam and Eve,.

The story of Adam and Eve, how they come to know each other, how they recognize each other, become aware of sexual and physical differences, and in so doing recognize themselves in their attraction and need for each other, is fundamentally the story of the birth of consciousness and conscience together. The birth of consciousness in the story of Adam and Eve can be

¹¹⁵ Bernard Williams 1993, p. 78

seen as an expresssion of "double conscience", designating both consciousness and conscience.

From the shame of Adam, God infers wrongdoing. God sees Adam looking away and lowering his head. He asks him for an explanation. Adam "confesses" that he ate of the forbidden fruit, that Eve gave it to him. God chases Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden. Since consciousness is the consciousness of human limitation and death, it would seem that the story of Adam and Eve is a story of how human misfortune came into the world. The expulsion and confession of wrongdoing serves as an explanation for death and human suffering.

But there are additional implications here. Sexuality is directly associated with what is forbidden, and what is forbidden is associated with disobedience, which, in turn, is associated with conscience, and becomes an explanation for human death and suffering. Read backward, we all know that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, chased out as in the Massacio painting of the expulsion.

We understand that Adam and Eve will be punished, that pain will be introduced into their lives, pain, shame, embarrassment, sickness, uncertainty and death. Strikingly, it has come to be assumed that Adam and Eve have somehow deserved to be chased out, that they are "guilty". Contemporary approaches to the human psyche, dependent as they are upon notions of behavior (cognitive behaviorism), focus on the misbehavior of Adam and Eve. Our behavioral focus gets in the way of grasping the story of Adam and Eve as the birth of consciousness and conscience in the emotional world of shame and human relationships.¹¹⁶

The assumed guilt in the story of Adam and Eve presumes that God was right in his punishment. Not questioning God's attribution of guilt and punishment can serve a defense against the shame of not knowing how or why Adam and Eve (and all the rest of us) must live with uncertainty, pain, suffering and death. Human limitations and suffering and the inevitability of death are shameful subjects. Questions about how belief in a divine order can be relied upon when human beings suffer have plagued theologians and philosophers since the beginning of time. Casting these questions aside in

¹¹⁶ It is then their shame that accounts for "the fall". Or is it the "fall" that accounts for the shame?

order to vilify sexuality or disobedience, in order to emphasize guilt, avoids shameful human weakness. It also avoids the life-giving powers of sexuality, and with the vilification of sexuality and the implicit condemnation of the body and of bodily emotions, it avoids ethics and conscience. With assumed guilt, human misery and misfortune disappears behind the unquestioned power and authority of God.

The story of Adam and Eve in Genesis ascribes conscience, knowing what is right and wrong, to God, who judges and punishes. As we will see in future chapters, judging right from wrong can be seriously problematic. Viewing the story as an expression of fears of judgement and the need for connection, feelings of being judged can certainly be related to shame, judged by others and by oneself. Cognitive behaviorists tend to believe that judgements can be assumed to be cognitive, and as such relatively independent of emotions. However, we know that this is not the case at all, since judgements can be expressions of feelings and used against threatening feelings. Judgements of feelings are necessarily difficult to separate from the feelings themselves, making what can be known and unknown at the same time even more difficult.

Consciousness comes packaged with anxiety; anxiety in turn comes packaged with the ways in which we judge it as a threat, and attempt to protect ourselves; and the need for protection calls up more judgements when vulnerability is felt to be unacceptable. When we feel our emotions are threatening us, we judge them, and these judgements have an effect on how we react to feelings.

When the unacceptable is felt to be foreign, it is assumed that outside forces, judged to be obstacles, are getting in the way. Then our feelings about having obstacles come into play, and we resent them. Resentment is a feeling that carries with it many other feelings; it can often be an attempt at distancing from painful experiences. The etymology in English is related to the French "resentiment," (re-sentir) feeling again.

Instinctively we want to hide from the threats, and use our disapproval or disbelief as a way of distancing ourselves from such threats. Thus our disapproval and disbelief, bolstered by and often confused with our judgements, can serve defensive functions. Not only can they be reactions to

judgements, but they can be reactions to reactions to judgements. In these reactions and reactions to reactions, emotions and judgements leave "rationality" and comprehension trailing far behind.

Often our judgements of feelings function to place the source of the threat outside us, since believing it to be within feels too threatening and there is no escape. They implicitly depend on our feelings about relationships with others and with whatever is construed as the outside world. The more paranoid we are, the clearer it will be that the obstacles are outside. The French have a saying: it is always the fault of others (« c'est toujours la faute des autres »). However, such an expression can be construed as mistrustful. They disorient us in our understanding of our feelings by furthering the illusion that others are their cause. They also further the illusion that we must be right, and that any error must by definition be made by others. These narcissistic rationalizations fundamentally distort emotional orientation. By contrast, the stronger our human connections, the better we can recognize threatening feelings in ourselves as being ours, of our own making in addition to our reactions to the ways in which others make us feel. There is a

couplet from a 14th century English madrigal (Dryden and Purcell) I am myself/mine own fever and pain.

Time and life begins when Adam and Eve becomes conscious of each other and are chased out of the Garden of Eden. Being chased out of the Garden gives Adam and Eve the only history they can know. Their past is idyllic. Their present is henceforth uncertain and their future unknowable. They have become human.

Vico: The Origins of Consciousness in song

Giambattista Vico's (1668-1744)¹¹⁷ vision of the beginning of consciousness and conscience is rather different from the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Primitive man and primitive woman are sitting in a cave, unable to speak. There is a terrifying thunderstorm, with lightning and deafening cracks of thunder. Suddenly, and in response to overwhelming feelings, the man (a Neopolitan tenor?) bursts into song. This is the origin of consciousness,

¹¹⁷ Vico (1668-1744) was older than Hobbes (1588-1679) and Spinoza (1632-1677); a contemporary of Newton (1642-1726/7) and a generation older than John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), Voltaire (1694-1778), Montesquieu (1689-1755), Rousseau (1712-1778), and Diderot (1713-1784).

language and poetry. Consciousness and conscience begin with strong emotions, love and song.

“Men vent great passions by breaking into song.”¹¹⁸ For Vico song, music and poetry are born together, recalling Augustine, “I feel that all the various emotions of the heart have rhythms proper to them in verse and song, where, by some mysterious affinity, they are made more alive.”¹¹⁹ It is the heart that sings a lasting song. In the prologue of the Pushkin story *Ruslan and Lyudmilla*, the narrator describes a green oak by the sea. On this oak a learned cat walks to and fro on a golden chain. When the cat walks to the right, he sings, when he walks to the left he tells stories.

For Vico consciousness begins not with language, but with passion and feeling. Setting himself against the rationalism of Descartes, Vico conceives of the origin of consciousness, not in any rational need to formulate ideas, not in any theory of semiotics or language, not in any reliance on words, not in any particular theory of the mind, not in any notion of evolution or

¹¹⁸ Vico, p. 77

¹¹⁹ quoted in Brown, 1966, p. 173.

development from simple to complex. Instead, Vico writes that consciousness is born in the emotions of awe, terror and implicitly, love brought on by a terrifying thunderstorm. It is the consciousness of their attractions and love for each other and the shared terror of the primitive man and woman that give rise to song. The communicative power of song, not words, becomes in this way the template for human connections. Language, judgement and reason come far behind.

For Vico, whatever we think or formulate in words is corseted by our frameworks of thinking. Because our lives are so vast, our ability to think about them rationally is correspondingly small and limited. Or, said differently, precisely because our thinking inevitably creates its own limits, our lives and experiences far exceed them.

In our human lives, it is essentially our feelings, not our thoughts, that matter most. The life of emotion can never be understandable since one lifetime is never enough to begin to grasp it. Kierkegaard commented that the curse of mankind is to live forward but think backward. In other words, life carries us along as we live it, and then we try to think about what we experience, our

thoughts always lagging behind the vastness of experience, only able to catch a tiny portion of what is there.¹²⁰

In his magnum opus La Scienza Nuova (The New Science) (The 3rd edition of the work was published in 1744) Vico, contrasting the Italian words "scienza" and "coscienza", (science and conscience/consciousness) advances an overarching notion of science rooted in Greek notions that can allow for ethics, poetic knowledge and intuition. For Vico, "*coscienza*," emotional knowledge, intuition, consciousness and conscience, constitutes the epistemological basis of *il certo*, as opposed to *scienza*, the rational knowledge of the natural world (*il vero*). *Coscienza* is a realm of "understanding" that exists outside rational coherence and logic, not unlike Russian *skazka*.

Vico explains:

"Men at first feel without perceiving, then they perceive with a troubled and agitated spirit, finally they reflect with a clear mind. This axiom is the principle of poetic sentences, which are formed by feelings of

¹²⁰ Extrapolating to the world of today, living and thinking are placed at odds when philosophers, scientists and social scientists focus on thinking (thought categories) and language to the exclusion of feelings.

passion and emotion, whereas philosophic sentences are formed by reflection and reasoning. The more the latter rise towards universals the closer they approach the truth; the more the former descend to particulars, the more certain they become."¹²¹

What Vico is doing here is essentially reaching to the notion that theology is the queen of the sciences, not belief in God but rather what we as human beings can know of ourselves and the world. His is a theological epistemology without God. In this he draws upon Renaissance notions of man as the measure of the universe. Vico's vision of "scienza" will guide what in centuries to follow will be termed a science of Man, one that gathers within it all social sciences, philosophy and humanities. For example, the French society which I studied,¹²² La Société des Observateurs de l'Homme, was composed of philosophers, linguists, geographers, mathématiciens, biologists and naturalists. They shared an inspiring overarching notion of what was comprehensible.

¹²¹ Vico, 1744, pp75--76 sections 218-219

¹²² See Kilborne, 1982

The word "conscience" in French and "coscienza" in Italian designates what in English is translated by two words: consciousness and conscience.

While relating them linguistically and conceptually, Vico distinguishes on the one hand "coscienza," (consciousness and conscience) from "scienza," knowledge or science. In the tradition of Renaissance Humanism, Vico underscores the fundamental epistemological distinction to be made between our knowledge of the human world as human beings, and our knowledge of the natural (non-human) world as outsiders who cannot know what lies outside human experience.

Vico grounds all understanding in the passions and in a process of changing understanding in time, what he refers to as "the modifications of the human mind." For him, human knowledge, perceived through the five senses, is dictated by shifting human concerns and therefore grounded in what men can know—and feel—from the inside. Feelings

become an integral part of understanding.¹²³ The object of “*coscienza*” is “*il certo*,” or human certainty; the object of “*scienza*” is “*il vero*,” or truth in the sense of universally applicable principles. Science and conscience, science and consciousness need not be opposed the ones to the others. Different forms of knowing can be a part of a single vision. Comparing these notions to “double conscience”, we find a striking resemblance.

Since Vico wrote in the 17th century, science has increasingly become impersonalized; empirical observation, statistics and replicability have been adopted as the primary standards by which the reliability of “objective” knowledge can be judged.

Let me illustrate the conflict between explanatory worlds with an example from Magic and Witchcraft among the Azande by the Oxford

¹²³ Whereas Descartes in his Discourse on the Method made monolithic doubt the centerpiece of his system and method, Vico made the distinction between two kinds of knowledge (*il vero* and *il certo*) the centerpiece of his. For Descartes there is only one form of true certainty (or certain truth), only one way of making “sense”: that arrived at by doubting the testimony of the senses, by doubting perception. This makes Descartes a closet sensualist in the cloak of a rationalist.

Social Anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard. Evans-Pritchard notes that the Zande (who occupied a portion of what used to be the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan) built their houses on posts, which sometimes gave way, crushing those beneath them. Dismayed by a series of accidental deaths when these houses collapsed, Evans-Pritchard tried to explain to the Zande that these posts were eaten by termites, and that this was the cause of the accidents.

However, the Zande were in no way satisfied by this explanation, since it was impersonal and depended on seeing termites as agents of destruction: termites were the cause and the collapse of a house was the effect. Such a cause and effect explanation was useless to the Zande.

For the Zande, the real question was: why was that particular person sitting under the house at that particular time when that particular house collapsed? When Evans-Pritchard explained to the Zande that the cause of the collapse was termites, the Zande could not understand

why such an irrelevant fact could be put forward as useful, since it left the primary questions unanswered. Explanations are mostly valued according to the kind of question asked. To the question: why do apples fall, we have a ready answer based on our assumptions about causality, the nature of evidence and scientific demonstration: because of gravity. But that does not explain why that particular apple fell on my head (and not on the head of someone else) on this particular day and not another.

Vico observes at the end of his book, “this Science [his New Science] carries inseparably with it the study of piety, and that he who is not pious cannot be truly wise.”¹²⁴ Piety includes wonder and awe. To recognize that there is a basic distinction between the world of mankind and the natural world is, therefore, a basic act of piety; to conflate the

¹²⁴ Vico, *Ibid.*, p. 426, section 1112

two, as the rationalist, empirical, cognitive, behaviorist tradition tends to do, is an expression of impiety and *hubris*.¹²⁵

In what is perhaps the most memorable passage in La Scienza Nuova

Vico writes:

But in the night of thick darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from ourselves, there shines the eternal and never failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that its principles are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind. Whoever reflects on this cannot but marvel that the philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows; and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations, or civil world, which, since men had made it, men could come to know.¹²⁶

It is tempting to compare this passage of Vico with Augustine: “Men go to gape at mountain peaks, at the boundless tides of the sea, the broad

¹²⁵ For Emile Durkheim, the implicit piety in the study of society is integral to his monumental Les formes elementaires de la vie religieuse (Elementary Forms of Religious Life). For him a sociology of religion is ipso facto a religious sociology. Essentially, for Durkheim (as for Vico) piety is implicit in the study of social processes, and an integral part of attempts to understand them. See Kilborne 1992 *The Role of Faith in the Social Sciences*.

¹²⁶ Vico, 1744, p. 96, section 331.

sweep of the rivers, the encircling ocean and the motions of the stars, and yet they leave themselves unnoticed; they do not marvel at themselves.”¹²⁷

Vico's emphasis on the nature of human responsibility (conscience) which depends upon what man has made, in contrast with the natural world, seems today to be irrelevant. In our world of artificial intelligence and artificial insemination there is little sense of wonder or awe. We can claim control and mastery (not wonder and awe) over our creations precisely because they avoid ourselves. Precisely because they are material creations and not ourselves, precisely because they have so little to do with us as human beings, we have lost the sense of piety, and with it something essential in the life of our emotions.

Aristotle, Wonder and the Life of Aidos

¹²⁷ Quoted in Brown, 1967,p. 162

Vico's epistemological distinction between the natural and the human worlds based on what is and what is not pertinent for human lives follows the lines of Greek philosophy. His emphasis on *il vero* corresponds to the Greek injunction to live a good life. Living a good life was held by Plato, Aristotle and others to be the goal of life.

Il vero is a kind of understanding that depends on being human and oneself and no other. Therefore, it cannot be objective, cannot be independently verifiable, since it depends upon ethical and emotional life. *Il vero* designates what we as human beings are responsible for and to whom we are responsible. It is inseparable from conscience (*coscienza*). As such it is fundamental to our notions of understanding, interpretation, causality and explanation.

The backbone of Greek philosophy is not philosophical understanding but rather in living, feeling and imagining. It lies in honoring the sense of life given to us through relationships and responsibilities of all kinds. The life of emotion lies not in understanding; it lies in living both what one understands and what is incomprehensible, being carried along by the force of life no

matter how one attempts to construe it. Vico's notion of *il vero* thus picks up on the Greek concepts of the good life by focusing on what is our responsibility as human beings to know because we are human beings; we are not Frankensteins, objective observers or creations of artificial intelligence. The good life is implicitly one that can be fully lived. By subordinating knowledge to responsibility Vico in distinguishing *il vero* from *il certo* is adopting an implicitly Aristotean approach to ethics.

Allowing for responsibilities and connections to others, for ethics, led Aristotle to define *aidos* (shame) "as a certain fear of disrepute". Such a fear is a fear of the judgements and perceptions of others on whom one depends. This is shame.

Aristotle goes on to say that *Aidos* resembles *pathos* (fear),¹²⁸ but that it needs to be distinguished from it. Both can be related to bodily

¹²⁸ He explains, "for those who feel shame blush and those who fear death turn pale. Both, then, appear in some way to be bodily needs. . ." (Nicomachean Ethics 1128b10-16).

sensations.¹²⁹ *Aidos* (shame and genitalia) evokes damage to reputation or sense of self, and therefore to identity and ethics. *Pathos* is pain at imagining poverty, sickness, loss and friendlessness.¹³⁰ *Pathos* is similar to Kierkegaard's remark that it is easy to recognize the loss of a fortune, a business, a house, an arm or leg, a parent or spouse, it is far more difficult to recognize the loss of a self. By implication then, *aidos* recognizes the importance of relationships in orientation and identity, while *pathos* does not. *Aidos* is thus related to our responsibilities to others, and to our reliance on others; *pathos* can be our own individual fears felt in isolation.

Implicitly in speaking of tragic emotion and katharsis, Aristotle links *Aidos* to "tragic wonder." He writes: "Tragedy is an imitation not only of a complete action, but of events inspiring fear or pity (katharsis). Such an effect is best

¹²⁹ « And [we have friendly feelings towards] those with whom we are on such terms that we do not blush before them for faults merely condemned by public opinion, provided that this is not due to contempt; and those before whom we do blush for faults that are really bad. » (Rhetoric. ii 4.1381b18-20)

¹³⁰ Aristotle approaches *aidos* from the vantage point of things one ought to fear, things it is ethical to fear. "For some things one even ought to fear, and it is noble to do so and shameful not to, for example, disrepute, since he who fears this is decent and bashful, whereas he who does not is shameless" (Nicomachean Ethics 1115a10-14)

produced when the events come on us by surprise. . . The tragic wonder will then be greater than if they happened of themselves or by accident. »¹³¹

And he adds, «The element of the wonderful is required in Tragedy. . .every one tells a story with some addition of his own, knowing that his hearers like it."¹³² Wonder is associated not with anything artificial or willed, but rather with a certain kind of "imitation". While scholars have debated at great length the meaning of "imitation"¹³³ in Aristotle, it appears to be part of a vision of tragic emotions including pity, fear and shame. Aristotle writes: "Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action, and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality."¹³⁴ Tragedy is an imitation of life which requires wonder. Therefore, its power lies in the power, reality and fantasy, of emotions. The end of life is a "mode of action". And for imitation, imagination is required. Imagination and piety.

¹³¹ Poetics IX.10-X.3

¹³² XXIV. 7

¹³³ For example there is the compendious and essentially unreadable Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western Literature by Erich Aurbach.

¹³⁴ VI.9-4

Shakespeare wrote:

Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air. . .¹³⁵

The Greeks said that to marvel is the beginning of knowledge and where we cease to marvel we run the risk of sacrificing our understanding and of not living. Tragic wonder give us "the illusion of looking into the invisible realms of the mind--if only we know, as Philostratus says, how to use our eyes."¹³⁶ Using our eyes requires intuition and imagination, abilities to see beyond appearances.

¹³⁵ Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra Act IV (14)

¹³⁶ p. 389 Gombrich

To imagine the birth of consciousness is to marvel at feelings of being alive.¹³⁷ For the Greeks and for Vico, responding to shame as "the color of virtue" becomes an essential part of consciousness and conscience, an essential part of feeling alive. The birth of consciousness, both in the story of Adam and Eve and in Vico's myth of cave dwellers bursting into song, depend upon fears of abandonment and the need for human connection. In Adam and Eve, the need for each other (represented by the consciousness of sexual desire) is doubled by their need for God, who rejects them and casts them out. In Vico's myth, song, as the force of life, as *psuche*, prevails as the expression of overpowering fear, love and piety, all sung one to the other.

¹³⁷Vico is following in the tradition of Pico della Mirandola who began his treatise *De hominis dignitate* (On Human Dignity) (1486) as follows: "Most esteemed Fathers, I have read in the ancient writings of the Arabians that Abdala the Saracen on being asked what, on this stage, so to say, of the world seemed to him most evocative of wonder, replied that there was nothing to be seen more marvelous than man. And that celebrated exclamation of Hermes Trismegistus, 'What a great miracle is man, Asclepius' confirms this opinion." Note here the evocation of Asklepios as a guardian of humanism (and, implicitly, tolerance). Note too the references to the Arabians. The text also refers to the Chaldeans and a variety of non-Christian sources, references to which demonstrate Pico's tolerance and broad-mindedness.

Chapter 7

Dreams, Piety and Wonder and Memory

Dreams are "the eyes of the soul". This notion from ancient Mesopotamia is altogether pertinent for the life of emotions, since, for the soul, to see is to be alive, and to be alive is to see with the soul. Yet for inner eyes to see, they must be able to look. And if they are neglected in favor of money, power, material possessions, and scientific knowledge, they cannot but focus on whatever happens to be in front of them. This means taking them out of time, isolating them in a present that knows no past or future.

As the eyes of our soul, dreams are inseparable from our inner lives; inner lives exist in time and are inseparable from the life of the mind, inseparable from the limitations and anxieties of our life span, from the life of our emotions.

The Greek *Psuche* means both soul and life-force. There is no life of our mind apart from the life of emotions upon which all thinking

depends. Thus the concept of *psuche* designates at once dreaming, breath and life force. Dreams are not only alive, they are evidence of life itself. Moreover, that we dream at all is a sign of life, like breathing.

Dreams exist in a time unlike any other. Because they can never be "present", and we cannot be conscious of them as they unfold or open up, they can only exist as unexperienced memories which, by trying to remember, we can only know by anticipation. The Australian aborigines were known by anthropologists for the concept of "dream time." Whether or not the Australian concept corresponds to our notions of dreams and time, the notion of dream time throws into relief how important is time for the experience of dreams. Dreams express a power of life far greater than any power of our waking notions of present, past and future.

We all know dreams in ways we do not know other experiences. But how we know our dreams remains a mystery, since we are not conscious while we dream. But this does not mean that we are

unconscious. Rather it suggests that we know dreams differently from the ways we know waking experience.

Like life itself, dreams cross so many boundaries that they defy description and are difficult to categorize. Are they perceptions? Are they memories? Are they thoughts? Are they imaginings? Are they history? Are they prophecies about the future? Are they illusions? Are they evidence of indigestion? Is their sexuality about sexual desire or about something else which sexuality represents? And when they are transformed in our attempts to remember them, are we remembering the dream or our imaginative versions of what we assume was a dream?

Because we can never know the dream as we dream it, we must rely on our memories. We must remember experiences we never had. And we necessarily remember a dream differently each time we tell it, since we must re-imagine it with each telling.

Dreams blur the boundaries between our inner lives and the external world, between our private worlds and our perceptions of the outside, between whatever we construe as inside and outside. And this is the point. And this is why dreams are so vital as a source of life and breath. Although it seems counter-intuitive, dreams link inside and outside in our imaginations, and challenge notions of will and intention.

Like life itself, dreams blur boundaries, defy our need for categorization and rationalization, description and interpretation. Being alive ultimately defies comprehension. If death is the only means by which life can be described, then the description means but little to the defunct. What kinds of perceptions are dreams? And what do dreams tell us about memory? Dreams call into question what we remember as no other experience can do. Remembering what we have never experienced suggests that such memories depend upon fantasy and intuition. But how?

To get around the problems of memory, fantasy and perception that dreaming experiences raises, Freud ingeniously asserted that dreams

could first be reduced to texts and then interpreted through associations with waking experience. But what do associations, which can be both perceived and remembered, have to do with dream experiences that we must struggle to piece together from our nightly impressions? The associative method of dream interpretation deflects our attention from what we know a dream to be.

But when a dream is no more than a text, it loses its life. There is no remembering texts, since they cannot change, having been formulated once and for all. Looking at an unchanging text, reading it and knowing one can reread it if one is in doubt, is a completely different experience from the telling and listening to a dream. Unlike the evanescent quality of dreams as we know them, as we feel them, each dream text is definitive, fixed and cannot be edited or changed. When the motions and emotions of dreams are reduced to motionless texts, they can no longer be alive. Although we know dreams to be in motion and continually changing depending upon the ways in which we remember

and imagine them, when dreams become no more (and nothing other) than texts, specimen fixed like butterflies on pins, they cease to be.¹³⁸

Dreams in Ancient Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world

For millenia, dreams have been associated with political power and legitimacy, with healing powers and divination. Paradoxically, although today they are dismissed as irrelevant illusions, dreams have been associated with belief and faith, designating experiences that command attention and bestow powers. In Ancient Mesopotamia recorded dreams are those of kings and prophets. These "royal messenger dreams" demonstrate the connection kings are believed to have had with deities; they were felt to be evidence of the life and power bestowed upon them by higher powers.. For the ancient world, waking thought was felt to be limited: it could not provide the soul with windows, an ability to see into the beyond. Such

¹³⁸ Historically there are many other approaches to the interpretation of dreams which can immeasurably enrich clinical understanding. The expression "I would not dream of it" begs the question: "what if you could?" see Kilborne "Dreams" Macmillan Encyclopedia of Religion.

approaches to dreams directly affected conceptions of thinking and the functions of thought, as do ours today, but in strikingly different ways.

The Dream of Pharaoh

The dream of Pharaoh interpreted by Joseph in Genesis is a fine example. "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph: In my dream, behold I stood upon the bank of a river, and Behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: And behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favored and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: And the lean and the ill favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine."¹³⁹ And Pharaoh awoke from the nightmare. Then Pharaoh had a second dream. "And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears,

¹³⁹ Genesis 41 15-21

came up in one stalk, full and good. And behold, seven ears withered, thin and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them."¹⁴⁰

Joseph told Pharaoh that the two dreams were in fact one, that they foretold of seven good years of harvest followed by seven years of famine and scarcity. Because of the interpretation, Pharaoh accorded Joseph extraordinary political and governing powers second only to his own. Thus, the dream demonstrated the prophetic nature of Pharaoh's dream and simultaneously bestowed on Joseph legitimacy and political power because his interpretation was God given.

A second example of dreamed power and legitimacy is that of Thutmose IV of Egypt (14 th century BC) who slept beneath the paws of the giant sphinx of Giza. Looking up at the giant head before he fell asleep, he dreamed that the sphinx visited him and told him that if he restored the statue of Giza, he would become the next ruler of Egypt. He did, and the dream was used to demonstrate his divine right to rule.

¹⁴⁰ Genesis 41 22-23

The dream stele recounting the dream was found between the paws of the sphinx.

Foundational Dreams: The Dream of Gudea

Innumerable are the dream messages from deities and saints that have been obeyed, and believed to legitimize power by the building of sacred temples. These dreams also prophesied what would come to pass.

Perhaps the best known of the architectural foundation dreams is that of Gudea, the ruler of the Sumerian city of Girsu. Roughly 4,000 years ago, Gudea had a dream in which he was visited by a being in the form of a raging deluge, a towering figure who had the wings of the Thunderbird and was flanked by lions. The figure said something about the building of a temple. In search of the meaning of his dream, Gudea set out on a mystic journey by sacred barge to the temple of Nanshe, known to interpret dreams. He begins: "I had a dream. In the dream there was a towering figure with a head like that of a god, wings like

those of the Anzud bird (Thunder Bird), and a lower body like a flood storm. Lions lay at his feet. He spoke to me about building his house, but I could not understand what he exactly meant."¹⁴¹

Nanshe answered: "I will explain your dream for you in every detail. The person who, as you said, was as enormous as the skies, who was as enormous as the earth, whose head was like that of gods, whose wings, as you said, were like those of the Anzud bird (Thunder Bird), and whose lower body was, as you said, like a flood storm, at whose right and left lions were lying, was in fact my brother Nin-jirsu. He spoke to you about the building of his shrine, the E-ninnu." The temple was conceived to express the divinely inspired indeterminacy of space and time.¹⁴²

Foundational Dreams: The Dream of Gunzo

¹⁴¹ Linear B details the building of the temple to Ningirsu 17-23. I have told the story based on the Linear B document (found online).

¹⁴² In the construction of the temple, time and space were a continuum. Sebastian Rey, *The Culture of the Sacred in Mesopotamia* Sebastian vol 2. The British Museum: University Park, PA & London

For our understanding of dreams, foundational dreams appear to be particularly important. Living in Cluny, France, I am particularly fond of the story of Gunzo and the construction of the great abbey of Cluny (Cluny III). According to some, Gunzo, an aged, ailing monk, dreamed that Saint Pierre (whose relics were part of the treasure of the Abbey) appeared to him in dream. Saint Peter appeared to him in his dream instructing him to assure the construction of a religious structure the likes of which had never been seen or imagined. It was to be an abbey that would hold 1,000 monks and would in proportions inspire all with its vast volumes, its beauty and its magnificence. Saint Peter promised Gunzo that if he carried out these instructions, he would live a decade longer.

Other, more reliable, sources indicate that Gunzo was an extraordinarily gifted and ambitious architect who adhered to Pythagorean principles of harmony, acoustics and building, principles reinforced by the quadrivium which governed education throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. : mathematics, architecture, music and astronomy. Cluny III

became the center for Gregorian chants because of the height of its vaults, its proportions and its acoustics, which Gunzo and others had calculated. Thus song and proportion, height and beauty could be combined in the tradition not only of Vitruvius (1st century), who followed Pythagorean principles, but also of Greek traditions of harmony and imagination.

What is striking here is that the inconceivably magnificent proportions of the abbey were believed to have been unimaginable but for the dream. The great abbey of Cluny (Cluny III) was to be, for centuries after its construction in the 12th century, the unsurpassed architectural achievement of Western Christianity. It remained unrivaled in size until the 17th century, when a delegation sent by the pope in Rome was instructed to measure it in order to construct Saint Peter's in the Vatican which was to be slightly larger.

Asklepios, Healing and Dreams

The cult of Asklepios, the god of healing in dreams, appears to have begun in what today is Turkey and spread through the Mediterranean.¹⁴³ Some have speculated that the name "Asklepios" derives from the Greek *epiotes*, meaning "gentleness".

In myth, Asklepios is the son of Apollo and the mortal nymph Koronis. Apollo abducted Koronis and raped her. But Koronis was not just anybody: she was the daughter of Phlegyas, the king of Thessaly (part of what is now Turkey). Koronis, having a mind of her own, and although pregnant with the child of Apollo, wanted to marry Ischys. Upon learning this, Apollo's sister Artemis (the goddess of hunting) murdered Koronis and placed her body upon a funeral pyre. As her body started to burn, Apollo swooped down and snatched the child from his mother's womb. He gave the child to Cheiron to be educated.¹⁴⁴

The name "Cheiron is derived from the Greek "Kheiro" meaning "of the hand", since Cheiron handed his wisdom and knowledge of the healing arts

¹⁴³ The cult of Asklepios spread from Thessaly to Epidauros, to Kos (home of the famous physician Hypocrates, a devotee of Asklepios)

¹⁴⁴ Cheiron also educated Achilles.

to humankind. A Centaur, Half man and half horse, Cheiron conjoined the realms of the living and the dead. His epithets, "snake" and "dog" refer to his accompanying snakes and dogs, the snake associated with death and rebirth and the dog with sniffing out shams.¹⁴⁵

Asklepios' medical skill and presence in dreamed cures allowed him to restore so many souls that he diminished the number of inhabitants in Hades, who complained to Zeus. Zeus then struck Asklepios dead with a thunderbolt. Hades retaliated by killing the Cyclops who made the thunderbolts for Zeus. Angry with Hades, Zeus restored Asklepios to life. The motif of a healing god who dies and comes to life again reappears in the initiation dreams of Siberian shamen, demonstrating the powers of life and healing for which shamen are known.

Asklepios, who married Epione, a personification of kindness and mildness, had four daughters who accompanied him in his dreamed ministrations: Panacea, goddess of health and the prevention of disease, Hygiea, goddess

¹⁴⁵ According to Ovid (*Metamorphosis* 11) and Pindar (*Pythian Odes*), it was Cheiron who taught Asklepios surgery, the use of drugs, love potions, fertility drugs and incantations.

of healing. From their names, Panacea and Hygiea, we derive our terms "panacea" and "hygiene". The other two daughters were Laeso, goddess of healing, and Aegle, the goddess of good health. Asklepios also had three sons: Telesphoros, patron of rehabilitation, and Machaon and Podaleirios, patrons respectively of surgery and internal medicine. The entire family acted in consort in dreams, combining their specialties as a multispecialty group practice.

Each temple complex had an "abaton", a sacred place designated for sleeping and curative dreams. Each abaton had a "Kliné", a reclining place (sometimes a cot) from which we derive our word "clinic". These sanctuaries to Asklepios were essentially not only the first hospitals with specialized spaces set aside for the sick who awaited curative dreams brought by Asklepios and his family, but also vast building complexes to house the families of the sick, to provide for athletic events, theater and music. Curative dreams could be dreamed also at the temple by family members or friends of the afflicted. By the millions, people flocked to these temples to feel more alive.

The functions of these Asklepieia were similar to those of early Christian abbeys which also provided for the sick and their families. Cluny, for example, had entire buildings set aside for visiting families, and, since Cluny had relics of Saint Peter, it became a center of pilgrimage. Implicit in the cult of the saints and in relics was the assumed power of the dead, which could be counted upon to legitimize growing prominence, wealth, and power. Additionally, it legitimized cultural, artistic, musical and architectural innovation.

By the later half of the 6th century BC all physicians were increasingly referred to as Asklepiads. Aristotle, himself a member of the Asklepiads, refers to Hippocrates as "the leader of the Asklepiads".¹⁴⁶ You will remember that Hippocrates (c. 460-377BC) is known as the father of medicine. The Hippocratic Oath which all physicians must swear to includes the lines "I swear by Apollo physician, Asklepios, Hygiea, Panacea and all the gods and goddesses, making them my witness.. into whatever houses I may enter I will come for the benefit of the sick." The Oath contains the famous lines: "and above all do no harm." Emphasizing that the physician swears to come

¹⁴⁶ Edelsteins 1945 p.104

"for the benefit of the sick" implies that there should not be conflicting motives (politics, money, personal gain, etc.).

Examples of cures found in temple records at Epidaurus include the following.¹⁴⁷ A woman, Kleo, had been pregnant for five years slept in the Abaton and, after dreaming of Asklepios, gave birth to a son who, immediately after birth, walked about with his mother. A man whose fingers were paralyzed slept in the Abaton and dreamed that Asklepios stretched out all his fingers. Upon awakening, his fingers all moved as before the paralysis. A blind woman dreamed that Asklepios cut the ball of her injured eye, poured in a curative drug, and she awoke having completely regained her sight. A man who had been tricked by his mother-in-law into swallowing leeches who had been put in a brew of honey and wine, dreamed of Asklepios who put his hand inside and pulled out the leeches. The man awoke with the leeches in his hand.

Asklepios appeared in curative dream after dream, operating on abscesses, curing headaches, healing arrow wounds, relieving paralysis and restoring

¹⁴⁷ See Edelstein 1945 (1998)

children to barren women. Epidauros Aristagora of Trizen slept in the Asklepieion in the hope of a cure for the worm in her intestines. Asklepios was out when she dreamed, so she dreamed of his attendants. In dream they cut off her head, reached into her body, drew out the worm, but were unable to restore her head to her neck. Asklepios returned, and angrily accused them of trying what was beyond them. He put the head back on and the woman awoke and walked away.¹⁴⁸

So prevalent and powerful were the cults of Asklepios throughout the Mediterranean and in the Roman Empire that they posed a serious threat to early Christianity. In response, some Christian physicians (Cosmas and Damian) made it a point of appearing to the sick in dreams. The cults of Christian and Muslim saints, frequently focusing on dreamed cures, borrowed heavily from the cult of Asklepios. Cults of saints in both the Western and Eastern church proved essential in absorbing local beliefs and local cults of the dead.

¹⁴⁸ The Cult of Asklepios. 1965 Alice Walton/ Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p.16

In both practice and belief, cults of Asklepios connected dreams to the abode of the dead, to Chthonian gods. Symbols of the underworld and of transformation (snakes shed their skins), snakes were an integral part of the sanctuary rituals, connecting the dead with prophecy. Additionally, Asklepiion temples were, like most Greek temples, built near sacred springs, their waters coming from deep within the earth.

The cult of Asklepios demonstrates how the Greek and Mesopotamian pantheaon of gods operated. Gods were not clearly defined and could both misbehave and interact with mortals. Additionally, their functions could overlap, and their personalities could blur. For example, Asklepios overlaps with Dionysos and Apollo, Hygieia overlaps with Athena, and Dionysos overlaps with Orpheus who overlaps with Cheiron.

Dreams, Visions, Illusions. . .

It would appear that what is called a dream can be associated with power and legitimacy and has healing powers. But this is not clear. Discriminating along the terms "dream", "vision", "hypnogogic experience", "hallucination"

and "delusion" raises all kinds of questions. However, arranging these concepts on a spectrum seen from our present-day perspective, the tendency is to move from more to less legitimate as the relevance of our sensory world order grows weaker. According to contemporary views, "dreams" are not to be taken seriously because they cannot be known as dreamt, because the sensory experiences in dreams are not "real". "Visions" are a little more difficult, since there is always the possibility that one is not fully asleep while seeing a vision, and that therefore sensory input can be relevant. "Hallucinations" entail seeing what is not there. And once we get to "delusions" we are definitely off in far left field, cut loose from the moorings of shared social experience. These various linguistic categories throw us off the trail. They bolster reliance on sensory experience as the basis of truth while negating the value of the dreaming experience. Note, it is assumed that shared sensory experience is the criterion of reality and reliability. In fact, the life of emotion suggests that by definition dreams require relationships, and the context of human connections.

Worrying about whether a dream is true or false, sent by God or Satan, divine or demonic, assumed far more centrality because of our Judeo-

Christian tradition. In the world of Ancient Greece, everyone knew that gods deceived humankind as they deceived each other.¹⁴⁹ Added to this, the sensualist tradition (Locke, Hume, etc) assumed that there was a truth which could be arrived at, and that it could only be arrived at through the senses. The current emphasis on Behaviorism carries on these assumptions, since behavior can be judged through the senses and has nothing to do with the windows of the soul.

Dreams are no more and no less than what we remember them to be, and our memories shift with each attempt to remember. Can we distinguish between the "real" dream and the "illusion" of a dream? Dreams open onto worlds that we cannot understand. They can be sources of horror and sources of wonder, sources of hope and sources of despair. Attitudes towards dreams and experiences of dreams would seem to be framed by relationships.

¹⁴⁹ "It is surely no accident that the tricks of illusionist art, perspective and modeling in light and shade were connected in classical antiquity with narration and theatrical scenery." Gombrich p. 31

Although many observers have been perplexed at how natives could believe in the truth of dreams even knowing that they are dreams, Levy-Bruhl takes exactly the opposite position: “I should say that they believe in it because it is a dream. . . .How do we account for the fact that, knowing well that the dream is a dream, they should nevertheless rely upon it?”¹⁵⁰ This reliance on dreams brings us up against the questions of how we can rely so heavily on that which obstructs us. “The ponderousness, the solidity, and the impenetrability of matter obstruct our way every moment; in the fairy tale, however, man has wings, his eyes pierce walls, his magic wand opens doors.”¹⁵¹

Initiation Dreams

Dream traditions of piety and wonder may be found throughout the world. The American Plains Indians in North America had an elaborate tradition of dreaming songs as part of a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood.

¹⁵⁰ Levy-Bruhl notes that for the Huichols (Native Mexicans) “the birds that soar highest. . . are thought to see and hear everything, and to possess mystic powers, which are inherent in their wing and tail feathers.”

¹⁵¹ Ferenczi (1955), pp. 238-239

These were dreams to be sung by adolescent boys in order to be accepted into the tribe as men. The initiates would go into the plains and woods alone awaiting the dream that would determine their future. Initiates did not just dream any dream and present it. The song required was one given to each dreamer by his guardian spirit, and had to be judged acceptable by the elders, a little like a PhD thesis: both had to follow certain stylistic and organizational guidelines. Often they suffered considerable hardship (thirst, hunger, sleeplessness). If the initiate returned and sang the wrong kind of song about the wrong kind of dream, he would be sent back into the wilderness to try again. If the initiate could still not get it right, he would engage in various kinds of emolition, cutting off a finger joint, or slashing an arm or leg.

Another example is the initiation dream of Siberian shamen. For the Yukagir, the Evenki, the Yakuts and the Buriats, the shamen derives his powers from his relation to spirits which he cultivates through dreams. Significantly, the profession is at once a blessing and a curse, a bit like epilepsy as the divine illness in Ancient Greece.

Shamen rely on dreams to demonstrate their connections with the world of spirits from which they derived their powers. Those who are to become often manifest traumatic symptoms, serious illness, associated with what in our tradition might be psychosis: hearing voices, delusions, painful physical symptoms, paranoia and restlessness, which, in the aggregate made the suffering adolescent a candidate for the porfession of shaman. In fact, it was believed that only the practice of shamanism could cure the afflicted adolescent of such symptoms, interpreted dreams as the call of spirits to become a shaman. In adddition to the prevalence of song, in accounts of shamanic initiation the novice not only sees terrifying visions and hears voices, but is literally taken apart by these spirits, dissected, boiled, disassembled befofe he can be put back together again and emerge as a recognized shaman.

For the Samoyeds, the novice dreams that spirits take his bones apart, scramble them and then put the pieces back differently, as though he were a badly made jigsaw puzzle. During the initiation process the novice had to learn the structure of the cosmos and the topography of worlds beyond: the

paths leading to other worlds, the placement of the dead, the dwelling places of guardian spirits and the demons of disease.

The Buryat believed that the initiate could leave his body lifeless for seven days and nights while ancestral spirits absconded with his soul, which they cut up and cooked. Candidates lay lifeless while their souls watched limbs disjointed on iron hooks, blood drunk by the souls of dead shamans, eyes torn from their sockets, flesh cut and pierced with arrows and rather flagrantly horrifying dismemberments constituting proof of divine election and other-worldly powers.

For the Evenki, it was a dead shaman who, appearing in dream, ordered the initiate to follow him, explicitly connecting the dead to the living. Before hunting expeditions, the Evenki relied upon the shaman to dream of recovering the souls of the animals to be hunted from the keeper of the species in the otherworld store. That way, the souls could be kept safe, assuring the livelihood on which the Evenki depended.

The Mesopotamian traditions of royal messenger dreams, the foundational dreams of Gudea and Gunzo, the Asklepiian traditions of healing in dreams and the shamanistic initiation dreams all confer power because they come from outside the scope of human comprehension, from somewhere else. In all cases the function of dreams was to establish links with the unseen world of guardian spirits and the world of the dead. In so doing they have always been sources of piety, wonder and life.

Dreams and The Skazska (Wonder Tales)

Vladimir Propp (1895-1970) describes the wonder that makes a tale alive. Propp identifies the Russian skazka, “wonder tale,” as a particular kind of tale characterized by its implausibility. Skazka fail to abide by the strictures of logic and intelligibility. The minute a tale loses its implausibility, it loses its magic and its power; as soon as it lapses into the plausible, it misses the mark. Additionally, the accompaniment with music frees narratives, and allowing them to reach beyond the plausible and believable. As Propp perceptively points out, the skazka are not “believed” in. The very fantastic

character of the stories defies both reality and belief, and therein lies their power and their life.

Let us take two examples, the first Pushkin and the second, Gogol.

Pushkin's love of skazka owes much to listening to his nanny, Arina Rodionova, whose stories nourished his childhood memories. The sounds of the telling, and a relationship with the teller become part and parcel of the skazka. Pushkin's *Ruslan and Lyudmilla* (Glinka turned it into an unforgettable opera) begins with a narrator telling of a green oak to which a story-telling cat is bound by a golden chain.

The story opens with a feast for Lyudmilla, the daughter of prince Vladimir, soon to marry the warrior Ruslan. Wedding guests include Ruslan's jealous rivals (Rogday and Farlaf). On the wedding night Lyudmilla suddenly vanishes, abducted by the sorcerer Chernomor. Inside this story there is another, told by Chernomor who tells of how his brother, now a big head, told of the old Finn who told Ruslan about his love of Naina, who several times rejected him.

When Ruslan defeats Rogday in battle, he finds himself confronted by a large head. Ruslan pierces the tongue with his sword, whereupon the head asks for mercy. The head tells the story (a story within a story within a story) of how Chernomor tricked him and tells Ruslan that the power of Chernomor lies in his beard. Ruslan finds Chernomor, who flies off with Ruslan holding his beard, snipping at it with his magic sword until Chernomor begs for mercy and tells him where Lyudmilla has been hidden. In the end the couple is reunited, after Ruslan has been killed and then, once brought to life again, uses a ring to awaken the sleeping Lyudmilla.

Several features of the story are worthy of note. The hero dies and is resurrected (a common theme), there are numerous unlikely motifs (a talking head, power in a beard, flying, disappearance, a magical ring), and the characters break into their own tales, so that there are multiple narrators (e.g., the first bard, the cat, Chernomor). There are stories within stories within stories, an endless progression of narrators and actors.

Another example is Gogol's tale of the frog princess. The hero goes in search of Vasilisa the Wise and is told that she is being hidden by Koshey the

Deathless. "You won't find it easy to get her away from him. His death lies in the tip of a needle. This needle lies inside an egg. This egg lies inside a duck. This duck lies inside the belly of a hare. And this hare lies inside a chest hidden at the top of a tall oak that Koshey watches over like the apple of his eye."¹⁵²

Or again, in the tale of the firebird, the hero comes upon a pillar with this notice: "Whoever rides straight forward from this pillar will be cold and hungry; whoever rides to the right will be safe and sound, but his horse will die; and whoever rides to the left will himself be killed, but his horse will remain safe and sound."¹⁵³

Intention has been rendered irrelevant. Belief has vanished, Gone is every trace of what the French call "vraisemblances" (things that seem true). The dynamics of seeming are themselves missing and in their place are cadences, rhythms, repeated phrases, musical transitions. It is thus no accident that virtually every major Russian composer since Glinka has made

¹⁵² Chandler, p. 64

¹⁵³

liberal use of skazka (including Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, and Medtner).

Plausibility kills the life of stories. "Reality TV" of recent years makes reality plausible by inventing it. Popular narratives (e.g., the Chronicles of Narnia, the Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter) acquire plausibility through being predictable, and thereby lose what is so important in the "wonder tale."

Magic in the skazka expresses human helplessness and the vital importance of helping hands from unlikely sources. Skazka heroes come up against impossible choices, riddles and situations. They are at a loss to imagine how to proceed; they must have help and cannot proceed alone; outside help in unlikely forms are their life-blood.¹⁵⁴

The Life of Dreams

¹⁵⁴ By contrast, magic in our contemporary world (e.g., Disney, Tolkein and Harry Potter) tends to be the handmaiden of will, a magic wand to master the world. The Sorcerer's Apprentice wants to make his life easier; Cinderella magically appears at the ball without effort or struggle and everything is given her.

Dreams also defy plausability and belief. No cognitive construction can define a dream. It is human interactions that make dreams dreams: the interactions between what one remembers and what one tells as a dream, how one feels about the accuracy of the dream, how one gropes to identify feelings in dream narratives and then how one listens to oneself telling the dream to another person. And then apart from the dynamic relation of dream, memory and narrative, there are all the interactions between two human beings a teller and a listener, the teller listening to the ways in which the listener listens. And then the dream opens onto what one has failed to remember: vague emotions that elude definition.

Our modern world has taken dreams as we know, feel, remember and listen to them, and redefined them to be what Freud's method of interpretation and Oedipal theories required them to be: a dream text accompanied by associations.¹⁵⁵ Absent from dream texts, from our

¹⁵⁵ Associating dreams with primary processes and waking reason with secondary processes implies that somehow dreams are the "raw material" of thinking, which get "refined" through cognition. As defined in psychoanalysis, primary processes are wish fulfillments, and secondary processes are what the ego can know of the outside world. Through repression the ego imposes « reality ». Refinement "purifies" raw materials. The distinction between primary and secondary processes then makes the external world by definition, not what primary process might imagine it to be, but rather whatever the « reality principle » thinks it is.

conceptions of the dream, is the experience and the emotions of the dreamer, of the dream as dreamt, the experience of telling the dream to another person, and the experience of hearing oneself tell the dream to another person and oneself at the same time.

Most importantly, dreams are the primary manifestation of life; they are experiences like no other. Historically, dreams have been (and still are) linked to the dead and to the cults of the dead, to cults of saints. When we sleep, each night we disappear from the sensate world. Construed as a mini-death, what goes on while we sleep is cognitively beyond our grasp. Yet, in our history and in what we know of other peoples and cultures, what is beyond our grasp is an essential part of being alive. Waking and dreaming are not opposed, but rather felt as a continuum, as are life and death, the lives of the living and the presence of the dead. In remembering dreams, we become acquainted with the fragility of memory and of our powers of comprehension, and with this feeling of fragility there is the echo of death. Dreams show us that we are reaching for something beyond anything that can be thought, imagined or believed in; in this, by inspiring us with awe and wonder, they

provide us, as no other experience can, with windows to the soul and heart.

Chapter 8

Trauma, Time and Fragmentation

Dreams and trauma draw upon whatever is construed as fantasy and reality, illusion, memory and perception, all integral, inseparable dynamics of our emotional lives. In our contemporary world however, they tend to be viewed as separable if not mutually exclusive.

Like *psuche* itself, trauma exists in time and over time; it is a continuing process of actions and interactions defined by the lifetime of emotions. Emotions resonate both in inner lives and in perceptions of the outside world. As long as we live, we feel what we feel while we feel what we have felt. Feelings in the present call up feelings in the past and anticipation of feelings in the future. In other words, emotions define the time and sense of life we can know. Feelings are not found in isolation: we use our feelings together, as we do our senses. When we drink a good wine, we smell it, we

feel it in the back of our mouths, we admire the color and we taste it—all in combinations and all at once.

As an expression of the life of emotions, our relationships also define time. How we turn (or do not turn) to others in response to our injuries and fears illustrates responses to human suffering. Unfortunately, prevalent approaches to trauma assume that it is like a hammer striking a glass: there is but one strike, and the glass shatters there and then. It is misleadingly seen as an instant behavior, an action limited in time, identifiable and distinguishable from what comes before and after. To add to the confusion, psychology and psychoanalysis tend to assume that feelings can be separable¹⁵⁶ and assigned to one moment. For one traumatic strike there is but one identifiable threat; the former is the cause and the latter the effect. And whatever the effect, it can be felt by only one person in isolation.

Trauma and Dora

¹⁵⁶ For example, Kleinians and Bionians single out envy, self-psychologists single out empathy and inter-personalists single out attunement.

In considering trauma let us begin with the famous case of Dora treated by Freud. Freud began seeing Dora in treatment while working out his theories of trauma and while he was writing The Interpretation of Dreams.

Freud centers the case¹⁵⁷ around the scene by the lake in which Dora, a young girl of 16, is propositioned by Herr K, a friend of her father's. In response, Dora slaps him and leaves. When she urges her father to cut off all relations with Herr K, her father refuses. Seemingly as a result, Dora's hysterical symptoms appear. Her father, dismissing Dora's concerns as "fantasized,"¹⁵⁸ brings her to Freud, with whom he was himself in treatment,

¹⁵⁷ Chronology: 1882 Dora born, 1884 father begins treatment with Freud. 1889 Dora's first visit to Freud. 1900 suicide threat. Treatment with Freud begins. case written as integral part of The Interpretation of Dreams (1900-1901). 1905 Case published.

¹⁵⁸ Freud then reports when Dora begged her father to break off all relations with his friend, Herr K, Dora's father flatly refused, accusing Dora of having fantasized the scene. « That I cannot do. For, to begin with, I myself believe that Dora's tale of the man's immoral suggestion is a phantasy that had forced its way into her mind; and besides I am bound to Frau K by ties of honorable friendship and I do not wish to cause her pain. » Dora's father, speaking to Freud, added that Herr K. "denied in the most emphatic manner having on his side made any advances which could have been open to such a construction. He then proceeded to throw suspicion upon the girl, saying that she 'had been over-excited by such reading and had merely 'fancied' the whole scene she had described." Freud, SE VII p.26

Relying on his Oedipal theories of unconscious motivation, Freud assumes that that unless Dora had been sexually attracted to Herr K, she would never have become hysterical. Freud writes: « There is never any danger of corrupting an inexperienced girl. For where there is no knowledge of sexual processes even in the unconscious, no hysterical symptom will arise; where hysteria is found there can be no longer any question of 'innocence of mind.' »¹⁵⁹. In other words, whatever trauma there might be comes from the repression of Dora's sexual feelings, not from Herr K's advances.¹⁶⁰ Freud is convinced that only his theory of sexual repression—and not the reality of her sexual trauma—can account for Dora's symptoms. « The seduction and trauma (are) insufficient to explain or to determine the particular character of the symptoms. ».¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 49

¹⁶⁰ Freud writes that when Herr K forcibly kissed her, there could have been no disgust, since, according to Freud, there was a reversal of affect: Dora must have felt sexual arousal and therefore could not have felt disgust at all. Ibid., p. 28

¹⁶¹ « None of her father's actions seemed to have embittered her so much as his readiness to consider the scene by the lake as a product of her imagination. She was almost beside herself at the idea of its being supposed that she had mererly fancied something on that occasion. » Freud, SE VII p. 27

There is a far larger and more complicated backstory to the scene at the lake. Not only was Herr K's wife having an affair with Dora's father, but Herr K was having an affair with Dora's mother. Dora undoubtedly knew that her family was threatened by her parents' affairs. For Dora's father to have asked for her to turn a blind eye to his affair with Herr K's wife was bad enough. He also asked Dora not to make a fuss about Herr K's advances. It might well have been clear to Dora that these efforts on her father's part were intended to protect his illicit affair with Mme K, and had little to do with her.¹⁶² Thus Dora's reactions to the scene by the lake were compounded by the betrayals of her mother with Herr K and her father with Mme K. Under such circumstances how could sexuality not be horrifying? The scene at the lake would appear to be a screen for parental misconduct and parental betrayal which Dora is not supposed to notice or express.

Trauma, Inside and Outside

¹⁶² "I am bound to Frau K by ties of honorable friendship" sounds not only self-serving but seriously dismissive of Dora's legitimate alarm.

Dreams and trauma threatened Freud's notions of the unconscious, of drives and energy, of inside and outside.¹⁶³ Just as dreams presented problems for Freud's conception of psychic life, so trauma presented similar problems. Essentially Freud opposes psychic inside and outside and then provides theories attempting to link them, thus solving problems he has created. He reaches out for a theory of anxiety that can allow him to fit his concepts into his theories and use his theories to validate his concepts; to link inside and outside, body and mind, soma and psyche in a system of interlocking theories. Freud was working on the Dora case, while writing his Project and while writing The Interpretation of Dreams.

Freud's seduction hypothesis led to complications in Freud's theories of external reality and its connection to internal fantasy life. Freud needed to downplay actual traumatic sexual seduction so that his theories of unconscious processes could work. So Freud turned to fantasy as represented in Oedipal conflicts; he accordingly reconceptualized what he

¹⁶³ Freud sequestered trauma, taking pain out of it by viewing it from a distance as an abstraction. Does pain come from inside or from outside? And what is its relation to energy? These are questions to be addressed in my final chapters.

termed "unconscious processes".¹⁶⁴ Explaining that a fear of wolves has nothing to do with wolves, he writes: « instinctual impulses are determinants of external dangers and so become dangerous in themselves. »¹⁶⁵

Freud's approach to trauma focuses on what is inside (fantasies, instincts and drives) and tends to exclude what is outside (external traumatic experiences), or at least to confuse inside and outside. He approaches dreams and trauma by looking inward, not outward, and not straying outside the compass of a single individual taken in isolation.

In his defense of the seduction hypothesis,¹⁶⁶ Freud goes through contortions to relate trauma to what is internal: instincts, excitement, tension

¹⁶⁴ In order to make it clear that symptoms do not come from the external trauma, and can be willed, Freud needed to introduce a will to be ill into his discussion of symptoms. In his case of Dora he writes: « An attempt must first be made by the roundabout methods of analysis to convince the patient herself of the existence in her of an intention to be ill. » SE VII, p. 45

¹⁶⁵ SE XX p. 145

¹⁶⁶ He then relates stimulation to excitement, excitement to sexual drives and their conflicts, and sexual drives to his pleasure principle. Note: in describing sexual drives Freud does not mention attraction to another human being. Attraction in the Oedipus Complex has nothing to do with the desirable qualities of the mother: it relates only to the son's lust for a mother-object (not a person). Mothers in Oedipal conflicts are functions, not human beings.

and release. "An instinctual demand is, after all, not dangerous in itself; it only becomes so inasmuch as it entails a real external danger, the danger of castration."¹⁶⁷ The problem here is Freud's definition of castration as "a real external danger."¹⁶⁸ But then what is the relation of "a real external danger" to anxiety?

The life of emotion depends upon an "outside" which is far more than the threatening realm of mistrust, danger and castration anxiety: there needs to be something beyond: a realm of the dead, or a realm of imagination like the *skazska*; there needs to be room for what one cannot know yet, what one might be able to know if, and room also for intuition and what one knows without knowing. A focus on threatening unconscious sexual wishes as the primary source of symptoms and anxiety omits the crucial importance of human relationships in rendering comprehensible what would otherwise be impossible to understand. It omits the need for confidence, the need for trust

¹⁶⁷ Of Wolf Man and Little Hans, Freud speaks of the "unexpected finding: in both patients the motive force of the repression was fear of castration." (SE, vol XX Inhibitions, Symptoms, p. 126)

¹⁶⁸ And, introducing the distinction between realistic and neurotic anxiety, he adds, "Symptoms are created so as to avoid a danger situation whose presence has been signalled by the generation of anxiety.. . It would seem highly improbable that a neurosis could come into being merely because of the objective presence of danger." SE XX p. 129

in relationships, the human need for a connection without which trauma cannot be addressed and made human.¹⁶⁹ Adam and Eve are inconceivable without God, and neither is conceivable without the other.

The history of dreams and their interpretations points not to the individual in isolation, not to what is inside (to biology and physiology), but rather to what lies outside, to others and the beyond. The history of dream interpretation always includes relationships, relationships of the dreamer (e.g., in evil eye explanations of a jealous aunt or rival) and the relationship with the interpreter, reliant on powers from beyond. Additionally, the legitimacy of the interpreter is never within the will of the interpreter, but requires the intervention of divine forces and guardian spirits.¹⁷⁰ Joseph could interpret Pharaoh's dream because he had God behind him. Although the use of associations and texts is to be found nowhere in the history of dream interpretation, Freud introduces them, claiming that they are legitimate

¹⁶⁹ Ferenczi writes that “repressed or suppressed criticism of us,” is an inevitable part of any treatment. It can easily lead to professional hypocrisy if it is not recognized and made available to the analysis. Ferenczi, *Confusion of Tongues* (vol III) p. 158

¹⁷⁰ Siberian shaman are tortured and dismantled, reminders that their powers are not their own.

because scientific. Nowhere else in the history of dream interpretation has any one person been both dreamer and interpreter.

Similarly with trauma, traumatic reactions are beyond the will, beyond the reason or comprehension of the traumatized person, who receives the blow unexpectedly. Dora was traumatized by an encounter that made her feel helpless; she was threateningly propositioned, a threat outside her control and experience. It was all the more threatening because of what she knew and did not know, did not want to know, all at the same time.¹⁷¹

All human beings fear abandonment. Like the rest of us, but perhaps more obviously, children want and need connection; they need tenderness and kindness from others. Traumatic sexual aggression against children destroys connection, leading the child to identify with his aggressor. While such identifications can relieve the child of the threat of total abandonment and disconnection through splitting, it leads to grave consequences: the traumatized child, unable to feel connections, loses his sense of coherence

¹⁷¹ "Double conscience" can be evoked to underscore the "wrongness" of the unconscionable behavior of Dora's father because it took advantage of Dora's vulnerability. Clearly it was he who deserved to be called to order, and not Dora.

and sense of self. Such defensive shameful withdrawal, and shattering of the self, then becomes itself traumatic, further compounding traumatic reactions which can lead to suicide "unless at the last moment some favorable change" brings the realisation "that in this new traumatic struggle (he) is no longer alone."¹⁷²

Let us pause here to consider a problem with the treatment of trauma in families motivated to deny injury and anxiety. It is all too common for the child to be held responsible, as was the case with Dora.¹⁷³ When adults turn on the child, refusing to recognize the child's trauma, despair and injury, as Dora's father did, they give the child reason to believe he or she is defective, unlovable and totally isolated, that what she has experienced she did not experience.

Additionally, such experiences can lead children to mistrust their bodies, to feel guilty about their sexuality, which, as children compared to adults,

¹⁷² Ferenczi, Notes and Fragments, vol. III p. 238

¹⁷³ Freud later notes that Dora's father and Herr K. had, « of course, never made a formal agreement in which she was treated as an object for barter. » Freud, SE VII, p. 34

makes them feel defective. Often children come to feel that human sexuality is dangerous, but the only way of fending off the other dangers of existence in the world of adults. These reactions in children and adolescents often lead to sexual acting out and addictive behaviors. As such, they are traumatic. Additionally, such behaviors and attitudes towards sexuality exclude the profound satisfactions of human connection through sexuality, satisfactions enjoyed when whatever is understood by sexuality revolves around experiences of going beyond the self. It is the human connection that counts most, sexuality is only in this respect instrumental, a means to an end.

Adults can do real damage when they encourage the traumatized child to believe that if she voices her distress, she is a threat; that they will abandon her if she is threatening. As a result, shameful secrets continue to act on family dynamics, and contribute mightily to transgenerational trauma, constituting yet another reminder that trauma exists in time. This traumatic time is not only the trauma of the child or adult in question, but the trauma experienced by the family reaching back generations. Sexual trauma, like the scene at the lake for Dora, is not the lone hammer shattering the glass.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ We know enough of the relation between Dora and her father, to know that she must have had a lonely and unfortunate childhood.

Following Hypocrates, « above all do no harm, » it becomes important to recognize the possible trauma and damage done by psychoanalytic and psychological treatments.¹⁷⁵ When the need for “tenderness” is not recognized by those who depend on us or on whom we depend, the result is ever more traumatic. Therefore, the *sine quo non* of treatment lies in the power and resources of human connections, the life-giving importance of human relationships as the bedrock of the life of emotion.¹⁷⁶

Like the life of our emotions, trauma exists in time and is in constant motion. Reacting to tramatic experiences is a process and not an event, as are reactions to these reactions. As processes they depend upon human

¹⁷⁵ It is too frequently assumed that whatever the analyst does cannot hurt the patient. Should the analyst injure the patient, so the argument goes, this gives the analyst the possibility of advancing the treatment, and only the analyst, not the patient, is in a position to judge the injury and its place in the treatment.

¹⁷⁶ The very idea that experienced sexuality could be traumatic, like the idea that the analyst could traumatize his patients, went against the theory of drives and of the unconscious. However, as Ferenczi emphasizes repeatedly, sensitivity to our effects on our patients and readiness to admit our flaws constitute the bedrock of confidence. « It is this confidence that establishes the contrast between the present and the unberarable traumatogenic past.» Ferenczi Confusion of Tongues vol III p.160

interactions, remembered, experienced and anticipated. Dreams and trauma exist in time, and time is defined by the life of emotion.

Trauma, Fragmentation and Disorientation

The metaphor of a hammer and a glass applied to trauma turns out to be seriously misleading, since it identifies a point in time when the hammer breaks the glass. This is not helpful in conceptualizing and responding to trauma. Since we remember, perceive and anticipate all at the same time, whatever we experience must necessarily participate in past, present and future. Therefore all trauma exists in time, and the ways we experience time affects trauma, as trauma affects experiences of time and its context in relationships. Not only is trauma not an "event", but its resonances extend throughout one's sense of self, memories and expectations.

In other words, those traumatized sink into a world outside of themselves. They feel outside time. The process of self-splitting results in the "sudden

change of the object relation that has become intolerable into narcissism.”¹⁷⁷

Metaphysically "nowhere", they are hopelessly disoriented. The feeling of time depends upon relationships, vulnerability and feelings of loss. To be metaphysically "nowhere" is to be outside the time of the compass of life. Not only have the others abandoned them, they have abandoned themselves.

Such self-abandonment disconnects them from a sense of their bodies which deprives them of basic orientation. Bodily knowledge and orientation depends upon the wish to touch and the fear of touching,¹⁷⁸ the wish to be touched and the fear of being touched.¹⁷⁹ The dynamics of the wish and fear to touch and to be touched are similar to dynamics of looking and being

¹⁷⁷Ferenczi, p. 237

¹⁷⁸ In Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety Freud writes of the ego's role in repression. "In this endeavouring to prevent associations and connections of thought, the ego is obeying one of the oldest and most fundamental commands of obsessional neurosis; the taboo on touching. If we ask ourselves why the avoidance of touching, contact, or contagion should play such a large part in this neurosis and should become the subject matter of complicated systems, the answer is that touching and physical contact are the immediate aim of the aggressive as well as the loving object-cathexes." SE vol XX pp.121-122

¹⁷⁹ Freud characterizes human connections as fearsome, and takes the taboo against touching (feeling) as the legitimizing of distrust.

looked at. It is clear that these play a central part in myths of the birth of consciousness (Adam and Eve).

When trauma splits and splinters the sense of self, those traumatized feel outside their bodies, beyond human touch. We move through time; but with traumatic fragmentation, time stops; unable to flow, unable to bring change, it is naturally felt to be threatening. Drawing upon the metaphor of wind, Sandor Ferenczi describes the traumatic force ending in "the complete dissolution of connexions and a terrific vertigo, until finally the ability, or even the attempt, to resist the force is given up as hopeless."¹⁸⁰

The result is "being dead" and seeing oneself from the outside, "bursting out through the head and observing the dead, impotently frustrated body" from above, from the outside. Trauma stops internal time. in the case of one patient "it is, in fact, never to her that things happen; she identifies herself only with other people....The trauma made her emotionally embryonic, but at

¹⁸⁰ Ferenczi Notes and Fragments, vol III pp. 222-223

the same time in intellectual terms, like a totally objective and unemotionally perceptive philosopher."¹⁸¹

Such splintering and self-abandonment can result in a narcissistic escape from reality and a retreat into a world in which the traumatized person, "unimpeded by earthly gravity, can achieve everything that he wants."¹⁸² As a result, the splinter that remains feels supremely intelligent and wise, a "guardian angel"¹⁸³ who sees the "suffering or murdered child from the outside." Note, in narcissism the individual suffers but can only look on from the outside. What is to be noted here is the narcissistic deadening of the sense of life, which depends upon relationships. It is relationships that give life to emotions; without them, there can be an escape from "earthly gravity" but at the price of a profound feeling of non-existence.

¹⁸¹ Ferenczi Clinical Diary p. 203

¹⁸² Ferenczi Notes and Fragments, vol III p. 237

¹⁸³ "Faced with overpowering, repeated trauma even this guardian angel must confess his own helplessness and well meaning deceptive swindles to the tortured child and then nothing else remains but suicide, unless at the last moment some favorable change" brings the patient to understand "that in this new traumatic struggle (he) is no longer alone." Ferenczi, Notes and Fragments, vol III p. 238

Psychology and psychoanalysis have tended to focus either on behavior (action) or theories of the unconscious (thought and drives), with the result that, despite appearances, inside and outside, action and consciousness, reason and conscience, have often been over-simplified and artificially opposed the one to the other.

The life of emotion defines time, and internal time is the marrow of identity. Trauma shatters time. In the life of emotion, internal time requires relationships. Feeling the inner strength of connecting and engaging with the suffering of others, we can more easily feel alive ourselves and derive a sense of orientation.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Sensitivity to our effects on our patients and readiness to admit our flaws constitute the bedrock of confidence. « It is this confidence that establishes the contrast between the present and the unberarable traumatogenic past.» Ferenczi Confusion of Tongues, vol III p.160

Chapter 9

Hiding to Nothing: Deceit and Identity

When there is a strong feeling of a world gone wrong, the "wrongness" can be the source of illusions, illusions of strength, illusions of meaning and illusions of identity. This chapter explores the world of spies, loyalty conflicts, deceit and self-deceit, dynamics that can all be related to the haunting feeling of abandonment and isolation. These identity conflicts express veiled emotions and hidden secrets that tear lives apart, and smother the *psuche*, driving the self further and further into deceit and self-deceit, further into isolation, further away from the sense of being alive.

Idealist illusions call upon the belief that if only we are loyal, we will not be abandoned and betrayed. The problem is whom to trust with one's loyalty. It is often assumed that patriotism is individual loyalty raised to the power of the group. But this is to neglect the problems of divided and shifting loyalties, individual rivalries, jealousies and josteling for power. In nationalism

and patriotism (and sports), loyalty is presented as simple, static and reliable. By contrast, emotions of loyalty are constantly shifting. These shifts give life to the emotions of loyalty and the ways we judge them. They are essential to human connections, essential in recognizing how deep and how filled with anguish are our human needs for trust and connection, and consequently how addictive are our illusions of independence, freedom, and autonomy.

Shame and Loyalty

Wherever we are called upon to "choose sides," loyalty conflicts and fears of abandonment come into play. When parents divorce or are in conflict, children are too often relied upon to "choose sides." This puts the child in an impossible position. The implicit and explicit parental demand of loyalty can easily deprive the child of the possibility of feeling loyal to himself or to the other parent, of feeling confused about the capacity to belong. It constricts the sense and meaning of loyalty. It becomes judgement, submission and obedience with the threat of abandonment.

The dynamics of deception are extremely complicated and inextricably bound up in the anguish of human relationships. Beginning with the postulate that it is impossible for us to know ourselves without having our assumptions about our identity challenged by others who fail to know us as we do, it follows that we are different people to everyone with whom we come into contact. If this is so, then contemporary assumptions about identity and true selves are deceptive illusions. It is not so simple to « be oneself ».¹⁸⁵

This chapter will be concerned with the group of spies in the decades between World War I and the end of the century. Known as the Cambridge Five and their circle, they provide us with a window into our contemporary world of despair and isolation. They were characterized by shame/identity dynamics, conflicting loyalties, deceit and a strong streak of idealism; a reaction to the impersonalistic and viciousness of the world around them.

¹⁸⁵ It is not simple either not to be oneself, since oneself is not unitary. Who is one then not being?

As we approach them today, they¹⁸⁶ evoke a bewildering world of exceptionally creative and imaginative intellectuals awash in a sea of deceit and disappointment, aware of increasingly dangerous forces loose in the world, grasping for something to hold onto, buffeted about by conflicting impulses to do what was right in a world in which such efforts were doomed not only to failure but to condemnation. It is a period of impending doom combined with intense longing for a vanished world and a prevailing sense that life had been permanently broken.¹⁸⁷

The network of English-American spies included the knighted Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean who defected to the Soviet Union in 1953,

¹⁸⁶ The members were active well into the 1960's, some were active in the 1920's. I focus here on the 1930's and 1940's, although the Cold War of the 1950's and 1960's is very much a part of the story.

¹⁸⁷ Virtually all were double agents, and from the perspective of the Russians, essentially triple agents: English spies working for the Russians while being spies for the British. The history of the Cambridge spies provides a disquieting perspective on the period between Versailles and Yalta, a period filled with ghosts that haunt our present world.

Kim Philby who defected in 1963, John Cairncross (author of a number of books on Moliere)¹⁸⁸Michael Straight, Ludwig Wittgenstein,¹⁸⁹philosopher. The novelists John Le Carré and Graham Greene were trained in the British Secret Service, as was Ian Fleming (James Bond) for whom Philby had particular contempt). These were romantics with a keen sense of injury who longed for a vanished time.¹⁹⁰ Many were among the most accomplished academic and literary figures of the English speaking world.

Most died alone and in disgrace. Sir Anthony Blunt, art historian and the director of the Courtauld Institute, the most prestigious art institution in Britain, was stripped of his title and held up to public scorn and

¹⁸⁸ Cairncross was a director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; chairman of the board of trustees of the National Gallery; a trustee of the British Museum; and president of the London Library.

¹⁸⁹ As a Trinity College don, and a member of the Cambridge Apostles, Wittgenstein recruited fellow Apostles Guy Burgess, Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt, all students at Trinity—as well as Donald Maclean from nearby Trinity Hall—to work for the Soviet Union. At the death of his grandfather in 1913, Wittgenstein inherited one of the largest fortunes in Europe, and was a plum recruitment.

¹⁹⁰ Many were the novelists influenced by members of the Cambridge circle (not only the Cambridge Five). Among them was the American/British novelist of detective stories Raymond Chandler whose novels and movies were lastingly popular for decades. His wife Cissy called him Raymeo beause of his romantic streak.

condemnation. Kim Philby died in Russia, suspect, sequestered and under house arrest.

Shame over one's place in society can nourish ideals of a nation transformed. For the British, the loss of the empire combined with the losses of the first and second World Wars came to stand for other losses. These losses engendered nostalgia for a world that had slipped away, or that never was; loyalty to an illusion became indistinguishable from alienation. "Poor loves. Trained to Empire, trained to rule the waves. All gone. All taken away. Bye-bye world."¹⁹¹

In the public imagination spies deal in secrets, excitement, intrigue and exoticism, far-away places, dangers on all sides, disinformation, plotting and scheming, bravery hardly noticed because it comes so easily. Yet beyond the surface, the stories of spies tap into our discomfort with the ways we appear to ourselves and to others, into feelings we have lived the wrong life, born at the wrong time, in the wrong place, trapped in our own habits and

¹⁹¹ Quoted in John Le Carré's Sheldonian speech, March 24, 2010

assumptions, unable to feel alive in a world that incessantly demands of us unacceptable and impossible compromises.¹⁹²

Those identified as traitors were not simply traitors, the evil unpatriotic who turned on their country. Nor are they today reducible to the discontented disenfranchised who, stuck in an underclass, saw no professional future for themselves and were bent on destruction. Rather, they were exceptional scholars, prodigious polyglots, unusually gifted, extremely sensitive and idealistic (Kim Philby, born in India and named after the Kipling character) rising to the very top of their inevitably literate/diplomatic professions. Many of the spies and those fascinated by spies were among the most accomplished novelists of the 20th century.¹⁹³

¹⁹² What if in order to protect what we felt we valued most highly, these values could never see the light of day? What if secrecy and deceit were the only means of protecting them? What if we were not what we appeared to be? What if freedom lay in hiding? What if we were free to imagine ourselves both as ourselves and as someone else, and we really were both?

¹⁹³ Several were triple agents. Like those of the FBI who tracked them, they were self-effacing and inconspicuous, closely resembling those spies he sought to uncover. Interestingly, J Edgar Hoover was described as so inconspicuously dressed and so unassuming in manner that he was difficult to recognize in Washington circles. Hoover lived a few houses away from Lyndon Johnson, with whom he was friendly. It appears likely that both knew far more about the Kennedy assassination than has yet come to light.

Most of the Cambridge spies, like so many literary and intellectual figures of their time, were passionately involved in anti-fascist causes. Although in the 1920's the US, France and Russia saw the enemy as Germany, by the early 1930's the situation had changed. The new villain was Fascism in Spain and Italy. English and American intellectuals turned to Berlin as the new hot-bed of anti-fascist activities, the new avant-guard haven offering sexual and artistic freedom assumed to go hand and hand with anti-fascist activities. The most famous of the spies, Kim Philby was decorated both in England and in Russia for his work against fascism, and was instructed by Hitler to poison Franco.

However, virtually all intellectuals suffered a shock in 1939 (with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) when it became clear that Russia was not to be relied upon as the only adversary of German fascism. In both Russia and in the West, those passionately opposed to Fascism often found themselves supporting the very abuses they themselves risked their lives to fight.

These abrupt historical turn-arounds in identified enemies and in loyalties were dizzying, and appeared to usher in a sense of a hopelessly broken,

disoriented world. As the tides of conflicting loyalties swept up thousands in the Comintern (the Third International), throughout Russia, Europe and the Balkans, national and regional identities clashed with political ideals. These conflicting forces, these oceans of identity confusion and fear of a lost world, this profound disorientation and the idealism it fostered in reaction— all these dynamics are at play in our world today.

The stories of spies provide an entry into the dark corners of national identity, betrayal and nationalism, identity and shame. All are part and parcel of the dynamics of the most destructive century in human history in both the West and in Russia.

John LeCarré

John LeCarré (really David Cornwell), the most famous writer on spies, was himself a spy who managed to fictionalize his secret lives. Before turning to fiction, LeCarré was a spy for the British M15 and then M16. He went to Oxford in 1952, was recruited there by MI5 to spy on leftist students, then joined MI5, running agents and conducting interrogations. In 1960, he went

to Bonn,¹⁹⁴ interrogating people who had crossed the Iron Curtain to the West.

"People who have had very unhappy childhoods are pretty good at inventing themselves."¹⁹⁵ His mother disappeared when he was five, walked out the door one night while the boys were asleep, never to return. LeCarré did not see her again until he met her in his twenties. There followed « sixteen hugless years ».¹⁹⁶ « We were frozen children and will remain so ».¹⁹⁷ LeCarré describes his father a man whose conception of his own truth—indeed of truth in general—was infinitely maleable.¹⁹⁸ The family lurched from abject

¹⁹⁴ Speaking of his early immersion in things German, Le Carré writes: "It gave me my own patch of eclectic territory; it fed my incurable romanticism and my love of lyricism; it instilled in me the notion that a man's journey from cradle to grave was one of unending education." The Pigeon Tunnel: stories from my life. London/Viking: London and New York pp. 4-5. Le Carre translated into German for Harold Macmillan (English Prime Minister 1957-1963 and grandson of the founder of Macmillan Publishing).

¹⁹⁵ Adam Sisman, 2015 John Le Carre a biography. London: Bloombury Introduction p. xiv

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 25

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 24

¹⁹⁸ Of his father Le Carre wrote: "He could put a hand on your shoulder and the other in your pocket and both gestures would be equally sincere. He could rob you and love you at the same time."Ibid., quoted p.8

poverty and debtors prison to profligacy and unlimited wealth and pretention, wealth and poverty being equally chimerical.¹⁹⁹

He writes that the house he imagines to have been born in stands in a plot of weed and builders' junk, a place for kids to hide in, rather than to be born. This image of a house to hide in also expresses his own need to disappear.²⁰⁰

With irony and sardonic wit LeCarré explains that he hired a pair of detectives to find out something factual about himself and his father,²⁰¹ writing of his instructions to them: "I'm a liar, I explained. Born to lying, bred to it, trained to it by an industry that lies for a living, practicing it as a novelist."²⁰² Of his instructions to the detectives, he writes: "I urged them to

¹⁹⁹ "I don't know how many times the bailiffs called," Cornwell later recalled. "You have no idea how humiliating it was, as a boy, to suddenly have all your clothes, your toys, snatched by the bailiff. It made me ashamed, I felt dirty." What does John Le Carre have to hide? (In) The Telegraph, April 2, 2011 Zoe Brennan

²⁰⁰ See my *Disappearing Persons*

²⁰¹ "What as difficult to comprehend about Ronnie (his father) was that everything was fake. His office, his car, his chauffeur, his 'regular' box at Ascot, were all just hired for the occasion, and never paid for. His wife was not his wife." Quoted Sisman, p. 181

²⁰² Le Carre *Pidgeon* p. 272

stop at nothing in their search for me." "Be my guests. Find the living witnesses and their written record and bring me a factual account of myself and my family and I will reward you."²⁰³

Writing to his mistress Susan to tell her why he could not commit, he warns: « I'll tell you who I am: a painkiller, a concession man, grown up on negating other people's emotions. A great big fat fraud. Poor love. . .I can't hurt, its as simple as that...I tried to warn you; I love you but take care; I love you but I'm a hollow oak. . . »²⁰⁴ He warned another girlfriend, Ann, of their future together. "It will be a life where the border between fairness and treachery is so narrow that you will fear for your own integrity...I shall always appear to you as a sort of watery Hamlet in some ways--my complete objectivity in all kinds of decisions has made a nasty impression on you. . .It's not unnatural in someone who has been as intensely concerned in himself for so long."²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Ibid, p. 272

²⁰⁴ Sisman, p. 284

²⁰⁵Le Carre (The Pigeon Tunnel) writes "The scale of Philby's betrayal is barely imaginable to anyone who has not been in the business. In Eastern Europe alone, dozens and perhaps hundreds of British agents were imprisoned, tortured and shot." p. 175

Kim Philby

Significantly, the most famous of the spies, Kim Philby, grew up in India. Philby (nicknamed "Kim" after Rudyard Kipling's novel Kim) was born at Ambala in the Punjab. His father, St John Philby, a well-known author, and orientalist was advisor to King Ibn Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia. After Trinity College, where Philby belonged to the Cambridge Apostles, he rose in 1939 to among the most powerful positions in M16 as head of Section V. In 1947, Philby was appointed head of British intelligence for Turkey. While in Istanbul he sent young men to certain death, never expressing regret.²⁰⁶ Soon thereafter he was assigned to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. as the First Secretary,²⁰⁷ the top liason position between British and American intelligence. In this position he

²⁰⁶ Begun in the early 19th century, the Apostles were a version of intellectual gatherings begun in the 18th century (the *società del caffè* in Italy and the salons of Mme Helvtius and others in France). Alfred Tennyson joined early in the 19th century. The membership of Tennyson suggests that there was a romantic streak in the Apostles from its early days and continuing well into the 20th century. In the 20th century John Maynard Keynes, a member, recruited Wittgenstein who, in turn, recruited as Soviet spies many of the Cambridge students who were members of the Apostles including Anthony Blunt.

²⁰⁷ The Russian/English intellectual Isaiah Berlin also occupied this post.

knew intimately the highest figures in the CIA (e.g., James Jesus Angleton director of Counter-intelligence, CIA). Philby, in line to direct M16, worked particularly closely with Angleton.

When Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean defected to Moscow in 1951, Philby was expelled from Washington. But in 1956 he managed to persuade M16 to send him to Beirut as Middle East correspondent for The Observer and The Economist. No Russian spy has ever climbed so high in the ranks of US and British intelligence. When he defected from Beirut to the Soviet Union in 1963, he was placed under house arrest by the KGB, suspected of loyalty to the English. Significantly, there were those who could not even recognize him as English.²⁰⁸

Charming, chameleon-like, ambitious and unscrupulous, Philby was, like the other Cambridge spies, incapable of intimate attachment. Married countless times, he died alone, unrecognizable to his friends.

²⁰⁸ Bovril commented how unrecognizable he had become when Graham Green visited Moscow.

Michael Straight and Under Western Eyes

Michael Straight is perhaps the most haunting, sensitive and imaginative of the Cambridge set. In my childhood I knew Michael Straight. When my family was living in Washington D.C., I was in school with David Straight, the son of Michael Straight. I went to his house several times, and met his father, a slight, soft-spoken man with a sense of the English language which was far beyond anything I was used to or had ever been exposed to. I realized that he held tragic secrets and a yearning for beauty which I could feel but not understand. The sense of an extraordinarily literate, sensitive man anguished by secrets and sorrow never left me.

Michael Straight, whose family started the journal the New Republic. After his mother divorced, he was brought up in England where his step father ran an experimental school. He went to Cambridge where was a student of the economist John Maynard Keynes. At Cambridge he

became involved with the Cambridge circle of Russian spies. After returning from England to the US, Straight became a speechwriter and an advisor to President Roosevelt and then to President Kennedy. In 1963 he was named to be Chairman of the Fine Arts Commissions, which would run The National Endowment for the Arts, a position which he refused when he confessed to Arthur Schlesinger.²⁰⁹ His decision to refuse the position was all of a piece with his struggles caught between the West and Russia, between ideals and fears of emptiness and disappointment. "I had long shed what belief I had once held in communism but I could not permit my life to be shaped by bitterness over the ways in which I had been used."²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Schlesinger (1917-2007) was author of 18 books, advisor to Presidents Roosevelt (FDR), Truman and Kennedy and perhaps the foremost intellectual and social critic of the 1940's 50's and 60's in the US. Pertinent for his relation with Michael Straight, during World War II, Schlesinger served as an intelligence analyst in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) later became the CIA. Interestingly, Schlesinger authored *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (1991) in which he suggests that it is time to scotch the American concept of the melting pot, that the cult of ethnicity threatens the very unity of society. Multiculturalists, he thought are very often ethnocentric separatists who see little in the Western heritage other than Western crimes (colonialism) and sinful European inheritance.

²¹⁰ Straight p. 199

Perhaps because of his dedication to the arts, he felt how how very precarious was support for literature and the arts in the US. Perhaps he sought refuge in a confession, which relieved him of having to see the fragility and likely demise of an illusion he needed to believe in. "I am being crushed--and I can't even run away."²¹¹ He needed to believe that there was a right direction if only he could find it.²¹² Feeling he could not be the one to follow it, there was nothing more to hide.

Deprived of any feeling of choice, caught in the throes of overpowering forces, Straight could continue to believe in the virtues of individual communism while at the same time engaging in American and British political power plays. Without his secret life, he might well have realized how precarious were his values, how easily damaged was what he could cling to for his integrity. After years of struggle, Straight, finding

²¹¹ Conrad, p.24 While it is Razumov who thinks this, it is clear that it also applies to Straight, and to those caught in fated attempts to preserve what they believe they value.

²¹² Straight writes: (the economist John Maynard) Keynes was not alone in believing that the Communist movement was the outgrowth of respectable antecedents in England's past. According to his biographer, Sir Roy Harrod, 'Keynes attributed it to a recrudescence of the strain of Puritanism in our blood, the zest to adopt a painful solution because of its painfulness.'" p. 62

himself caught in the tangle of deceit which his double life had imposed upon him, exhausted and depressed, decided to confess.

Straight grew up in an extraordinarily well cultured, literate, artistic and cosmopolitan family. In his childhood home, Paderewski played, Flscher-Dieskau sang, Michael Chekov (the son of Anton) spoke of theater, and Joseph Conrad read. Other family visitors included Igor Stravinski and Martha Graham. In his adult life he knew well members of the Bloomsbury Group, and also knew Clive Bell, Bernard Knox, Julian Huxley and W H Auden.²¹³ As Secretary of the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists, headed by Albert Einstein, he knew Einstein. Straddling England and the US, in addition to all his friends in England, he also knew, among others, Algir Hiss, Dean Acheson, Hubert Humphrey, the Kennedies, Jack and Honey Spitz, James Reston at the NY Times, the Alsops, CIA journalists and Owen Lattimore, the foremost translator of Greek tragedy. When offered the position of

²¹³ As member of the Apostles at Trinity College (Cambridge Conversatione Society) he met Lytton Strachey with whom he became close friends. Lytton was the brother of James Strachey translator of the Standard Edition of the works of Freud.

Chairman of the Fine Arts Committee he decided to confess to Arthur Schlesinger, to withdraw his name, and in his confession to name Anthony Blunt, the English art historian, as one of the leaders of the spy ring.

He writes of the “sense of guilt over the wealth that I inherited, a fear of hurting or even of offending others, an inability, at a critical moments to assert my own interests; a deep-seated need to love and to be loved and a radical streak.”²¹⁴ In this he is like the other members of the Cambridge circle, and those in our world today overcome by the anguish of inconsolable isolation, combined with a desperate need to be loved and a keen sense of disappointment. Trying to lay claim to himself, he gave himself up to the idealism of secrets and the secrets of idealism.

As one caught between Russia and the West, Straight was haunted by Conrad's novel Under Western Eyes (published 1911). It is, I think, the

²¹⁴ Straight, p.23

most prescient novel about Russia²¹⁵ ever written in English. It is all the more astonishing for having been published in 1911, well before the First World War and the Russian Revolution of 1917 but after the first Russian Revolution of 1905. It portrays the inner struggles of conscience, loyalty and betrayal against the vast background of Russia "a monstrous blank page awaiting the record of an inconceivable history", "a land of spectral ideas and disembodied aspirations".²¹⁶

While Conrad himself was Polish, he grew up in Poland dominated by Russia. His father was a revolutionary and died at the hands of the Russians. Conrad chose to write in English and live in England. Thus writing in English about Russian lives and "mentalité", about Russian betrayal, revolution, and conscience, all comes with countless overtones, to which Michael Straight was hardly insensitive.

²¹⁵ Joseph Conrad, 1911 *Under Western Eyes*. New York: Oxford University Press. "Here is the very essence of things Russian. Not the mere outward manners and customs but the Russian feeling and thought." quoted xvii (Introduction)

²¹⁶ Conrad p. 25

Straight was well aware of the layered meanings of Conrad's title "Under Western Eyes." What Western Eyes "see" and what they look at, what they cannot look at --are all implicit overtones of the title. The narrator is an English teacher of languages, with the perspectives of an Englishman, but its protagonist Kyrilo Sidorovitch Razumov, a Russian student of philosophy who becomes entangled with Russian revolutionaries. Razumov muses: "I am quite willing to be a blind instrument of higher ends. To give ones life for the cause is nothing. But to have one's illusions destroyed--that is really almost more than one can bear."²¹⁷

The narrator of Under Western Eyes attempts to "see" the inner struggles of Razumov, but cannot really look without recoiling in incomprehension. "Words, as is well known, are the great foes of reality," he reminds us on the opening page. "This is," he writes, "a Russian story for Western ears, which . . are not attuned to the tones of

²¹⁷ Conrad, p. 110

cynicism and cruelty, of moral negation, and even of moral distress already silenced at our end in Europe."²¹⁸

Moral distress silenced in Europe? Conrad's characterisation of moral distress, and the solitary anguish of spies in struggling to respond to their moral distress (and the moral distress of their generation)-- to the "great social inequity of the system resting on unrequited toil and unpitied sufferings"²¹⁹-- rang true for the Cambridge spies and ring unmistakably today, however concerted the efforts to hide them.

The protagonist, Kyrilo Sidorovitch Razumov, a third-year student at St. Petersburg University, is regarded as altogether trustworthy, but has no family "No home influences shaped his opinions or his feelings. He was as lonely in the world as a man swimming in the deep sea."²²⁰

²¹⁸ Conrad, p. 121

²¹⁹ Conrad p.193

²²⁰ Conrad, p. 8

Victor Haldin, equally alone and without human connections, appears in his lodging having just assassinated the minister-president of Russia. Haldin asks Razumov: "All I want you to do is to help me vanish, no great matter that." Vanishing for those who have nobody, no home influences, no connections, ought to be easy.²²¹ Razumov turns him in, and he is executed.

Tortured by having betrayed Haldin and feeling that he has betrayed his inmost hope of ever being able to connect to another person, Razumov muses, "Who knows what true loneliness is--not the conventional word, but the naked terror? To the lonely themselves it wears a mask. The most miserable outcast hugs some memory or illusion. Now and then a fatal conjunction of events may lift the veil for an instant. For an instant only. No human being could bear a steady view of moral solitude without going mad."²²²

²²¹ When I was in Moscow, I had occasion to teach a class of psychologists and psychiatrists a few of whom had had spies for fathers. I asked them in what the power of their fathers consisted. To my surprise, the answer they gave was: in their power of disappearance.

²²² Ibid., p.120

Feeling totally alone and isolated, Razumov is overcome with the need to hide. "Hide? but where? How? With whom? . . .The eye of social revolution was on him, and Razumov for a moment felt an unnamed and despairing dread, mingled with an odious sense of humiliation. Was it possible that he no longer belonged to himself? "223

Losing emotional orientation, Razumov lost himself. Truth and lies seemed constantly to change places, one hiding the other. "How can you tell the truth from lies? . . .In Russia, and in general everywhere--in a newspaper, for instance, the colour of ink and the shapes of the letters are the same."224

With extraordinary prescience, Conrad writes: "The ferocity and imbecility of an autocratic rule rejecting all legality and, in fact, basing itself upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less imbecile

²²³ Conrad, p. 222

²²⁴ Conrad, p. 139

and atrocious answer of purely Utopian revolutionism encompassing destruction by the first means to hand, in the strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institution. These people are unable to see that all they can effect is merely a change of names."²²⁵

The anguish of moral disorientation and isolation become unbearable for Razumov. "The sanguinary futility of the crimes and sacrifices seething in that amorphous mass envelops and crushes him."²²⁶ And Conrad writes of the common, ordinary slope that, gradually and hardly noticed, leads to utter despair. "There are evil moments in every life. A false suggestion enters one's brain, and then fear is born--fear of oneself, fear for oneself. Or a false courage--who knows?"²²⁷

"Whenever two Russians come together, the shadow of autocracy is with them, tinging their thoughts , their views, their most intimate

²²⁵ Conrad, p. 282

²²⁶ Conrad, p. 282

²²⁷ Conrad p.278

feelings, their private life, their public utterances--haunting the secret of their silences.²²⁸ "I saw the shadow of autocracy lying upon Russian lives in their submission or their revolt."²²⁹

Describing the Russian approach to understanding through mysticism, Conrad notes: "That propensity of lifting every problem to the plane of the understandable by means of some sort of mystic expression is very Russian."²³⁰ "Russian simplicity often arches innocently on the edge of cynicism for some lofty purpose."²³¹

Interestingly in French the word for deception is the same as the word for disappointment: "déception". Deceiving and disappointing are thus combined in the same word. One can be disappointed in oneself not to have seen one has been deceived, not to have realized that in the service of ideals, one has betrayed oneself. Yet to have one's illusions

²²⁸ Conrad, p. 80

²²⁹ Conrad, p. 81

²³⁰ Conrad, p. 78

²³¹ Conrad, p. 93

destroyed, and to have recognized the self-deception, like Razumov, becomes "almost more than one can bear."

In his Author's Note at the end of the book, Conrad comments that the most terrifying reflection produced by writing the book is that the characters are not exceptional but ordinary products of their time and place. Conrad strikingly described Razumov: "His good looks would have been unquestioned if it had not been for a peculiar lack of firmness in the features. It was as if a face modelled vigorously in wax (with some approach even to a classical correctness of type) had been held close to the fire til all sharpness of line had been lost in the softening of the material."²³²

In the final scene of *Under Western Eyes*, Razumov confesses to Natalia Haldin, the sister of Victor Haldin, with whom he has fallen in love. The confession is his lonely attempt to express sorrow of such depths that it can only be intimated. Straight ends his book with the response of

²³² Conrad p. 4

Natalia to Razumov. When Razumov asks her if she believes in the duty of revenge, she replies "I believe that the future will be merciful to us all. Revolutionary and reactionary, victim and executioner, betrayer and betrayed, they shall be pitied together when the light breaks on our black sky at last. Pitied and forgotten; for without that there can be no union, and no love."²³³ Like Razumov, Straight was caught in a loneliness and abandonment from which he could not escape save through the illusion of belonging to the world of intellectuals who longed for beauty and turned out to be spies.

Like Razumov, after long silence, and with that confusion of shame, despair and loneliness, Michael Straight decided to confess. "You bear a burden for many years; you say to yourself, Once I rid myself of this burden, everything will be different. I'll stand upright; I'll sleep well; I'll be considerate of other people because I respect myself; I'll be happy.' Poignantly he continues, "It does not work out that way; it did not for me. Our bodies and our spirits become adjusted to burdens that we

²³³ Conrad p. 259

bear, and when they are lifted from us, we do not spring back into the ideal shapes that we pictured for ourselves in our fantasies."²³⁴

Solitude, Secrets and Spies

In Europe and Russia, Romanticism has been "a form of protest against real or imaginary suffocation in a mean, venal and hypocritical milieu, given over to greed, corruption and stupidity"²³⁵ Isaiah Berlin, the Russian writer who emigrated to England, speaking of the Romantic strain in terror, referred to "the worlds of Byron's gloomy heroes--satanic outcasts, proud, indomitable, sinister--who defy society, suffer and destroy", who preserve "their integrity at a vast cost in agony and hatred."²³⁶

In our modern world, the gulf between the public image and the private secret mirrors internal gulfs over idealism and cynicism. Secret worlds

²³⁴ Straight, p. 322

²³⁵ Berlin 1990, p. 229

²³⁶ Berlin 1990 p.

became a refuge from the modern world of nationalism, instant identity, sports, money, glamour and power. As in the world of spies, rebelling against these values, desperate to protect their ideals, it is tempting to pick the opposite side,²³⁷ not realizing that it too demands unquestioning allegiance, and to be caught in a no-man's land from which there is no escape.²³⁸

The subject of deception and conflicting loyalties is conspicuously missing in education more generally and in training in psychology and psychoanalysis in particular. The literature on lies is thin, unconvincing and simplistic.²³⁹

²³⁷ Le Carre notes: "a state of watchfulness must surely be the first prerequisite of a writer as it is of a secret agent. A writer, like a spy must prey upon his neighbors: like a spy he is dependent on those whom he deceives; like a spy he must somehow contrive to keep a distance from his own feelings and by doing so conjure up a package that will meet with the approval of his master. Like a spy, he is not merely an outsider, but implicitly a subversive." quoted in Sisman p. 434

²³⁸ LeCarré managed to fictionalize his secrets, giving them a public silence. Others had to live with secrets that were only too real, without the possibility of imagining them to be otherwise.

²³⁹ Take, for example, the breezy book, Lying. Vintage 1999 by Sissela Bok who skims the surface of the topic without reaching its underlying dynamics.

The world of spies shows us that, as in our contemporary world, without trust and human connections, without love, emotional life withers. All that is left is a condemnatory and desperate need to connect and to belong to which there can be no response and from which there can be no respite. When ideals acquire intolerable secrets, and secrets have to be kept in order to preserve ideals, emotions become suspect. All that is left is despair.

Ours is a world desperately in need of humanity, of an awareness of how fragile and contingent identity is, and how essential it is for the life of emotion. We need to recognize that identity depends upon the life-giving powers of relationships, on how, in order to know ourselves, we depend on those we love and trust.

Chapter 10

Identity, Narcissism and Disorientation

In the world of spies there is, combined with an intolerable sense of isolation, the sense of an ideal, irrecoverable, lost world. Despair over feeling that one can never belong anywhere is part of our modern world, in which the idealization of freedom serves to hide the anguish of not belonging.

Since the 18th century, the politics of freedom has outstripped the experience of liberty. At least before the 18th century, it was more common to know that one was not free nor could one be. And if one was free, it was due to wealth, power and privilege, none of which could be considered a "right". Their legitimacy could always be questioned. Freedom as a "right" came with a retenu of unexpected difficulties. In fact, identity would seem to have become more complicated in the wake of Rousseau's "Men are born equal but are everywhere in chains."

With Nationalism, nationalistic enthusiasm and political promises, combined with the vogue for social engineering and utopian projects, freedom acquired new meanings. Freedom as a "right" gave it political overtones, split it from experience, and opened the way for manipulation. As the value of freedom became an absolute, it played into the hands of the wealthy and powerful with devastating consequences for our contemporary world.

With prescience for our world today, Joseph Conrad described the isolation and loss of self given more power because seen against the backdrop of Russia: "His heart had, as it were, suddenly emptied itself. Rest, work, solitude and the frankness of intercourse with his kind were alike forbidden to him. Everything was gone. His existence was a great cold blank, something like the enormous plain of the whole Russia veiled with snow and fading gradually on all sides into shadows and mists. "²⁴⁰

Caught between the wish to hide and a terror of abandonment, spies needed to assume that spying would be an expression of freedom. They rationalized freedom as the freedom to hide their desperate need to belong. Since the

²⁴⁰ Conrad, p. 223

patriotism required by their own countries imposed unacceptable compromises, belonging to the community of spies afforded protection against the onslaughts of prevailing values of power, wealth and importance. But this required secrecy, self-deceit, and the ability to trick, to hide, to deceive, and to be forever haunted by the feeling that all is gone.

Like so many in the modern world, spies hold the secret of an imagined identity safe from the erroneous views of others. The Sicilian playwright and novelist Luigi Pirandello points out that a primary experience of selfhood comes from the stake we have in comparing the various erroneous views others have of us. We are not seen in the same way by A, B and C. All distort us.

The ability to respond to these distortions proves to be the crucible of identity. Identifying the disparities, the distortions, the inaccuracies, the blindness, and the indifference of others in what they perceive to be ourselves is a source at once of terrible shame and the only hope we have. Recognizing these dynamics of distortion and deceit opens the way for intimacy and trust.

Each person we encounter in our lives has a unique view of who they believe us to be, and we must fill in with our own imaginations what we cannot know about how each one of them sees us. In my Disappearing Persons I suggest that we are all caught between a fear of disappearing and a terror of being seen, and that the ever-changing dynamics of human relationships, the life blood of *psuche*, necessarily threaten narcissistic assumptions.

There are shameful gaps between and among the various selves that each of us is, which we instinctively want to hide, using one self to hide another. In the process we are forever fearing being found out and frightened of being seen. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke noted: "There are quantites of human beings, but there are many more faces, for each person has several. . . The question of course arises, since they have several faces, what do they do with the others?"²⁴¹

Looking and being looked at defines a process intimately related to our experience of human time, to the fluctuations of wishes and fears continually

²⁴¹ Rilke, Malte Laurids Brigge (p. 15)

becoming one another, continually giving way the one to the other. The dynamics of looking and being looked at are at the heart of our conceptions of whatever we imagine identity to be. They are at the heart of tragedy, of Oedipus Rex in particular (Oedipus strikes out his eyes so they cannot see), and the dynamics of spies.

Our contemporary concept of narcissism fails to include the internal dynamics of deceit and the process of looking and being looked at. It fails to make room for the human sorrow of mortality; it fails to make room for human time. Although they may have narcissistic feature, it is difficult to call the Cambridge spies "narcissists". It is clear that every one had seriously difficulties with relationships. However self-centered they may or may not have been, they were idealistic, and attempting to better the world.

Narcissus, the Myth

Narcissists are assumed to be like Narcissus. As commonly construed, narcissists are self-preoccupied, a self-preoccupation that, according to theories of narcissism, protects them from strong emotions. Accordingly, so

the theory goes, they are difficult to treat because they are above suffering, detached from feelings, inaccessible and closed off. A closer look at the myth of Narcissus, however, brings us to the dynamics of mortality.

In the standard version of the myth, Narcissus is the son of the river god Cephais who raped the nymph, Lieriope. The child of a rape, Narsissus is known for his unearthly beauty, admired by both humans and gods. He is desired by all those who see him. But he can neither acknowledge nor reciprocate such desire. Those who fall for him, therefore, feel rejected. In the end he drowns while gazing at (trying to find) his image in the water of a spring.

In one version of the myth, the Greek traveler and geographer Pausanias, recounts that Narcissus, has an identical twin sister who died. Grieving for her death, Narcissus looks for her in his reflexion, and, because he cannot find her in his own image, he drowns. Whether he confuses himself with his identical sister or with his own image, mistaking it to be himself, Narcissus falls into the water and drowns, isolated, beyond the reach of another human being, beyond the reach of himself.

Where then does Echo fit into the myth of Narcissus? In one version of the myth of Narcissus, Hera lays upon Echo the curse of being unable to say anything for herself as a punishment for chattering about the sexual exploits of Zeus, her husband. Because of what Hera does not herself want to know, she curses Echo so she can only repeat what others say.

Narcissus and Echo are bookends; they define each other. Narcissus cannot express himself because he has difficulty imagining anyone who is not himself; the only person he can "see" is himself in his reflection. Echo can only "hear" herself in what she repeats others to have said. Narcissus is unable to love and be loved; he can only be the object of love of others.

There is another version of the myth. Tiresius, the blind seer whose warnings Odipus rejected, prophesied that Narcissus would be immortal provided he never know himself. Once again, as in the tragedy of Oedipus, the Greek (Delphic oracle) maxim "know thyself" implicitly makes itself felt. Accordingly, if Narcissus becomes conscious of his inability to make contact with Echo, he will die.

Here then is a rather different reading of the myth. Narcissus suspects and becomes conscious there is something wrong with him, tries to figure that out by looking at (trying to find) himself in a pond, takes his image literally (without imagination), realizes something is shamefully missing and drowns. Echo represents then what is missing, what he cannot find because she is an echo. He cannot imagine himself looking at others who look at him, cannot know himself through others.²⁴² Realizing he cannot make contact with Echo constitutes a form of lethal self-knowledge.

Tiresias prophesies that Narcissus will live forever provided he never comes to know himself. This prophecy of Tiresias appears to be related to another prophecy. Tiresias prophesies that Oedipus will kill his father and marry his mother. Both prophecies echo the Delphic oracle « know thyself ». It is as though the Delphic oracle were a musical motif, a recurring rhythm, a familiar insistent theme.

²⁴² The presence of Echo underscores how isolated he is. Unable to relate to Echo, he can see no more than the image of himself (nobody else being available), and because he cannot reach himself, he drowns in his image.

Not knowing oneself provides a sort of backdrop to the myth of Narcissus and the tragedy of Sophocles. Implicitly, mortality and relationships are related. Because Oedipus and Narcissus are devoid of substantial human relationships, they are unable to "know themselves", confined to their own imaginations, unable to grasp the reality of the prophesies of Tiresias. Narcissus had to have been able to recognize something in himself by looking at his image or he would never have died. The love and admiration of others was not enough; he died fulfilling the prophecy of Tiresias and coming to "know himself."

Our modern world, filled as it is with illusions of self-sufficiency and immortality, with cruelty, ignorance and indifference to suffering, desperately needs the hope and promise of human intimacy. Being mortal--Narcissus becomes mortal by knowing himself-- is associated with the shame of knowing something is missing, feeling how small and fragile and limited are our lives. Which suggests that shame is intimately related not only to identity but also to the Greek concept *psuche*, or life force. I will return to this idea in my conclusion.

Intimacy, Solitude and Identity

What we can know of ourselves consists in struggling to know how we can nourish and sustain our relationships despite--and because of--the ways in which they challenge our assumptions about ourselves. Continually confronted by challenges to who we think we are, our identity, whatever it is construed to mean, is intimately related to shame and shame to deceit. We attempt to show others what we want them to approve of, secretly wanting them also to see what we would rather hide, and resenting their seeming indifference when they do not. What others do see, of course, is always in doubt. When other misperceive us, as they inevitably do, are they deceiving themselves? Are they deceiving us? How do we distinguish between misperception and deceit?

When relied upon, appearance has to be controlled in order to have the illusions that one is acceptable. But shame then over the inadequacy of appearance leads to stouter shame defenses, greater mistrust of others and greater feelings of isolation. In such mirrors of deception, it can easily feel

impossible to find anything but distorting images. But how to judge the distortions? Do they come from others or from oneself?

Since we can never really know what others think and feel about us, our imaginations fashion the ways others see us after our own wishes and fears. But in the process of using one self to hide another, we are forever fearing being found out, longing to be recognized and frightened of being seen.²⁴³

Fear of exposure, having our secrets available to others who then have the power to remind us of things about ourselves we would prefer to ignore—this leads to more mistrust. Our very efforts to protect ourselves can so easily backfire; we find ourselves wounded without being able to understand the wound.²⁴⁴ In this way we can use our ideas about the ways others see us to prevent us from thinking about "knowing ourselves".

²⁴³ Like Oedipus and Philoctetes, the Dimmesdale of Hawthorne suffers from invisible (unknown) wounds. Note the similarity between the death of Oedipus in Oedipus at Colonus and the death of Dimmesdale: neither one can be described directly, one learns through the veil of unknown eyes. see Kilborne 2005

²⁴⁴ « And in addition [it is shameful] not to share in the fine things of which all have a share . . . all these [lacks] are more shameful if they seem to be one's own fault; for thus they now [seem to come] more from vice if one is the cause of [one's own] past, present, or future [deficiencies]. » Aristotle, Rhet. ii 6.1384a9-16

Such confusion and shame lead to greater reliance on appearance, which, in turn, hides from us thinking about how we know ourselves. When thinking about others prevents our "knowing" ourselves, when the two are opposed, we are catapulted into our contemporary world of artificial oppositions. Contemporary concepts of knowledge and thinking appear to be clouded over with misleading assumptions.

When what we understand--of our feelings, our bodies, our rhythms of breathing and heartbeat, our wishes and fears--become an integral part of "knowing ourselves", not only are thinking about others and ourselves not opposed, they are integral the one to the other. We rely on others to define an appearance that cannot be imagined or felt in isolation.

The myth of Narcissus is not primarily about Narcissus. There is a far larger context for the myth than the personality of Narcissus. Tiresias informs Liriope, Narcissus' mother, that a curse had been placed on her child: that he will lose immortality if he comes to know himself. In the world of Greek myths, curses typically stem from injury and insult. The insulted and injured party

curses the aggressor; who, suffering the curses, lays curses on others.

Curses always involve relationships in time, family histories disappearing into family myths. Those bearing a curse are suffering from family rivalries, trans-generational burdens, and the unpredictable behavior of gods. There seems no end to this process of curses and suffering, of injury, mistrust, betrayal, anger and retaliation.

For example, Laius, the father of Oedipus, was cursed by his stepfather Pelops when Laius, as an adopted son, ran off with and raped the son of Pelops (Chryssippus). In retaliation, Pelops then put a curse on Laius: that his son (Oedipus) would kill him. Similarly the brother of Laius, Atreus, killed the sons of another brother, Thyestes, and served them up to Thyestes to feast upon, leaving hands and feet to the last. To retaliate, Thyestes then followed the prophecy that if he raped his daughter (Pelopia), their son would kill Atreus, which he did. In short, injuries are followed by retaliatory curses. Note that aggression is not primary here: rage follows injury.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Following this theme in Greek literature, Plato emphasizes that anger is not primary, but is the reaction to injury.

In the line of Kadmus every generation is stricken by tragedy and trauma: children lose parents, experience violence, maiming and betrayal, and live out blood curdling events in which children are scarred and bereft, abandoned to a ruthless world.

Therefore, like Narcissus, Oedipus cannot be understood without the history and dynamic of curses and family relationships and passions. Cut off from unrecognizable parents, Oedipus can solve the riddle of the sphinx without understanding it, without "knowing himself." Apparently alone, unfettered, he believes he is the powerful king he is seen to be; he cannot know he has been cursed and is blindly walking into the snares of his own making. Implicitly, the "blindness" of Oedipus is placed side by side with his "knowledge" that allows him to solve the riddle of the sphinx. Both are placed against the background of his trauma and his family. As king he is "knowable" to others; as himself he is, like Narcissus, unknowable. Both die when they come to "know themselves."

The greater the hubris, the less the capacity for empathy (for oneself as well as others) and the greater the disregard for human frailty and limitation. And

the greater the unrecognized and fortified avoidance of shame. We can imagine that Narcissus, realizing he cannot make contact with Echo, looks to himself in order to find himself, realizes he cannot find himself in his own image, and drowns. By implication, it takes others to "know oneself."²⁴⁶

Narcissism, Pathology and Cultural Values

Following the prophesy, Narcissus dies because he comes to know himself. In other words, the myth of Narcissus is another myth of the birth of consciousness. With consciousness comes death. Virtually all the myths of creation and the myths of the birth of consciousness (e.g. Adam and Eve) require a man and a woman, strong feelings of human connection out of which consciousness is born. Adam and Eve live immortally in the Garden of Eden until they eat the apple, which brings on not only consciousness but also conscience, and with both death and suffering. Like other myths of the origins of consciousness, the myth of Narcissus accounts for the presence of human suffering and death. It is a myth of becoming human, like the story

²⁴⁶ It is his realisation that he cannot find himself that enables him to "know himself". He can "know himself" as not there.

of Pinocchio the puppet who yearned to become a boy and had to suffer mightily.

How the myth of Narcissus has come to designate a personality torn out of context to represent self-absorption to the exclusion of others represents a striking--and portentous-- transformation. One wonders how such a distortion could ever have become part of our assumptions.²⁴⁷ It would appear that the term "narcissism" has been invaded by contemporary values and illusions of independence, freedom and a corresponding mistrust of human connections.

Our notions of narcissism can be seen against the backdrop of the romantic heroes of westerns and popular films: individuals (generally men) who excel in strength, daring and courage, who brave all kinds of dangers and who leave intimate relationships in favor of heroic deeds. The hero leaves wife and lover in order to be "heroic". Paragons of strength, heroes seldom feel

²⁴⁷ Pride, as assumptions go, can be felt in isolation, without others to get in the way. To further confuse the picture, self love is assumed to be a positive feeling, an expression of an assured identity. The picture becomes more complicated if one introduces honor and shame; honor shows itself to the world and shame wants to hide.

isolated, never abandoned. And almost never in need of others to help them. And if they suffer they are admired for their fortitude.

Our opposition self/other appears to be a function of our contemporary values, distorting what we can feel as the life of emotion. Our emotions about ourselves are by definition emotions of our relations to others. Our emotional world cannot separate them out or we would not be human and mortal. Considering narcissism and object relations side by side then becomes a matter of emphasis. Narcissists rely on what they assume is their appearance in the eyes of others on whom they depend for their identity.

Following contemporary values, implicitly opposing self and other, Freud insisted on the distinction between primary and secondary narcissism,²⁴⁸ implicitly attributing drives to primary narcissism and defenses to secondary or pathological narcissism. Infants and children, the argument goes, are

²⁴⁸ The psychiatrist/psychoanalyst Otto Kernberg builds on Freud's distinction between "primary" and "pathological" narcissism, relating pathological narcissism to what he named "borderline disorders", a diagnosis that made him the expert in the diagnosis he invented. Kernberg's "borderline" diagnosis can be seen as part and parcel of the de-institutionalization of psychiatry, the marginalization of psychotic/schizophrenic diagnoses, and the emptying of psychiatric hospitals throughout Europe and the US.

preoccupied with themselves, and this is primary narcissism. Children are helpless and use magical thinking; adults know how to test reality, master the world, and use reason and logic. Associating primary narcissism with children avoids and neglects the dependency of children on adults. Implicitly the only way children can be exemplars of primary narcissism is if they are using narcissism defensively, in which case it cannot be "primary". Also; primary narcissism is associated with the evolution of "reality testing", which, following the evolutionary lines of simple to complex, begins with illusion and fantasy, and then "progresses" to rationality and reality testing.

Narcissism and the pain of human relationships

Let us take as our point of departure for the consideration of all psychic life emotions as manifested in conflicting wishes and fears acting dynamically. The life of emotion is manifested by movements of wishes to connect and fears of connecting, wishes to be recognized and fears of being found out. The intensity of these conflicts between wishes and fears drives protective measures (in both analysts and patients) with endless defenses against defenses. The stronger the conflicts, the greater reliance on protective

measures and the greater likelihood that these will fail and thus create the need for more and stouter protective measures. A bit like a bridge that cannot hold too heavy a load.

In the light of this perspective of endless interactions between fears and wishes, defenses responding to defenses that fail, theories of narcissism fall short. When we view narcissism as neither "primary" nor "secondary" but rather as a dynamic that requires defending against, we can feel narcissism as a defense and a defense against other failed defenses, like building more and more walls around a sand castle knowing the ocean will claim its own and they will be washed away.

Narcissists don't want others to get in the way of feelings of omnipotence despite being dependent on them. The winds of ambivalence will blow much stronger if the sense of identity is weak, which it necessarily is in narcissism; the stronger the winds, the greater the need for protective measures

(defenses) that are going to require reinforcement.²⁴⁹ Because they do not know who they are, narcissists long for the admiration of others (to whom they cannot connect), for signs that at least others know what they cannot. This leads to constant searches for the approval of others who can only be viewed as functions of what one does not have. When the approval of others is an illusion relied upon to do what it cannot, others become at once intolerably necessary and horrifying. Others then threaten narcissists with the possibility that they are neither who they think they are, nor who others take them for, nor who they think they are not.²⁵⁰

It is assumed that narcissists know who they are. In fact, just the opposite is true. The narcissistic self-preoccupation is a defense against the emptiness of lives not lived, against the void that cannot be shown. Unfortunately in

²⁴⁹ For those who believe they are alone (and are alone with respect to others) blaming others for their mis-perceptions and incomprehension does not lead to freedom. Treating narcissistic disorders (however defined) accordingly requires addressing the feeling on the part of patients that they are misperceived. This cannot be done if the therapist or analyst thinks of himself or herself as a "blank screen", "with neither memory nor desire." Each patient needs a human connection to recognize all the mis-perceptions and deceptions of those around them including their own and those of their therapist.

²⁵⁰ However the narcissist must imagine this identity as one who is not himself. Without self-knowledge in the Greek sense, there can never be a "true" self, a narcissistic Winnicottian notion.

considering and treating narcissism the flagrant dynamic problems of identity and the void of a missing self are frequently missed. As Kierkegaard noted, the loss of an arm, a leg, a fortune, a house, a parent--all these can be recognized. The loss of a self so easily goes unnoticed. Narcissists by definition cannot find themselves, so they present themselves as someone else who they want others to recognize.

By becoming conscious and dying, Narcissus becomes human, becomes mortal.²⁵¹ Becoming conscious of who he is, Oedipus regains his dignity, becomes human and dies. By dying, he becomes mortal, he became human. As a myth of the origin of consciousness, the myth of Narcissus relates consciousness to sexuality. Narcissus behaves as though he does not have a body, does not have sexual desires.²⁵² By contrast, the Greek gods lust as

²⁵¹ Seen in this way, our sense of mortality as therapists can become a source of life for both ourselves and our patients. Rather than being blamed as a manifestation of selfishness, narcissism can then open the way for a wider consideration of shame dynamics in the context of suffering, trauma, and human struggles. Shame, our own and what we perceive as shame in our patients, then broadens our possibilities as therapists and, as the story of Narcissus suggests, points us to vital, humanizing resources.

²⁵² In the myth of Narcissus, Narcissus can only be an object for the sexuality of gods and mortals and cannot be a subject of sexuality in himself without sacrificing his immortality.

though they do have bodies and sexual desires. The lust of the gods throws into stark relief how disconnected Narcissus is from his body.

In the origin myth of Adam and Eve, consciousness is associated with bodies and sexuality, with mortality and abandonment. Adam and Eve become conscious of each other through their need for each other. As sexual beings, they become conscious and mortal, destined to suffer because they have become human.

Psychoanalysis and psychology have divorced sexuality from what we feel in our bodies, from our need for human connection. As a consequence of this split, there is difficulty imagining that practitioners and patients are equally human with bodies and sexuality, equally subjects and objects to themselves and to each other. Unnecessary contortions are required to make room for the effects of patients on therapists, patients able to look at therapists and not to be reduced to objects that the therapist looks at.

Recognition that this can be a problem then leads to solutions for what never should have been a problem in the first place, to attempts to solve the

difficulty with the concept of "counter-transference." The term "counter-transference" literally means what counters transference, those reactions of the therapist that are identifiable as those that "counter" the transference of patients.

Obviously it is impossible to disentangle "counter-transference" reactions from the entire gamut of feelings in the therapist. To imagine that this in any way can be done is to distort human emotions beyond all recognition, and dehumanize both patients and therapists. It turns the therapist into an ambulatory hypothetical.

When we approach patients assuming the reality of this split, not as fellow human beings who, like us, struggle with human problems, but rather in terms of diagnostic categories and theories,²⁵³ we can too easily fail to respond to their suffering. In so doing we ourselves fail to exhibit the humanity on which the respectful practice of our profession depends.

²⁵³ Paranoia, schizophrenia, bi-polar swings, suicidality, dependency disorders all fit into our contemporary omnibus concept of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorders. Diagnostic categories and pathology can, when they are not respectful of human relationships, be used to reinforce the observer functions of practioners.

Psychoanalytic contortions over countertransference underscore the epistemological value of the work of Emile Durkheim²⁵⁴ (one of Wundt's students). In his Les formes elementaires de la vie religieuse, Durkheim makes it clear that any sociology of religion must necessarily be a religious sociology. In other words, one can only know religion through experience, by being religious. Epimenedes the Cretan said "All Cretans are liars." We can understand this in two ways. One is to say that Epimenedes is not to be believed since as a Cretan he is a liar. The other is to say that as a Cretan, Epimenedes knows what lying is and is indeed to be believed when he says that all Cretans are liars.

It is commonly assumed that narcissists must know themselves because they are self-preoccupied, unable to feel, unable to be reached. It is also commonly assumed that narcissists are unusually difficult patients. However, it seems more relevant to recognize that narcissists are difficult to treat

²⁵⁴ Durkheim was educated at the École normale supérieure (ENS) in 1879 along with Jean Jaurès and Henri Bergson. At the ENS, Durkheim, wrote his dissertation on Montesquieu, under the direction of Fustel de Coulanges (the specialist in Greek and Roman religions and institutions).

because they do not know themselves, and that there is in fact profound suffering and shame over their experience of not knowing who they are. It is this suffering, and not the diagnostic manifestations of what is misleadingly called "narcissism", or "narcissistic personality disorder" that needs to be front and center in the treatment of narcissism.

Referring to the mystery in the solitary side of identity, Conrad describes an emotional world out of reach. "In this queer pedantism of a man who had read, thought, lived pen in hand, there is the sincerity of the attempt to grapple by the same means with another profounder knowledge. After some passages which have been already made use of in the building up of this narrative, or add nothing new to the psychological side of this disclosure. . comes a page and a half of incoherent writing where his expression is baffled by the novelty and the mysteriousness of that side of our emotional life to which his solitary existence had been a stranger.²⁵⁵

There is for me no understanding of narcissism without a recognition of its relation to suffering and conflicts over human connections. A hallmark of

²⁵⁵ Conrad, p. 262

narcissism is the feeling that others get in the way of a "true self". Those who cannot know themselves, who look into themselves for a connection to others while perceiving others as threats, are terrified of going mad. "One cannot say that it is all anxiety, or all weariness; yet is both, and like ungrown despair."²⁵⁶

Narcissists suffer without the ability to give voice to their suffering, to their "ungrown despair". But allowing the despair to grow can be a manifestation of the movement and power of *psuche*. And it is in our relationships, in our connections to others that our humanity and our sense of being alive exists. Human identity requires others because human beings are fundamentally social animals; being alone means being abandoned by others. There is no life of emotion without others, no self, no consciousness, no conscience.

The life of emotion depends upon movement, upon the feelings of time in our bodies and imaginations. To their detriment, psychology, the social sciences and philosophy have tended to assume that what is intelligible has to be independent of our bodies and our intuitions; it must be material, mapped,

²⁵⁶ Dickens, Bleak House p. 474

provided with time zones, longitude and latitude, and examined under microscopes. Dreams can be "specimens"²⁵⁷ like urine samples.

Archeological metaphors explain child and human development, what is deepest is earliest.²⁵⁸

However, emotions exist in time and movement, and cannot be apprehended through such notions. We did not ask to begin our lives and they will end without our permission.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

Shakespeare²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ In The Interpretation of Dreams Freud has a chapter on "specimen dreams."

²⁵⁸ The concept of space is used to infer a time having nothing whatsoever to do with human lives.

²⁵⁹ Sonnet 60

Chapter 11

Tragic Emotions, Memory and Music

The etymology of our word tragedy can be traced to the Greek *tragōidia*, or from *tragos* ("goat") and *aeidein* ("to sing"). It would appear then that in Ancient Greece music and tragedy were intimately linked. Both depend upon human time, rhythm and movement. Vico described the birth of consciousness as song sung by primitive man to primitive woman, and inspired by the violent emotions of a raging thunderstorm, a song with rhythms, cadences and musical lines.

For the ancient Greeks and for Aristotle, time meant change, and change meant motion, both implicit in music. Aristotle's notion of time is directly related to his definition of "action". In his Poetics Aristotle writes: « Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in the form of action, not of narrative, through pity and fear

effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. »²⁶⁰ Implicitly, then Aristotle is linking emotions with "action", and "action", with "the good life" with strong emotional reactions to experience (e.g., Vico's thunderstorm).

Strictly speaking, tragedy is not itself "action" (it is an "imitation") but nonetheless emotionally is indistinguishable from "real" tragic experiences. Tragic actors "act" upon the audience; they participate in the emotions they elicit, as do musicians. In this way the audience acts as a sounding board for the emotions of actors and musicians, a means by which both actors and musicians on the one hand, and the audience on the other, can draw upon memory and feelings, on perceptions and experiences in the service of what Aristotle referred to as "the good life."

For Aristotle, tragic emotions as actions and reactions must be "serious, complete and of a certain magnitude." "Serious," and not frivolous, sarcastic, sceptical, cynical or ironic. "Complete" and "of a certain magnitude", both inside and outside without distinction. Having "magnitude", existing in time.

²⁶⁰ Poetics VI.4

Evoking the Asklepan tradition, Aristotle writes that tragedy works through *katharsis*, “through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.”²⁶¹ Each increases the intensity of the other. An intense jolt of energy, *katharsis* is intended to reinforce human bonds and a sense of humanity, to restore health to ailing relationships, and faith in human capacities. Overlapping with Asklepan notions of medicine and ethics, it is a medical metaphor.²⁶² Medicine, psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis all owe their history to the Asklepan tradition, which links psuche with ethics.

Metaphorically the function of tragedy is to "tune" the soul like a musical instrument. The combined power of pity and fear (the jolt) purge spectators of unnatural, cacophonous (unethical) emotions and can be "complete" because always in motion, always changing, never ending. Music, like tragedy, is both action and reaction. Like tragedy, music functions to restore

²⁶¹ Poetics, p. 23 We can legitimately wonder what is meant by a “proper purgation of these emotions.” Presumably this refers to Aristotle’s notion of balance, and refers to medical practices in the Asklepan tradition (the balancing of humors).

²⁶² In 1887 the uncle of Sigmund Freud's wife, Jacob Bernays, a well known classicist, wrote a paper in which he explicitly said that *katharsis* is a medical metaphor. Freud was fully aware of this paper, yet refused to follow its trajectory.

balance and harmony, thus restoring a sense of the place of man within nature. What cannot change, according to the Greeks, cannot live.

Like time itself, music is both inside and outside, nowhere and everywhere. Beethoven was deaf and went on composing.²⁶³ Musicians carry the music they play inside them, in their memories, in their imaginations and in their souls. Where is it when they play? It must be both inside and outside, without distinction. And the better the musician can, while playing, approach what he or she hears and imagines internally, the more powerful the performance. The dynamics of listening to oneself play while being aware of the reactions of listeners, while at the same time listening to what one imagines internally as one plays--these dynamics express life of emotion.

Plato, Pythagoras, Beauty and Music

²⁶³ Beethoven's compositions are a testament to the powers of imagination of inner life which saved him from the suicide he seriously considered.

There is a strong Pythagorean/musical tradition that is essential for our conception today of the life of emotion. It combines notions of beauty, harmony and proportion with belief in reincarnation and the experience of cyclical time. This tradition has profoundly influenced not only Platonists but also doctors (e.g., Galen), architects (Vitruvius and Brunelleschi), musicians and artists (e.g., Botticelli); it has inspired cathedrals, builders and engineers, and the makers and tuners of musical instruments.

Pythagoras is associated with music, acoustics, proportion and harmony as well as mathematics and architecture and is credited with discovering principles of tuning musical instruments (the intervals of octave, fifth and fourth). Relying on musical instrument string length ratios, Pythagoras formulated as mathematical proportions the basic intervals--an octave (2:1), fifth (3:2), and fourth (4:3). Pythagoras and his followers believed that these ratios governed the construction of the entire cosmos. In the Pythagorean doctrine of the Harmony of the Spheres, the tuning of the lyre was seen as a microcosm of a universal harmony.²⁶⁴ Pythagorean notions include: first, (1) that the soul was immortal; (2) that the soul could change into other kinds of

²⁶⁴ The musical theory inherited by the Romans led to the eight principal modes of Gregorian chant.

living beings; (3) that nothing is ever new (events repeat); and finally, (4) that everything alive belongs to the same family.²⁶⁵

Pythagoreanism in Ancient Greece can be traced to the cult of the Pythian Apollo, the god of Delphic Oracle, essential also for Greek tragedy. The name Pythia is derived from "pythia hieria" related to "Python", the name of the mythical snake slain by Apollo near Delphi. Etymologically, "python" is related to the Greek word meaning "to rot". The chthonion egkoimisi (incubation) was practiced in Delphi, linking Pythagoras to Asklepios.²⁶⁶ Pythagorean beliefs, cults of Asklepios, tragedy and music (Orpheus) can all be traced to cults of the dead and from there to the cult of the saints.

In Mesopotamia, Ancient Greece and throughout the Near East and the Mediterranean, not only were the priests sacred, song constituting an integral part of their profession, so were the musical instruments they played.

Mesopotamians made various offerings (animal sacrifices, jewelry) to these

²⁶⁵ Huffman (ed) p. 395 Constantinos Macris

²⁶⁶ Pergamum, home to a library of approximately 200,000 volumes (scrolls) , according to Plutarch, was also, under the emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138), the home of the shrine to Asclepius, and one of the most famous healing centers of the Roman world.

instruments, blurring the lines between priest, musician, instrument, god, and king.²⁶⁷ The classical education of scribes, priests and other educated professionals in Mesopotamian required music. Major Mesopotamian centers of learning (e.g., Babylon, Sippar, Nippur, and Erech) became known for their achievements in music as well as in mathematics and astronomy.²⁶⁸

Ancient Greece inherited the ritualization and deification of musical instruments.²⁶⁹ Following Pythagoras, Greek musical theory described planetary movements musically. Correspondingly, the tuning of musical instruments was believed to be a manifestation of cosmic harmony. In Greek philosophy and ethics, notions of cosmic harmony (the harmony of the spheres) was associated with the "Good Life" and the tuning of the soul. Plato wrote: "All audible musical sound is given us for the sake of harmony, which

²⁶⁷ The lute, or sinnitu, became well known throughout the Near East as the tambour, comparable to the Sumerian pan-tur, the Greek pandoura, the Russian balalaika, the Georgian tar and the Arabian oud.

²⁶⁸ The University of Constantinople founded in 425 by Emperor Theodosius II (and lasting into the 14th century) had 31 chairs for Music, Law, Philosophy, Medicine, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Rhetoric.

²⁶⁹ The Greeks borrowed the scale in the Hurrian hymns) and the seven-stringed lyre. Greek "lyre heroes" (e.g, Orpheus, Amphion, Cadmus (founder of Boetian Thebes), Linus) reflected Mesopotamian influences.

has motions akin to the orbits in our soul...as a heaven-sent ally in reducing to order and harmony any disharmony in the revolutions within us."²⁷⁰

In his writings on architecture, Vitruvius, the well known architect and engineer of the Roman Empire living in the first century drew heavily on the Pythagorean tradition. De Architectura is filled with allusions to Pythagorean numerical systems. In De Architectura he emphasizes the need for architects to be trained in music,²⁷¹ and that musical instruments should be designed to conform to the ratios and proportions found in the natural world.²⁷²

Vitruvius draws upon the Aristoxenus, a prolific Pythagorean student of Aristotle and a musical theorist.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Plato Timeus 47a4-d7

²⁷¹ Vitruvius applies music theory throughout his descriptions of temple and theater design. In Book II of De Architectura, he shows how columns should be spaced in temples according to the same intervals as tones in music.

²⁷² Daniel Walden, 2014, "Frozen Music: Music and Architecture in Vitruvius' De Architectura." In Greek and Roman Musical Studies iv:4-45

²⁷³ In addition to writing a tract on the elements of harmony (Elementa Harmonica), Aristoxenes wrote volumes on ethics, music and philosophy. Aristoxenes describes rhythmic durations using two terms; *symmetriai* is used to illustrate the various proportional relationships of different rhythmic and durational lengths to one another; *eurythmia* describes a beautifully constructed rhythmic structure. As Cicero and Vitruvius use them, these terms have much the same meaning in rhetoric and architecture.

For Vitruvius, rhythm, proportion and symmetry help produce an architecture that is closer to nature, and thus at once more beautiful and more useful, as in music and rhetoric. For Vitruvius, types of temple fronts are analogous to types of musical scales, each with its own aesthetic and subjective qualities; theater edifices should resonate like a musical instrument.

Boethius (480–524 AD), credited with formulating the quadrivium, the fulcrum of education for centuries thereafter, wrote the Fundamentals of Music and also contributed a tract on the role of music in healing. The quadrivium was made up of arithmetic, geometry (architecture), music, and astronomy.²⁷⁴ By implication music overlapped with astronomy (music of the spheres), and music also overlapped with mathematics (the tuning ratios), and geometry (proportion based on notions of harmony and mathematics). The four complementary disciplines were considered the basis of the study of philosophy.

²⁷⁴ Although the concept of the quadrivium appears with Archytas in the 4th century BC, over time it was attributed to Pythagoras who lived long before.

The Pythagorean/Platonic tradition gathered strength in the early Christian period and reached its peak in the 12th century Renaissance in France and the 15th and 16th century Renaissance in Italy. For the Italian Renaissance, influenced by Vetruius, Pythagoras became as important as Plato, making of Plato a Pythagorean. "Whatever may be said about Plato himself, there can be no doubt that Pythagoras and the Pythagorean tradition were major influences on his successors."²⁷⁵ The Italian Renaissance also included Orpheus in the Pythagorean/Platonic tradition.

Many are the connections between the notions of harmony, illness, death, medicine and music in the Greek and Mesopotamian worlds. The father of Pythagoras was, according to Greek myth, Hermes, the go-between, the messenger of the gods, shuttling between the above and the below. God of the wind, air and weather and initiator of dreams, Hermes was given his rod by Apollo as a reward for his singing and playing the cithar. There is a significant confusion of Hermes with Asklepios, both have staffs and snakes, and connections to the underworld, Asklepios has one snake staff and

²⁷⁵ 2017 John Dilon, Pythagorenaism in the Academic Tradition (In) A History of Pathagoreanism (ed. Carl Huffman) p. 250

Hermes a two;snake staff. These associations point to the chthonian roots of Orpheus as well as Pythagoras and Asklepios.

The symbol of the medical profession is the caduceus. Our word *caduceus* is derived etymologically from the Sanskrit word for singer and poet. Dreams, music, poetry and theater were all associated with rituals and power of healing. The etymology of caduceus thus points to the power of song and poetry in healing.

Orpheus was the son of the muse Calliope and Oeagrus, king of Thrace. The name Orpheus from the Greek word "dark" can be seen to link him as a chthonian diety to Dionysos and the Dionysian rites of the Maenads in the Korykion cave on Mount Korykion. As pioneer of civilization Orpheus was supposed to have taught mankind the arts of medecine, writing and agriculture, as well as magic, prophecy and music.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Similarities betseen Pythagoreanism and Orphism were recognized by Herodotus. Persephone, one of the most important deities worshiped in Orphism, is believed to be the mother of the first Dionysos. In Orphic myth, Zeus came to Persephone in her bedchamber in the underworld and impregnated her. The infant born of this union was Dionysos, who was later dismembered by the Titans, before being reborn. The rebirth of Dionysos appears to have influenced the motif of rebirth (e.g., Christ) and to have overlapped with Askepios (Christ the healer).

The overlapping and confusion of Pythagoras, Plato, Orpheus and Asklepios is significant. In the sanctuaries of Askepios and their temple complexes, theater, music, dreams and prophecy were all part of the healing process. Cults of the dead²⁷⁷ nourished the practice of medicine together with rituals, theater and music.²⁷⁸ Cults of the dead profoundly influenced the power of dreams.²⁷⁹ Having himself been visited in dream by Asklepios, the physician Galen, the most famous physician in the Roman Empire who became a

²⁷⁷ With the growth of medicine and anatomy, bodies of the dead were no longer sacred, and burial ceased to have the same meanings it had had. The sanctity of these bodies upon which autopsies were performed was negated, and death reduced to nothing more than an absence of life. There appears to be an inverse relation between the cult of saints and the rise of anatomy.

²⁷⁸ In our modern world, doctors in medical schools practice on the dead, as lifeless proving grounds for technique and know-how. The idea of learning how to respond to the suffering of the living by studying the bodies of the dead would have seemed ludicrous to the Greeks.

²⁷⁹ The caduceus of Asklepios entwined with snakes clearly links him to the powers of the underworld, which he represents when appearing in dreams. These powers are powers of life and death, movements dwarfing human lives.

physician because of his dream, wrote: On Diagnosis from Dreams (De Dignotione ex Insomniis).²⁸⁰

Just as Orpheus used his lyre to follow Euridice into the underworld, thus proving the power of music and life over death, Pythagoras is depicted as a prophetic sage who himself listened to the music of the spheres, and whose philosophy was imbued with song.²⁸¹ Today, it is impossible to disentangle the ideas of Plato and the Platonists from those of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, and the cults of Orpheus and Dionysos.

Identifying himself with Orpheus/Pythagoras, the famous Italian Renaissance writer Marcillio Ficino (1433-1499) formulated connections between love, beauty, song, reincarnation and prophecy. Ficino translated all available

²⁸⁰ When Galen was born, in the second century AD, Pergamon was a major center of science and culture. His father and grandfather were architects. After studying politics and philosophy, Galen began studying medicine at the Asclepieion in Pergamon at the age of 16 as the result of a dream in which the god Asklepius appeared to him. Galen worked in the Asclepieion of Pergamon for many years, becoming the most famous doctor in the ancient Roman Empire and personal physician of Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

²⁸¹ Iamblicus writes that "Pythagoras took his inspiration from Orpheus in composing his account of the gods, which he called "holy" precisely because it was culled from the mysteries of the works of Orpheus. quoted in Michael Allen, 2017 (in) A History of Pathagoreanism (ed. Carl Huffman) p. 439

works of Plato from Greek to Latin.²⁸² His major work, the eighteen volume Theologia platonica de immortalitate animorum (Platonic Theology: On the Immortality of Souls) published in 1482 was based on Plato's Timeus.

Associating Pythagoras, re-incarnation and soul journeys, Ficino's powers were not unlike those of Siberian shaman, whose importance depended upon his ability to connect with the dead, the spirits and the beyond. By claiming to know how to listen to the music of the spheres, Ficino demonstrated his election as a prophet. As a celebrity, Ficino himself played the lyre in Orphic recitals,²⁸³ viewing himself as Orphic-Pythagorean prophet. Today we view ideals of beauty and harmony through the lens of the Italian Renaissance. What is clear is that Pythagoras is associated over millenia with the history and evolution of notions of proportion, music, beauty, harmony and healing. These notions have profoundly influenced ways of thinking about the life of emotion from which we have become distanced.

²⁸² At the time of his writing. Subsequently more works of the Platonists came to light.

²⁸³ In singing or intoning an Orphic hymn, Ficino was also performing a Pythagorean musical and therapeutic exercise." Allan, op cit, p. 440

Music, Dreams and Memory

Because they are "nowhere" and defined by human time, dreams are like music: they can be grasped as cadences, rhythms, to be continually imagined and felt, and then remembered, played internally and then felt again.²⁸⁴ We all know what it feels like to remember dreams and struggle to reach for them, imaging what we cannot remember. Although in musical scores, there are time signatures, and tempo markings, largo, adagio, presto, etc, these in no way indicate the length of the work in time. Similarly, we have no idea how long a dream lasts. The human time of rhythm and cadence cradles both dreams and music as it cradles memory.

Linking memories to aesthetics, the Russian Pitrim Sorokin described how closely musical experiences became an integral part of his aesthetic feelings. He writes of his childhood memories of the Komi and Russian agricultural and hunter communities:

²⁸⁴ My method of dream interpretation consists in treating dreams musically, as though they were music to be listened to in human time rather than an immortal text to be interpreted.

"My musical tastes were formed by the beautiful folk music of the region which was not, as yet, invaded by the vulgar-urban and commercial-crooning, jazz, and noise-making (Russian chastushki). In this region were still preserved the old folk songs of the Russian and the Ugro-Finnish peoples collected by the composers: Rimsky-Korsakoff, Musorgski, Tchaikovsky, Kastalsky, and others. This explains why at a later age when, for the first time, I heard the music of these composers and also of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven, many of their tunes and melodies appeared to me quite familiar: I had heard them in childhood from the Komi and Russian peasant women and men who ordinarily sang collectively during their community work, at fishing or harvesting, or at their communal festivities and important events in their lives, like weddings and funerals. Religious music of the churches was another type of music which strongly conditioned my musical tastes. It was the "traditional" music of the Russian churches, including the early Russian plain chant (Kievsky and Znamensky

chants), and once in a while the simple religious compositions. composers like Bortniansky, Lvov, Archangelsky, Kastalsky, Tchaikovsky, and others."²⁸⁵

For the Greeks, like tragedy, music was an integral part of the ways they conceptualized emotions, responsibility and ethics. *Psyche* can be seen as expressive of ethical responsibilities and feelings as well as tragic emotions, dance, music and healing. Viewed musically, *psyche*, gathers life and death

²⁸⁵ quoted in (2020) Emiliana Mangone, "Pitirim A. Sorokin's contribution to the theory and practice of altruism" Revue européenne des sciences sociales. 1:141-175

Speaking of his early work gilding cult objects, painting ikons, and the spires of churches, Sorokin describes experiences of making objects beautiful which he related to ethics and morality.

"The morality and mores of the Komi peasant communities were well integrated around the precepts similar to those of the Ten Commandments and of mutual help. The houses of the peasants did not have any locks because there were no thieves. Serious crimes occurred very rarely, if at all; even misdemeanors were negligible. People largely practiced the moral precepts they preached. Mutual aid likewise was a sort of daily routine permeating the whole life of the community. Moral norms themselves were regarded as God-given, unconditionally binding, and obligatory for all. The same was true for the common law of the peasants. Living in this sort of a moral community I naturally absorbed its moral norms as well as its mores. The same can be said of my aesthetic tastes and preferences. My world of beauty was made up, first, of the beautiful world of nature: pure big rivers and lakes, not yet contaminated by industrial and urban pollutions; endless forests extending for hundreds of miles; flowery meadows and fields surrounding each village; vast expanses of pure snow in the winters; mainly blue and sunny sky with brilliant stars at night; and other scenes of an unspoiled nature in which the villages and hamlets were mere specks lost in an ocean of such geographic grandeur."

in its cadences. In continual movement, like a river *psuche* carries along dreams and memores, as they shift keys, rhythms, cadences, driven by harmonies and unspeakable sorrow.

If we think musically, artificial binaries--self/other, force/counter-force, mind/body, reason/emotion, perception/memory--all fall away. Not only are they unnecessary, but they seriously limit our ability to feel alive as human beings. Anxieties about feeling alive are essential to the life of emotion. Like our bodies, music shows us there are rhythms, tempi and movements that start long before we do and end long after we are no more.

Musical sensitivities and understanding can renew the movement, phrasing and harmony of our lives. *Psuche* is life, breath, dream, the life force behind music time and motion. It cannot be grasped intellectually because we can only know it through experience. But we can feel it and know we are feeling it. And we can remember the feeling. And, like the musician, we can reconstruct the feeling in our imaginations provided we have the capacity to imagine what we cannot understand.

In imagining the life of emotion, music and the Pythagorean/Platonic tradition depend upon human time and memory. Playing and listening, listening to oneself listening to others, remembering listening--these musical dynamics are the soul of our identities. They depend on our feelings of human limitations (hamartia), our feelings of mortality, and on trust--all of which "tune" the soul. Shakespeare²⁸⁶ reminds us that those without inner music are unethical (their souls not tuned) and therefore they are not to be trusted.

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted

²⁸⁶ The Merchant of Venice V.i.82–86

Chapter 12

Psuche, Time, Memory and Motion

“I had never known before how short life really was, and into how small a space the mind could put it.” ²⁸⁷

Our limited powers of reason throw into sharp relief what William James referred to as the "More". The "More" is a context, a background for thinking. It is vast in comparison with the small space minds can be put into. As a response to feeling the brevity of life, the "More" can be imagined as *psuche*, a life force no human being can possess; we have it because we are alive; it lives in us and through us. Our lives exist in time, as fish exist in water. We are born, grow up, grow old, and die; our conceptions of present, past, and future are in our bodies as well as in our feelings of self and others.

The life of emotion keeps experiences in corporal memories and sensations, which then interact with our memories and perceptions. Because our life spans are limited, our bodies change; this knowledge of change is emotional

²⁸⁷ Dickens, Bleak House, p. 370

and intimately related to our conception of time. Our bodies know time since they live it. From this perspective, *psuche* gathers the feelings of a life force that brings change and motion along with a sense of human limitation. Saint Augustin's *abyssus humanae conscientiae*, an abyss of human consciousness, conveys this sense of a More which humbles us all.

Placing Augustine's conception of a depth that we cannot fathom against the concept of the unconscious makes it clear that because the unconscious is what is not conscious,²⁸⁸ there can be no abyss in consciousness itself. Instead, Freud opposes what is unconscious to what is conscious, as though they were two poles of a magnet. This opposition would seem to offer clarity, since the one is not the other, but such a binary opposition is of questionable use in helping us think about how we think, in helping us remember what we have felt, or in anticipating what we might yet imagine. It is antithetical to the life of emotion.

²⁸⁸ But what does this actually mean? While the opposition consciousness/unconscious may be intellectually satisfying, it goes against what we know of our thinking and emotional processes.

By contrast, putting Augustine's conception of a depth we cannot fathom together with the notion of "double conscience", allows for what is known and not known at the same time, what is known but is unacceptable to be thought, what is intuited but disbelieved. And, most important, it allows for what is ethical (conscience) because it is rooted in our mortality and our emotional need for one another. In the Asklepian/Aristotelean tradition, it allows for a tragic response to human suffering. We feel our lives carrying us along, like currents in the sea. We live as we breathe, and with each breath we change, with each breath we are farther and farther from being born, and closer and closer to the end.

Perhaps influenced by Augustine's *abyssus humanae conscientiae* Vico writes that what is divine comes from the Latin *divini*, "to understand what is hidden from men—the future—or what is hidden in them—their consciousness (consciences)." The hidden consciousness to which Vico refers here is a consciousness of what makes us human, feelings of piety, awe, what is incomprehensible. These feelings are implicit in the concept of "double conscience".

Aristotle's emphasis on practical knowledge as opposed to scientific knowledge underscores the pertinence of emotions for the first and their irrelevance for the second. What for Aristotle is "practical" is by definition known through our emotions. Aristotle's emphasis sheds light on how and why the distinction between evolutionary/Newtonian time (scientific understanding) and human time (emotional understanding) matters.

These Newtonian, binary assumptions were in place generations ago in the works of the father of experimental psychology, Willhem Wundt and in his

students.²⁸⁹ Their assumptions have driven the reliance on artificial intelligence as the model for thinking, a reliance which implicitly denegrates human thought processes and denigrates emotional understanding and

²⁸⁹ Students of Wundt who were later to become well known included Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev (Bechterev), Franz Boas, Émile Durkheim, Edmund Husserl, Bronisław Malinowski, George Herbert Mead, Edward Sapir, Ferdinand Tönnies, Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Those students of Wundt who emigrated to the United States were enormously influential, and proposed simplistic scientific methods to veil human complications. Hugo Münsterberg (1863 – 1916) who received his PhD in 1885 under Wundt, emigrated to the US and applied psychology to legal, medical, clinical, educational and business settings, although he had in Germany focused on attention, memory, learning, and perception.

The Englishman Edward Titchener 1867 -1927 attempted to classify the structures of the mind. Essentially a sensualist and a materialist, he was influenced, as was Wundt, by Goethe's theories of colors and his volume Selective Affinities in which Goethe compares emotional attraction to chemical reactions. Sensations and thoughts were components of a larger structure, he thought, analogous to hydrogen and oxygen. Sensations caused Ideas and perceptions.

George Herbert Mead studied briefly with William James at Harvard and then went to Leipzig to work with Wundt, without ever having finished a degree. However, he returned to the US and, at Chicago, became the most important American Sociologist of the later 19th century, writing The Mind, the Self and Society, a work attempting an integration similar to that sought by Freud.

The most overtly political figure among Wundt's students is Franz Boas, who wrote his dissertation under Wundt on the color of seawater and was seriously interested in perception. After emigrating to the US, he turned his attention to native American languages and the building of an empire (Columbia University/American Museum of Natural History) against the backdrop of the American treatment of Indians and emigrants. Boas argued against racist theories of intelligence and was involved in immigration policy. He also wrote "On Alternating Sounds" the perceptions and misperceptions of sounds in unfamiliar languages.

intuition. Artificial intelligence cannot deceive because it cannot know the dynamics of lying. Because it has no will of its own or motivating force driving curiosity, it can only do what it is told. In this it is altogether unlike the Greek gods, whose philanderings and sexual escapades are a playground for deceit.

Paradoxically, the theories of psychoanalysis appear to be in the same flight path as the reliance on artificial intelligence. Like the assumptions underlying Freud's notion of the unconscious or the Oedipus Complex, artificial intelligence has no need for interactions with others. If Artificial Intelligence were a mirror, we would be in grave danger if in looking at it, we should see ourselves.

Our modern explanatory frameworks on which contemporary psychological and psychoanalytic theories depend, assume that what applies to bodies in space must also apply to human beings; they assume that a theory of drives and neurons can explain repression and memory, that notions of behavior and cognition can explain identity (true self, false self).

But when thinking is "scientific", it is devoid of emotion and can only be imagined and inferred, like Newton's gravity. It cannot be known through our emotions as human beings. Newton witnessed the fall of the apple; he did not discover the power of gravity by falling himself. No, he "discovered" it because, as an external observer presumably unaffected by an apple that fell, he witnessed its fall. He could describe the force of gravity only by observing an external material phenomenon: the falling of an apple, evidence of a universal law from which Newton himself was totally abstracted. The questions, "Is the apple the same on the tree as it is on the ground?" and "why did that apple and not another apple fall on my head and not on the head of someone else on that day and not on another day"--these questions are cast aside in favor of the assumption of a great discovery: something must be causing the apple to fall. Apples fall from above and land below.

Similarly, the Bentham dictum (that human beings as a race have evolved to seek pleasure and avoid pain) is presented as the scientific equivalent of the law of gravity or magnetism (magnetic poles attract and repulse). The dictum not only assumes that pleasure and pain are opposites, but that they can be isolated, and isolated in a hypothetical individual who stands then for all

mankind. The opposition pleasure/unpleasure thus fits snugly with the other outdated binaries: conscious/unconscious, illusion/reality, force/counter-force, thesis/antithesis, individual/family, self/other.

Giambattista Vico tapped into the Aristotelean/Augustinian tradition with his distinction between *il certo* and *il vero*. *Il certo* refers to what we can know as human beings, what we can know emotionally because we feel our bodies and respond to those around us, what we can know because time is our element; *il vero* refers to universal, scientific, intellectual and inferred truths (e.g., the movements of planets and stars, or the movements of atoms).

Theories of evolution, theories of drives, child development, neuroscience-- have nothing to do with our element: human time. All depart from what we know and feel in our bodies and memories. Thinking is not only what we think; it is how we imagine what we think, how others respond to what we think and, most importantly, what drives what we think.

In our world today, prevalent psychological theories fail to provide us with essential resources for our profession. To conceptualize thinking

around a hypothetical person, a psychic apparatus in isolation, cut off from other psychic apparatus²⁹⁰ is no longer useful. As we know them, our feelings come alive in necessarily conflictual relationships and interactions, and in what we know of our bodies and our mortality. To be alive, our thinking needs to change in unpredictable ways, to be continually in motion.

Practical Wisdom

What Aristotle refers to as "practical wisdom," what William James refers to as "pragmatism", and what Vico refers to as "poetic wisdom" can all be thought to describe virtually the same dynamics of emotional understanding in motion, interacting with perceptions and memories.

Aristotle writes of scientific knowledge: "Now no one deliberates about things that are invariable, nor about things that it is impossible for him to do." In other words, the weight of thinking is misplaced if it focuses on such

²⁹⁰ Narcissus could live forever provided he did not know himself. Knowing himself meant knowing his connections to others. By implication, if Narcissus was narcissistic he could live forever, but it would not be living. So he lived and died.

things. He continues "scientific knowledge involves demonstration, but there is no demonstration of things whose first principles are variable".²⁹¹ For Aristotle because scientific knowledge relies on principles that are not variable and does not admit that it might be other than it is presented to be, scientific knowledge cannot be practical wisdom.²⁹²

In other words practical wisdom is being human, and being human is good for oneself because it oriented towards others, because it is ethical. What is most deeply human is beyond scientific demonstration. Aristotle writes:

Those with practical wisdom "see what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general."²⁹³ « Now it is thought to be the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g., about what sorts of things are conducive to health or to strength, but about what sorts of things are conducive to the good life in general. »²⁹⁴ For Aristotle, the aim of

²⁹¹ Aristotle *Nichomachean Ethics* 1140a (30-35)

²⁹² "For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for the good action itself is its end." *Ibid.*, 1140b (5)

²⁹³ Aristotle, *ibid.*, 1140b (10)

²⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1140a (25)

philosophy and of understanding in general is not what is expedient, not what is scientifically demonstrable, but rather what is "conducive to the good life in general", which, in the Asklepiian tradition, relates to health and cure.

By implication then what "conducive to the good life in general" is ethical and emotional. Aristotle's theory of ethics is a theory of tragic emotions beginning with human limitation and vulnerability (*hamartia*).²⁹⁵ His theory of emotions emphasizes fragility and the inevitability of error as hallmarks of human value. What we value, then, is inseparable from a feeling of fragility and suffering, of things gone wrong, which, in turn, provides a foundation for ethics and strengthens human bonds.²⁹⁶

Aristotle's concept of *katharsis*--transformative tragic feelings of pity and fear in a terrific jolt of energy--overlaps with his concept of "practical wisdom". Practical wisdom concerns "what sorts of things are conducive to the good life in general" which is also the function of *katharsis* and tragic emotions.

²⁹⁵ See Nussbaum, 1986, p. xxix ff.

²⁹⁶ "The Tragic consciousness of responsibility appears when the human and divine levels are sufficiently distinct for them to be opposed while still appearing to be inseparable." Vernant, p. 27

Tragedy for Aristotle is intended to bring us alive through tragic emotions, which reinforce identity through connection with others.

Like a terrific jolt of energy, tragedy overlaps with healing, song, music and poetry. Vico imagined the beginnings of language and consciousness together in strong feelings and the need for human connection breaking into song. Vico's *il certo*, like Aristotle's "practical wisdom", designates the realm of understanding that is relevant to human beings as human beings. What matters for both Vico and Aristotle is not only the object of understanding but its meaning; it is how we understand and not only what we think we understand.

For Vico, the human world is the domain of piety and awe, of overwhelming emotions, not unlike Saint Augustine's *abyssus humanae conscientiae*. For Vico as for Aristotle, "understanding" is grounded in human limitation and whatever is defined as most pertinent for human lives. Like Aristotle's "practical wisdom", Vico's "poetic wisdom" underscores the principle that

“passion and emotion” precede “reflection and reasoning.”²⁹⁷ In Aristotle's theories of tragedy and ethics, what matters is the distinction between human, emotional understanding that is relevant to human lives, on the one hand, and scientific, "objective" explanations of natural laws outside human time, on the other.

Taking his lead from Vico's distinction²⁹⁸ between *il vero* and *il certo*, as well as Aristotle's distinction between scientific knowledge and "practical wisdom", Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), the Russian/English historian of Ideas²⁹⁹ and one of the towering figures of the 20th century, speaks of

²⁹⁷ This anti-Cartesian stance of Vico towards the human mind and towards the nature of understanding sets him at odds with the entire sensualist-rationalist tradition along with its Kantian assumptions. Vico's approach is therefore at odds with Structuralist, Post-Structuralist, Deconstructionist and Modernist assumptions, as well as with the assumptions of Rational choice theorists, Behaviorists, Cognitivists, Neuro-scientists and Neuro-biologists. Newtonian/mechanical metaphors that turn psychic life into objects of science always been misleading. Inside the outside is still outside the inside.

²⁹⁸ Berlin, Isaiah, 1976 Vico and Herder: Studies in the history of ideas. London Hogarth Press.

²⁹⁹ Berlin translated Turgenev, reading widely and mastering Russian and English literature. Berlin grew up in Riga and Saint Petersburg, witnessed the Russian Revolution, and moved with his family to England when he was 12. In addition to Russian and English, Berlin was fluent in French, German, and Italian, Hebrew, Latin and Ancient Greek.

how profoundly troubling is the assumption that science requires men "to be analyzed as material objects in space", for their lives and thoughts to be "in principle deducible from the mechanical laws which govern the behavior of their bodies."³⁰⁰

In our contemporary world if we are to approach the human mind and our emotions more faithfully, we need to depart from Newtonian assumptions about material apples, cause and effect, forces of gravity, what is up and what is down. Psychoanalytic notions of repression and the unconscious fall into Aristotle's category of "science" and Vico's concept of *il vero*. Aristotle's "practical knowledge" and Vico's *il certo* emphasize knowledge that human beings can have by virtue of being human, by virtue of being emotional. By definition, then, these dynamics are essentially ethical in nature, they deal with human responsibilities towards one another.

³⁰⁰ Isaiah Berlin, "The Sense of Reality," in Berlin, *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and Their History*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York, 1999), 1–39

Berlin suggested the distinction between hedgehogs and foxes to describe two views of the world: hedgehogs look through the lens of a single defining idea (e.g. Descartes and Freud); and foxes, look through a wide variety of experiences (e.g., Aristotle, Vico and William James)

"Knowing" *psuche* as the power of life, the power of life cycles, the immortal and regenerating life of the soul, is altogether different from understanding the power of gravity, the power of a turbine engine or the power of a hydroelectric plant; it is altogether different from notions in physics of force/counter-force, of alpha and beta particles; indeed it is different from any form of power (including the human heart) because it cannot be located in time or space; it is felt to be both inside and outside; it does not have any material correlate: not apples, atoms, electric generators, or pumps. To "know" *psuche* is to feel alive, and that feeling is tragic and emotional.

Henri Bergson, Marcel Proust and William James

The life of emotion, being outside spatial/temporal correlates, is defined by human time, by our experiences in our own bodies, minds and imaginations.³⁰¹ The riddle of the sphinx that Oedipus solves without comprehending ("what walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon and three in the evening") refers to the life of a day, life as a

³⁰¹ Human beings exist in time. How do we know time? We know it through dreams and memory, and through our bodies. What we know viscerally is not time as represented in causal relations: time between cause and effect.

day, to the scope of our lives, our dreams and our memories.

Shakespeare wrote:

We are such stuff as dreams are made on
And our little life is rounded with sleep³⁰²

In the Aristotean/Pythagorean/Orphean traditions so closely associated with the life of emotion and the concept of *psuche*, three figures at the end of the 19th century stand out: Henri Bergson, William James and Marcel Proust. All devoted their work to the qualities of memory in time.

Bergson is known for his concept of "élan vital" (a vital force) and for his philosophical work on memory and time (Matière et Memoire).

Unlike energy in matter that exhausts itself, unlike notions of entropy as death drives, there is, opposed to them, an energy that does not wane: vital energy, *élan vital*.

³⁰² Shakespeare, Tempest IV.i

Henri Bergson,³⁰³ a specialist in Greek and Roman philosophy, was an intimate friend of Proust³⁰⁴ who shared much of the same world view. Both believed that memory is emotion and emotion, memory. Having written his thesis on Heraclitus, who is known for his writings on time and change, Bergson, like Pythagoras, situates time in the flow of our emotions. For Bergson, as for the Greeks, the universe exists in time and movement. Hence the difference between lived time and time made into an object for the purposes of science.

William James, the brother of the writer Henry James, was an American psychological philosopher, known for his concept of a "stream of consciousness"³⁰⁵ (emphasizing the movement of thinking

³⁰³ Bergson's doctoral dissertation as "Aristoteles de loco senserit, " (On the Concept of Place in Aristotle"). A specialist on Heraclitus, he was named in 1900 Professor of Greek and Roman at the Philosophy College de France, and upon the death of Gabriel Tarde, the sociologist and philosopher, in 1904, Bergson succeeded him as Chair of Modern Philosophy, the pinnacle of philosophy positions in France.

³⁰⁴ In 1891 Bergson married Louise Neuberger, a cousin of Marcel Proust. Proust served as best man at their wedding.

³⁰⁵ William James, *Principles of Psychology*. The last two chapters are entitled respectively "The perception of time," and "Memory".

and feeling) and his concept of "pragmatism" (close to Aristotle's "practical wisdom").

Emphasizing the movements of thoughts and feelings, William James observed, "We feel out thought, flowing as life within us, in absolute contrast with the objects which it so unremittingly escorts."³⁰⁶ This movement of our thoughts and feelings points to The More.³⁰⁷ For James "escorting objects" are obstacles to the flow of thinking, since truth is "what happens to an idea," ever dependent on the "everlasting weather of our perceptions".³⁰⁸

Marcel Proust is known for his novel In Search of Lost Time (À la recherche du temps perdu), a seven volume work the heartbeat of which is the shifting qualities of memories symbolized by the madeleine, its taste, its powers to enliven the imagination and make palpable human time. For Proust, imagination is memories re-lived,

³⁰⁶ R.W.B. Lewis *The James: a family narrative*. Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. New York; 1991. quote p. 545

³⁰⁷ "Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feeling, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine. " Ibid., quote p.510

³⁰⁸ Ibid, quote p. 558

given new life, one that opens memories to elaboration of what once was, using sensuous description to evoke forgotten feelings newly sensed in the cadences of the narration.

Psuche, Emotion, Time, Asklepios and Music

There is a history of philosophy, ethics, aesthetics and healing that pertains directly to the life of emotion that we need today.³⁰⁹ The life of emotion cannot be deduced or inferred, like a scientific law. Reliance on utilitarian/behaviorist notions that human beings are driven to seek pleasure³¹⁰ and

³⁰⁹ In our contemporary world, medicine, psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis are all historically the brain children of Asklepios, but do not apply Asklepiian principles in their practice. This begins with "above all do no harm", which means being aware of our effect on our patients and being responsible for knowing when they feel damaged. Such an emphasis requires an effort to listen to the dynamics of our interactions, to attend to the fluctuations and oscillations of wishes and fears, and not to be distracted by "content".

³¹⁰ Freud's "pleasure principle" fits neatly into the Benthamite schema. Compare Freud's pleasure principle with Aristotle's views: Aristotle defines pleasure in terms of what heals, what cures. "By things pleasant incidentally I mean those that act as cures (for because as a result people are cured, through some action of the part that remains healthy, for this reason the process is thought pleasant). Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 1154.

Paradoxically Freud the physician explicitly rejects the Asklepiian (Galen, Hippocratic) ethics of his profession by departing from a focus on healing.

avoid pain has seriously damaged our abilities to attend to the life of our minds and our emotions, to our *psuche*; it has negated the life-giving power of human connections and love. Without intimate relationships both consciousness and conscience are seriously impoverished.

Our ever-changing human connections nourish the sense of rhythm and time on which the meaning of life depends. Aristotle's description of *katharsis*³¹¹ points to tragic emotions, jolts of energy, pity and fear taken together.³¹² From the perspective of Aristotle, actions are "practical". Whether actions or imitations of actions (as in tragedy), what is practical for Aristotle relies upon those rhythms and cadences that call upon imaginative time, the human response to birth and death.³¹³

³¹¹ It is worth noting that for Freud *katharsis* is a release of energy, and has nothing whatsoever to do with tragic emotions.

³¹² In the light of our contemporary conceptual distortions, Aristotle's concept of *katharsis* appears to us to be a contradiction: fear for oneself cannot be pity for others, and pity for others cannot be fear for oneself. And *psuche*, because it cannot be located in space or time, becomes not only outdated and the object of superstition, but, worse, a concept devoid of any relevance whatsoever, despite being the heart and soul of the etymology of psychology, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

³¹³ as actions and imitations of actions (like dreams and music)

Aristotle's "practical understanding" carries with it the power of emotions (psuche), and, we can add, implicitly the notion of "double conscience", both consciousness and conscience. Aristotle was a member of the Asklepiads, the guild of physicians whose healing powers depended on ethics; his ethics were nourished by Asklepiian responsibilities and responses to human suffering; his theory of tragedy was a theory of ethics.³¹⁴

We have seen earlier in this book how Freud relied upon the concept of drives and neurons to conceptualize and account for what drives thinking. The concept of the unconscious relies upon repression, a force against the force of drives, drives being opposed to thinking. Combining theories of motion and counter-motion with a fascination and horror of sexuality gone wild (implicit in his theory of drives), Freud managed to smuggle "causative"

³¹⁴ For a more complete description of katharsis and tragedy, of hamartia and ethics, see my Tragic Incomprehension.

neurons into his Oedipus Complex.³¹⁵ He viewed the Oedipus Complex as the manifestation of universal human conflicts and motivations, "proof" of the reality of the unconscious. He truncated the story of Oedipus, splitting Oedipus off from the line of Kadmos and the generations of curses and family relationships, and holding him up as a lone figure, the embodiment of the Oedipus Complex, which then came to stand for the life of the mind, composed of unconscious, drives, repression, ego, id and superego.

Strikingly, the transformations of Oedipus from the Greeks to the present can be seen as an expression of the deification of scientific knowledge, the glorification of the lone hero and the corresponding discomfort with being human, with needing others and with the painful shame dynamics inherent in human intimacy. What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three legs in the evening? The riddle of the sphinx that Oedipus solves

³¹⁵ Freud depicts infants as innocent in appearance but, like fallen angels, essentially envious, murderous and sexual (Satanic). The place of envy in Freud's account of the origin of civilization fits snugly with the early Christian motif of illicit angelic instruction in the aetiology of human culture. Additionally, our usual assumptions about significant feelings in therapy (envy, resentment, love and hate) designate feelings in isolation, or paired as opposites in notions of ambivalence. Such assumptions have little room for feelings as they are felt, for feelings as distinguishing what is inside from what is outside, or for feelings in interrelationships with others, in interaction with the effects of relationships.

correctly but fails to grasp stands like a shadow over his hubris, his defiance of his own humanity.³¹⁶ Against the feelings of *psuche*, and the riddle of the sphinx, the dictum of the oracle at Delphi³¹⁷ "Know thyself" rings like a clarion call echoing our human limitations and our mortality.

In our modern world, the anguish of human relationships, essential for the life of emotion, "double conscience" and "practical knowledge", has been cast aside and replaced by assumptions that human beings can be approached "scientifically", through binaries, computers and machines.³¹⁸ While Freud's scientific theories of the unconscious and drives appear to account for the

³¹⁶ Freud fails to grasp the irony of the ability of Oedipus to solve the riddle of the sphinx. Solving it in Oedipus Rex ensnares Oedipus in his incomprehension of himself, and makes it clear that he is blind to the "know thyself" dictum. In the final play of the trilogy, Oedipus at Colonus, he recognizes his hubris and embraces his humanity and his mortality, and can die in peace.

³¹⁷ As a python, a snake with connections to the underworld, the Pythian oracle was known for prophesying what human beings could not know, prophecy being connected to the dead. Defiant of his human limitations, seemingly without intimate relationships, Oedipus refused to know himself as mortal and flawed, and presumed that he could invent himself through the eyes of others as the great king and savior of his subjects.

³¹⁸ While the unconscious seems to open doors to our inner life, it comes packaged with a mistrust of emotion and deliberately ignores "double conscience."

life of emotion, to be a substitute for *psuche*, they neglect time, movement and change, they exclude beauty, ethics and love.³¹⁹

When scientific, religious or political assumptions of "truth" fail to take into account Aristotle's "practical understanding" (which is an ethical response to human suffering, *katharsis* being a medical metaphor), the result is, as Berlin warns us, ominous. When cut off from "practical understanding", psychoanalysis and psychology cannot reach what is alive in human beings, cannot acknowledge what changes, and therefore cannot be faithful to memory, to our need for one another, to our need for love.

The life of emotion cannot be imagined through categories and binary oppositions, the dialectics and structures with which we now approach them. Structural models (e.g., ego, id and superego) are by definition immobile and fixed. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis models are equally indifferent and unresponsive to human time. Chronological and evolutionary time have little to do with the life of emotion. The omnipresent opposites:

³¹⁹ Perhaps even more essentially, Freud's insistence that the unconscious was a part of science, meant that it could not be "practical", that it had to be outside human time and therefore outside ethics.

mind/body, self/other, mind/matter, memory/perception and unconscious/conscious leave little room for emotional time which is by definition "practical", not "scientific". To be recognized it must be lived. And to be lived, it must be felt.

In his Poetics, Aristotle describes *Katharsis* as a jolt of energy, of *psuche*, associated with passionate Dionysian, theatrical, tragic celebrations of ecstasy and overpowering feelings that connect individuals with one another, feelings that make what is felt to be inside and what is felt to be outside—and what is felt to be outside the inside, and inside the outside--recognizable and imaginable.³²⁰

For the Greeks, *psuche* was breath, a force of life without a material correlate. As a form of action, *psuche* expressed a life force far larger and stronger than any one human being. It can be known only directly, by being lived, and it can only be lived if felt as a force far greater than one's life. "I had never known before how short life really was, and into how small a

³²⁰ Vernant (1972) (1990) notes that from the perspective of tragedy man and his actions were; presentedf "not as stable realities that could be placed, defined, and judged, but as problems, unanswered questions, riddles whose double meanings remain enigmatic however decoded." p.186

space the mind could put it." By implication then the small space into which our minds can put our lives stands in sharp contrast against the vastness and movement of the More which defines them.

In his dialogue the Phaedo, Plato, Aristotle's teacher, reports the final words of Socrates, who, imprisoned and sentenced to death, has just taken the poison which is killing him: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asklepios: will you remember to pay the debt?"³²¹ After that Socrates spoke no more. Clearly Socrates believed that there was a debt to pay, and that a sacrifice to Asklepios was required. Why?

Scholars have long debated these last words of Socrates, but have failed to connect them with the cult of Asklepios, with the membership of Aristotle in the Asklepiads or with the lengthy discussions in the Phaedo of the immortality of the soul.³²² The cult of Asklepios was a cult of healing and life,

³²¹ Plato, Phaedo 118 (p. 501)

³²² Why scholars have failed to connect the last words of Socrates with the lengthy passages on the immortality of the soul is a good question. One possible answer is that Plato was associated with rationalism and that cults were assumed to be superstitious and therefore antithetical to rational order. Another, related to the first, is that Plato is associated with a mistrust of emotions, and sacrifice and death evoke strong feelings.

of *psuche*. But it was simultaneously a cult of the dead, attested to by the snake on his staff and by the ideas of healing implicit in incubation and cave cults.³²³ Given this context, the most obvious explanation of his last words is that Socrates was expressing his debt to Asklepios as the pureveyor of *psuche*. In other words, Socrates felt he owed his life to Asklepios. The sacrifice of a cock was a gesture of gratitude for his life.

The sacrifice of a cock can also be construed as a gesture demonstrating Socrates' (Plato's) belief in the immortality of *psuche* (the soul). In the Phaedo, Socrates (Plato) goes to great lengths to prove that *psuche* is immortal.³²⁴ For Ficino in the Italian Renaissance, Plato, Pythagoras, Democritus and Orpheus are all mixed up with Asklepios, and all associated with cults of the dead, with healing, ideals of beauty and celebrations of life cycles and reincarnation.

³²³ Dreamed cures are still an integral part of incubation practices throughout the Mediterranean and the Near East. They often take place near the tombs of saints, thus linking the dead with dreams and the power of healing.

³²⁴ By implication, Plato associated Asklepios with the immortality of *psuche*, the life spirit (soul).

There is no before *psuche* or after *psuche*: there is only a life force that lies outside time but consists in continual motion and change. This life force manifests itself through human, emotional time and experience, through our experience of human mortality. By implication in Plato's Phaedo, *psuche* is a continually regenerating life force, movement and force of change.

The life of emotion has been recognized for millenia in *Psuche*, as soul, breath and life force (force vitale). *Psuche* manifests itself in emotional, human time which we know through our bodies, through dreams and through music. Music lives in time and sonatas have "movements" into which they are divided. We know music as it is. It is not the shadow or representation of something else, like the shadows in Plato's analogy of the cave. As psychologists and psychoanalysts, we are responsible for recognizing and using these basic resources in responding to human suffering in the Asklepiian tradition of healing and ethics. This is the implication for us today of the last words of Sophocles "I owe a cock to Asklepios".

When approaching rationality--and these unwarranted, binary oppositions--as no more than the feeling of what fits (William James), it becomes clear that the feeling comes first, and the ways of construing the world only second. Beneath the intellectual strata there are deeper intuitive strata extending to a center which is not a point but rather an internal power, a force forever in motion.³²⁵ We need conceptions of the mind and of human suffering that allow for human, emotional time, for imagination and intuition and for *psuche*, life force expressed in breath, movement, music and dreams.

This Sonnet of Shakespeare³²⁶ draws on the power of *psuche* in describing the life of our emotions, the movements from envy to hope to despair and thence to love.

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,

³²⁵ "Par dessous cette couche intellectuelle, il y a des couches intuitives de plus en plus profonde, jusqu'a on arrive à un centre qui n'est qu'un point, mais un point de force, une force interieure. . ." Beneath the layer of intellectual explanation there are intuitive layers one beneath the other, until one arrives at the center, which is not a point but rather an inner force. Albert Thibaudet, 1992 Le Bersonisme. Essai: Paris p. 181

³²⁶ Sonnet 29

I all alone bewEEP my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee; and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

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